



Verbs

A verb is a doing or action word. A verb can have three tenses: present, past and future.

| Present | Past | Future |
|--|---|---|
| today | yesterday | tomorrow |
| verb I cook a stir-fry for dinner. | verb + ed (regular) I cooked a stir-fry for dinner. | will/shall + verb I shall cook a stir-fry for dinner. |

Auxiliary verbs – these are helping verbs and always come before a verb.

Common auxiliary verbs are: **am, are, be, can, could, had, has, have, may, might, must, shall, should, was, were, is, will, would.**

- We **should** put the wet clothes in the dryer.
- He **must** go to the principal immediately.

A common error when using should or could in the past tense is that students often say *should of* instead of *should have* or *could of* instead of *could have*. This also applies to the negative – *We shouldn't have gone in the water. We couldn't have seen the bus.*

Finite verbs – these verbs can stand on their own and do not need an auxiliary verb.

- We argue.
- They play.
- We sit.

Infinitive – when *to* comes before a verb it is known as the infinitive. In general, the infinitive should not be split.

- I am going **to** definitely **eat** breakfast today. **✗**
- I am definitely going **to eat** breakfast today. **✓**

Verb group – this is a group of words built around a verb.

- He **huffed and puffed**.
- They **were going to climb** the fence.
- We **tried to establish** whether she had been a witness to the crime.
- I **must have been thinking** about lunch because suddenly I felt hungry.