

ALOE

A LESSON ON ENGLISH

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Verbs, Part I

Here is a simple definition of a verb in the English language is that it is a **word that conveys an action or a state of being.**

Here are three kinds of verbs:

- **Action verbs** describe some kind of movement or physical effort:
run, jump, breathe, sing, think, do, want.
- **Being verbs** describe something that's not an action, but simply is:
be, exist, stand.
- **Helping verbs** do not stand alone or express action. They are part of verb phrases that "help" the main verb's meaning. *See chart to the right.*



The English language combines two major language groups [Latin and Germanic languages], resulting in more than 1 million word sand many verbs.

English speakers, therefore, have a choice of verbs to describe an action. For example: *think, cogitate, ponder, consider, meditate upon, and reflect* all have similar meanings.

Action verbs tell about something a person, animal, force of nature, or thing can do or be. *Can you cry, march, rinse, or turn? Can the wind blow or a cup fall? Yes, those are all actions.*

Being Verbs tell about something in a state of being. A noun or pronoun does not always take action. *Sometime, it just is. For that purpose, you use a being verb.*

Verbs have two important functions: Some verbs put static objects into motion while other verbs help to clarify the objects in meaningful ways

Helping verbs define the tense (past, present, future) or change the meaning of the main verb. Here's a list of common helping verbs:

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| may | being | is | does | would | will |
| might | been | was | did | have | can |
| must | am | were | should | had | shall |
| be | are | do | could | has | |

ALOE newsletter
International Leadership Institute
Sara Tusek, Editor
Florida and Prague
Email: publications@ili.cc

www.ili.cc

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Verb Tenses

From <http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html>

There are 12 basic verb tenses in English. They can be divided into four main categories, as follows:

SIMPLE: PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE

CONTINUOUS: PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE

PERFECT: PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE

PERFECT CONTINUOUS: PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE

- **Continuous tenses** refer to actions that have not yet been completed. *I am studying English now* (Present continuous)
- **Perfect tenses** refer to completed actions. *I have studied English with three teachers.* (Present perfect)
- **Perfect continuous tenses** refer to actions that have taken place/are taking place lately or recently. *I have been studying English for 5 years.* (Present perfect continuous)

These verb tenses are not easy to use correctly, even for native English speakers! Only by practicing these tenses in reading and writing can you gain mastery of their correct use.

Sara Tusek, with more than 26 years of experience in education, directs the American English Language Institute. Currently based in Prague, Czech Republic, the Institute provides courses in English for academic purposes. www.ili.cc



"A Lesson on English" is a series of short lessons created for people who want to become fluent in conversational English. The lessons are practical and useful for students learning English in a traditional classroom setting or on their own.

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