

# VERBS: TYPES AND TENSES

(English Syntax)

There are four **TYPES** of verbs: intransitive, transitive, linking, and passive. Intransitive and transitive verbs are in the active voice, while passive verbs are in the passive voice.

## VERB TYPES—DEFINITIONS

**Intransitive** verbs are verbs that express action but that do not take an object. The subject and verb express a complete thought without an object. The verb can, however, be followed by an adverb or other modifier.

**Examples:** I ran.  
I ran swiftly.  
I ran in the race.

**Transitive** verbs are verbs that express action that terminates in, or is received by, an object. The object of a transitive verb can be a noun, pronoun, or a noun clause or phrase.

**Examples:** I threw the ball. (Noun as object)  
We beat them. (Pronoun as object)  
I think that you are correct. (Noun clause as object)

Notice that the subject and verb alone, "We beat," would not make sense without an object to receive the action.

**Linking** verbs are verbs of the senses like "feel," "look," "smell," or "taste," and a limited number of other verbs like "be," "seem," "become," or "remain" that link the subject of the sentence with a complement. Linking verbs are always followed by an adjective, noun, or noun phrase that acts as a complement.

**Examples:** He is a lawyer. (Noun as complement)  
I feel tired. (Adjective as complement)  
It seems that we will lose the game. (Noun clause as complement)

**Passive-voice** verbs are verbs that allow the subject to receive the action rather than to do the action. Passive-voice verbs are made by using some form of the verb "be" that is followed by a verb ending in -en or -ed (unless the past participle of the verb is irregular). Only transitive verbs can be turned into the passive form.

**Examples:** Our team was beaten at softball. ("By the opposing team" is implied.)  
The building is destroyed by the wrecking crew.  
The ball was thrown by me.

To help identify a passive verb, ask, "Is the subject sitting there *PASSIVELY* waiting for something to happen to it, or is the subject doing the *ACTION*?"

## VERB TENSES—DEFINITIONS

Verb tenses are used to indicate time. There are six tenses.

**Present** tense is the stem of the infinitive—to SEE, to USE, to DRIVE, etc.

**Past** tense is usually formed by adding -ed or -en to the verb or by changing a vowel inside the verb—SAW, USED, DRIVEN, etc.

**Future** tense is formed by adding "will" or "shall" to the verb stem—we SHALL see, you WILL use, he WILL drive, etc.

**Perfect** tense is formed by adding "have" or "has" to the past participle of the verb—I HAVE seen, he HAS used, you HAVE driven, etc.

**Past Perfect** tense is formed by adding "had" to the past participle of the verb—I HAD seen, he HAD used, you HAD driven, etc.

**Future Perfect** tense is formed by adding "shall have" or "will have" to the past participle of the verb—I SHALL HAVE seen, you WILL HAVE used, he WILL HAVE driven, etc.

The following chart should help as a quick reminder.

<u>Tense of Type</u>	<u>Add</u>	<u>Verb ending</u>
Passive Verbs	form of "be"	-en or -ed
Future Tense	shall, will	infinitive stem
Perfect Tense	have, has	-en or -ed
Past Perfect	had	-en or -ed
Future Perfect	shall have, will have	-en or -ed

### **EXERCISE**

**DIRECTIONS:** The paragraph below contains many problems with verb tenses, and the spelling of verb forms. Find and correct the problems.

The town of Endeavor has just pass a leash law which requires all dogs to be kept behind fences or on leashes whenever they are outside. For years residents demanded such a law because they were tire of dogs roaming the neighborhoods and leaving their droppings in other people's yards. The city was finally lead to enact a leash law because of incidents in which dogs attack joggers or cyclists. The most serious case involve a German Shepherd that bited a little girl playing in the next yard. She needed eighty stitches to repaired the wounds. Now that the new law has went into effect, the people of Endeavor were feeling much more secure when they go for walks or bicycle rides. They also knew their children can play safely in their own yards.

### **ANSWERS:**

The town of Endeavor has just passed a leash law which requires all dogs to be kept behind fences or on leashes whenever they are outside. For years residents demanded such a law because they were tired of dogs roaming the neighborhoods and leaving their droppings in other people's yards. The city was finally led to enact a leash law because of incidents in which dogs attacked joggers or cyclists. The most serious case involved a German Shepherd that bit a little girl playing in the next yard. She needed eighty stitches to repair the wounds. Now that the new law has gone into effect, the people of Endeavor are feeling much more secure when they go for walks or bicycle rides. They also know their children can play safely in their own yards.

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