

Finite verbs

Every sentence needs a finite verb. A **finite verb** is a verb that has a *subject* and shows *tense* and *number* (whether it is singular or plural). A finite verb together with its subject makes sense and *can stand alone* as a sentence.

Example: She **plays**. ← The word *plays* is a finite verb and *she* is the subject.

To find out the subject of the finite verb, ask *who* or *what* about the verb. Who plays? *She* plays, so *she* is the subject.

Example: They **are running**. ← The words *are running* make up a finite verb and *they* is the subject.



Remember

To test if a verb is finite, see whether it can stand on its own with a subject.

1. Underline the finite verb in each sentence.

- I am tired.
- My mother drives a car.
- My brother plays football.
- Portia brushes her hair.
- Vusi is eating fruit.
- Nomfundo likes mangoes.
- David runs to school every day.
- The cow is jumping over the fence.

2. Circle the finite verbs in the following paragraph.

The sun shone brightly. Summertime brought the warmth and Ros smiled to herself. Every summer she visited her grandparents at the coast. This summer she wanted to learn how to surf. Ros sighed contentedly.

Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs work with a main verb to create the tenses, moods and voices that we use in English grammar. The auxiliary verbs we use the most are *be*, *do* and *have*. The other auxiliaries are *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *shall*, *should*, *will* and *would*. Look at the examples in the table to see how the auxiliary verb helps to create a finite verb.

Auxiliary verb	Main verb	Finite verb
is	running	is running
has	been	has been



Turn to pages 20 and 21 for notes on mood.



- Identify the auxiliary verbs and main verbs in the following sentences. Circle the auxiliary verb and underline the main verb. The first one has been done for you.
 - The rain (is) falling.
 - I should finish in ten minutes.
 - You must clean your room.
 - I have eaten all my sweets.
 - I could help you if you stand still.
 - If I had won those tickets, I would have been so excited.
 - Delia is beating Thando at arm wrestling.
- Choose an auxiliary verb from the list in the margin to help complete the verbs in the sentences below. Some auxiliaries are used twice.
 - We _____ practised a lot this season.
 - Our neighbours _____ start building next month.
 - Mike _____ love to go fishing with you.
 - I _____ have the last hot dog if no one else wants it.
 - We _____ been to Lesotho only once.
 - The Grade 6s _____ run the cross-country later today.
 - The dog _____ like to go for a walk.