

# Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle

## VERBS – “When & How to Use Them”

### 1. Present Tense

- a. facts: Richmond **is** the capital of Virginia.
- b. regular habits: I **brush** my teeth every morning.  
She **doesn't cut** the grass every two weeks in summer.
- c. schedules: The plane **leaves** at 5:00.

### 2. Present Continuous/Progressive “to be” + verb + ing

- a. actions happening right now: I **am talking**. You **are listening**.
- b. to show future: I **am driving** to the store in 15 minutes.
- c. schedules: The train **is arriving** at 2:00.

### 3. Questions – Notice the pattern.

Past	Present	Future
<b>Did</b> you <b>get</b> to see the show?	<b>Do</b> you <b>understand</b> the problem?	_____
<b>Did</b> he <b>like</b> the clothes he got?	<b>Does</b> he <b>eat</b> peanut butter?	_____
<b>Did</b> she <b>work</b> all day?	<b>Does</b> she <b>drive</b> fast?	_____
<b>Did</b> they <b>arrive</b> on time?	<b>Do</b> they <b>remember</b> me?	_____

### 4. Past Progressive “was/were” + verb + ing

- a. a long action happening at a point in time: At 5:00 I **was eating** dinner.
- b. a long action stopped by a shorter action: We **were watching** TV when the phone rang.
- c. two long actions happening at the same time: They **were driving and listening** to the radio.

### 5. Future “will” or “be going to” + verb

- a. “will” shows strong intent or willingness to help  
He said he **will meet** you there. I **will open** the window since it's hot.
- b. “be going to” is for plans  
I **am going to fly** to New York next week. They **are going to move** to a new apartment.

### 6. Time Clauses – Time Words (when, after, before, while, whenever)

**Past** – After I **came** home last night, I **took** a bath.

**Present** – Whenever I come home at night, I take a bath.

**Future** - After I come home tomorrow night, I am going to/will take a bath.

## 7. Present Perfect has/have + past participle

- something that happened in the past but the time is uncertain or unimportant  
I **have eaten** at that restaurant before.
- something that repeatedly happened in the past and will happen again  
He **has flown** to Morocco on business three times this year so far.
- something that happened in the past and still continues to the present  
I **have worked** here for two years. I **have been** a swimmer for 15 years.

**Key words for present perfect:** since, for, recently, yet, up to now, so far, ever

Example Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Gerunds & Infinitives

**A. Gerunds – verb + ing** are followed after certain verbs or verbs + preposition usually follow– (go, enjoy, finish, stop, quit, mind, postpone, put off, keep on, consider, think about, discuss, talk about, look forward to, dream about, be interested in, plan on)  
I **go jogging** every morning. They **talk about ending** the game. I **look forward to seeing** you.

### B. Infinitives – to + verb

- show purpose – I go to the dentist **to get** my teeth cleaned.
- with “too” & “enough” - \_\_\_\_\_ I am old enough to vote.

### C. Either gerund or infinitive

Common verbs followed by either a gerund or infinitive: (begin, start, continue, like, love, hate, can't stand, stop)

Example sentences: I love to eat strawberries. I love eating strawberries.

## 9. Passive “to be” + past participle

The object moves into the subject position and becomes more of the focus.

The ball **is thrown** by the boy.

The concert **was well attended** (by people). (The “by” phrase can be omitted.)

The Scarlett Letter **was written** by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Example sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISES FOR PRACTICE

- Write five complete sentences with “I” using a particular verb form.
- Conjugate verbs with complete sentences in affirmative and negative.
- Write short paragraphs on certain topics and include two to three sentences which use the studied verb form. Underline those sentences.
- Do exercises from grammar books or handouts.

## Reference Materials on Grammar:

Betty Azar’s Grammar Series; Form and Function; Power English 1