



## VERBS

Grammar helps us to focus on the role that words play in a sentence or phrase. The most essential part of speech in any sentence is the verb. Without a verb, we cannot have a complete sentence. A verb is a single word, or a group of words, that describe an action or state. This module covers concepts such as subject-verb agreement; recognising verb tense and verb forms; selecting verb tenses for academic writing and common verb-preposition combinations.

Grammatical feature	What you need to know.....
<p><b>1. Subject-verb agreement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common error in student writing is to forget to make the <u>subject</u> and <u>verb</u> agree in number. If the subject is singular then the verb must also be singular. If the subject is plural then the verb must also be plural.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice</b></p> <p>In the following sentences, identify the subject by asking 'who or what' is engaged in the action or is in the state described by the verb. Could the subject be replaced by 'it' or 'they'? (It = singular, they = plural)</p> <p>Choose the correct verb form below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>The lecture</u> <i>begin/begins</i> at 9:00am.</li> <li><u>The tutorials</u>, which commence in week 2, <i>follow/follows</i> the lecture.</li> <li><u>Losses</u> <i>is/are</i> expected.</li> <li><u>An estimation</u> of profits and losses <i>is/are expected</i> tomorrow.</li> <li><u>Biology and Chemistry</u> <i>is/are</i> popular.</li> <li><u>This group</u> of students <i>has/have finished</i> their exams.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>2. Verb tenses and verb forms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verb tenses are used in English to describe <u>when</u> an action takes place i.e. in the past, the present or the future. The form of the verb changes to express different tenses so it is important to choose the correct verb form for the tense that you are using.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice</b></p> <p>The following tenses often cause confusion. Which are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When <i>has</i> this book <i>been</i> published? / When <i>was</i> this book published?</li> <li>He <i>studied</i> hard last week. / He <i>has studied</i> hard last week.</li> <li>The students <i>have been working</i> hard. / The students <i>worked</i> hard.</li> <li>I <i>have been</i> in Australia for three months. / I <i>am</i> in Australia for three months.</li> <li>I <i>am</i> in Australia since January. / I <i>have been</i> in Australia since January.</li> </ol> <p>Does the following phrase refer to the past or the future?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How long <i>are</i> you here for?</li> </ol>	
<p><b>3. Referring to information you have read</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In your assignments, you need to provide evidence for your arguments. When you refer to what authors have written, choose verb tenses carefully to accurately convey your message. Note how verb tenses are used in your readings; tense usage can vary across and within disciplines. One paper may require several tenses or just one.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice</b></p> <p>Analyse the use of verb tenses in some of the model assignments found in <a href="#">The Learning Centre's Assignments page</a>. They are from a range of disciplines and will help you to identify which tenses to use.</p>	

<p><b>4. Patterns of verb usage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through your reading, you will become aware of the many grammatical patterns of verb usage in English, specific to your studies and your discipline. To develop your English, take time to analyse the verb patterns used in a variety of readings from your course. Take note of frequently occurring tenses, collocations etc. This will help you build appropriate language skills for your discipline.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Common verb + preposition and noun + preposition patterns for academic writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepositions cause many problems for students with English as an additional language. Choosing the correct preposition to go with a particular verb or noun is often a matter of learning the relevant collocation e.g. to have an impact <i>on</i> something. Note the collocation of 'impact' and 'on'. Note also the verbs that are commonly used together here, 'have' and 'impact'. More information can be found in our <a href="#">Prepositions</a> information sheet.</li> </ul>

**Answers:**

- Subject-verb agreement**
  - begins*
  - follow*
  - are expected*
  - is expected*
  - are*
  - has* or *have* are possible, depending on the emphasis
- Verb tenses and forms**
  - When *was* this book published?
  - He *studied* hard last week.
  - The students *have been working* hard. OR The students *worked* hard last year. (Both are correct).
  - I *have been* in Australia for three months.
  - I *have been* in Australia since January.
  - How long *are* you here for? (Refers to the total time you will spend in the country).

**Useful links:**

- Subject-verb agreement: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/1/>
- Verb tenses and verb forms: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/718/1/>
- In the JCU APA 6<sup>th</sup> Referencing Guide, a variety of tenses are used in the examples: <http://libguides.jcu.edu.au/apa>
- General writing and specific subject guides: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/lionline/>
- Using gerunds and infinitives: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/gerunds.pdf>
- Verbs for referring to sources: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/referring-to-sources.pdf>