

The State-of-Being Verb

When you discuss relationships and feelings, you may say sentences such as these: I *am* their son. The food *tastes* wonderful.

A verb is a word that expresses action or a state of being. A state-of-being verb tells something about the condition or state of the subject of the sentence.

In Chapter 5, you will learn about state-of-being verbs. Each lesson in the chapter focuses on the correct use and form of state-of-being verbs in sentences.

Goals for Learning

- ▶ To identify state-of-being verbs and verb phrases in sentences
- ▶ To distinguish between active and state-of-being verbs and verb phrases in sentences
- ▶ To identify the correct form of state-of-being verbs in sentences

State-of-being verb

A verb that explains or describes the subject of a sentence. A state-of-being verb is also called a linking verb.

A **state-of-being verb** tells something about the condition or state of the subject of the sentence. A state-of-being verb does not tell what the subject is doing. State-of-being verbs are also called linking verbs.

EXAMPLES

State-of-being verb: Roberto **is** a tackle on the football team.

Action verb: Roberto **plays** on the football team.

In the first sentence, the verb *is* helps to make a statement about Roberto. In the second sentence, the verb *plays* tells the action that Roberto does.

The most common state-of-being verb is *be* and all its forms: *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been*. *To be* means “to exist, to live, or to happen.”

Here are some other commonly used state-of-being, or linking, verbs:

appear	grow	seem
become	keep	smell
feel	look	stay
get	remain	taste

Activity A Read the examples. Then write five more sentences about Roberto on your paper. Use state-of-being verbs. Underline the verb in each sentence.

Examples Roberto **seems** nice.
 Roberto **is** a student.
 Roberto **grew** tall.
 Roberto **gets** taller every year.
 Roberto **looks** friendly.

The verb *be* can also be a helping verb. It can be used with a main verb to express progressive tenses.

EXAMPLES Jamie **is cooking** dinner.
Eric **was talking** softly.

In addition, *be* is used to form passive verbs. *Be* is a helping verb in those verb phrases, too.

EXAMPLE The picture **was painted** by Norman Rockwell.

Activity B Write the verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper. Beside each verb or verb phrase, write whether the verb *be* is a main verb or a helping verb.

- 1) Dawn was feeling fine yesterday.
- 2) Today she is sick.
- 3) She is going to the doctor.
- 4) Dawn will be absent from school.
- 5) She will probably be better tomorrow.

Be is almost always a state-of-being verb when it is the main verb of the sentence. Some other state-of-being verbs can also express an action. If you can substitute a form of *be* for these verbs, they are state-of-being verbs. If not, they are action verbs.

EXAMPLES State-of-being verb: The stew **tasted** good.
(You could say: The stew *was* good.)

Action verb: Michael **tasted** the stew.
(You cannot say: Michael *was* the stew.)

Activity C Write the verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper. Beside each verb or verb phrase, write whether it is an *action verb* or a *state-of-being verb*.

- 1) The old house smelled musty and stale.
- 2) The children were smelling the flowers.
- 3) The boys grew beans, squash, and corn in their garden.
- 4) Your body will grow stronger with exercise.
- 5) He feels sick.

State-of-being verbs also express tense.

EXAMPLES

Present:	The water feels warm.
Past:	He looked good yesterday.
Future:	Mary will be fifteen next week.
Present perfect:	I have been hungry all day.
Past perfect:	Jack had seemed tired by dinnertime.
Future perfect:	Carol will have been sick for a week tomorrow.

Activity D Write the verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper. Beside each verb or verb phrase, write its tense.

- 1) “The Tell-Tale Heart” is an interesting story.
- 2) Sam will not be happy about that.
- 3) Mrs. Franco has been our neighbor for two years.
- 4) She was a Spanish teacher.
- 5) We had been the winners twice.
- 6) We will have become tired by then.
- 7) The cloth had felt smooth and soft.
- 8) They have been asleep all morning.
- 9) This plant grows best in the shade.
- 10) Did Mr. Lee seem upset to you?

State-of-being verbs may be used in the progressive form. Use the verb *be* as a helping verb. Then use the present participle form (*-ing*) of the verb.

EXAMPLES

It is **staying** warm today.

I **will be feeling** fine soon.

Activity E Write the present participle for each state-of-being verb below on your paper. Then write a sentence for each verb.

Example grow—growing I **am growing** taller this year.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1) be | 4) look |
| 2) seem | 5) feel |
| 3) appear | 6) become |

Conditional helping verbs may be used with state-of-being verbs.

EXAMPLES

Karl **must be** in love.

The dog **could become** angry.

Activity F Write the state-of-being verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper.

- 1) Ron and Jamie were ready for Thanksgiving.
- 2) The roast turkey would taste good.
- 3) The pumpkin pies in the oven smelled delicious.
- 4) Everything looked wonderful.
- 5) “Is dinner ready yet?”
- 6) The whole family was hungry.
- 7) “I have been very hungry all day!”
- 8) Dinner was great!
- 9) The conversation around the table sounded happy.

Lesson 1 Review

Part A Write the verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper.

- 1) My aunt is eighty years old.
- 2) She is looking well.
- 3) She always has felt healthy.
- 4) Aunt Marie is a good cook.
- 5) She has been keeping very active.

Part B Write the verb or verb phrase in each of these sentences on your paper. Beside each verb or verb phrase, write whether it is an *action verb* or a *state-of-being verb*.

Example Debbie tasted the turkey. **tasted—action**
Dinner will be ready soon. **will be—state-of-being**

- 1) Dinner was served at three o'clock.
- 2) The food looked wonderful.
- 3) That turkey smells delicious.
- 4) The drumstick is my favorite part.
- 5) The sweet potatoes tasted quite fine.
- 6) May I have more corn?
- 7) My grandmother looks pleased.
- 8) I feel full.
- 9) My parents seem extra quiet.
- 10) They must be tired from all the cooking.