



## Chapter

# 5

# The State-of-Being Verb

**W**hen 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.

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### Goals for Learning

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- ▶ 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 <b>feels</b> warm.
Past:	He <b>looked</b> good yesterday.
Future:	Mary <b>will be</b> fifteen next week.
Present perfect:	I <b>have been</b> hungry all day.
Past perfect:	Jack <b>had seemed</b> tired by dinnertime.
Future perfect:	Carol <b>will have been</b> 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.