

Handout Number 18

Verbs

I- Definition: A verb is a word that expresses an action or a state of being

II- Verb Tense

A verb expresses the time of an action or of a condition through *tense*. By changing the form of a verb, you can show whether something is happening now, happened in the past, or will happen in the future. Verb tense also tells you whether an action is a single instance or an on-going condition.

Verbs in English have six tenses: *present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect*. You form the tenses by using the principal parts and, where necessary, auxiliary verbs.

1. Present Tense: To form the simple present tense, use the infinitive form of the verb, or (for the third person singular) add *-s* or *-es* to the infinitive.

Example:

- Rita *tours* the castle; we *tour* the grounds around the castle.

Rule #1

Use the simple present tense of a verb to express an action that is repeated regularly or a condition that is true at any time.

Examples:

- She *reads* books all the time. (Action repeated regularly)

- Plato *is* a philosopher. (Always true)

You can also use the simple present tense to express an action that will occur according to a schedule or plan in the future.

Example:

- Our plan to England *leaves* Beirut International Airport at 7:30 p.m.

2. Past Tense: To form the simple past tense of a verb add *-d* or *-ed* to the infinitive.

Example:

- Rita *toured* the castle yesterday.

Rule #2

Use the simple past tense to express an action that was completed entirely in the past.

Example:

- The Black Death *occurred* in the Middle Ages.

3. Future Tense: To form the future tense, use *will* or *shall* with the infinitive form of the main verb.

Rule #3

Use the future to describe an action that will occur in the future.

Example:

- In his presentation, he *will discuss* the effects of the Black Death on the fall of the feudal system.

4. Present Perfect Tense: To form the present perfect tense of a verb, use a present form of *have* (*has* or *have*) as an auxiliary verb with the past participle of the main verb.

Rule #4

Use the present perfect tense of a verb to express an action that happened at an indefinite time in the past or an action that began in the past and continues in the present

Examples:

- Many scholars *have analyzed* the reasons for World War II. (Indefinite past)

- She *has collected* stamps for years. (Began in the past and continues in the present)

5. Past Perfect Tense: To form the past perfect tense of a verb, use *had* with the past participle of the main verb.

Rule #5

Use the past perfect tense to express an action that happened before another action in the past.

Example:

- When I arrived, the guests *had left*.

6. Future Perfect Tense: To form the future perfect tense, use *will have* or *shall have* with the past participle of the main verb.

Rule #6

Use the future perfect tense to describe an action that will be concluded before another action or time in the future.

Examples:

- We *will have covered* World War II by January.
- I *will have graduated* before I am twenty-two years old.

III- Progressive forms of Verbs

Each of the six tenses has a *progressive* form, which you use to describe a continuing action. To make the progressive form, use the appropriate form of the verb *be* plus the present participle of the main verb.

Examples:

- **Present Progressive:** Art historians **are examining** the painting now.
- **Past Progressive:** Specialists **were examining** the painting yesterday.
- **Future Progressive:** Scholars **will be examining** the artifacts tomorrow.
- **Present Perfect Progressive:** The archeologists **have been examining** the tombs.
- **Past Perfect Progressive:** Scientists **had been examining** the book's ink with care.
- **Future Perfect Progressive:** By Friday, the scientists **will have been examining** the blood culture for ten days.