

PART III

VERBS

Verbs are the wonderful words that give life to language.

The most common verb, *be*, for example, allows us to tell who or what exists in the world, and also when, where, how, and why it exists. In addition, just by changing the form of the verb, we can tell about what existed in the past and what will exist in the future, plus what we wish existed or what we would do if something existed. The verb *be* is used in a different manner from all other English verbs—it has different forms and different patterns.

All other verbs follow a second set of patterns, which enable us to tell facts about people—where and how they live, what they have, how they look and feel, what they like, what they think, and what they do; they also enable us to tell how things work and what happens in the world. And again, with a change in form, we can put all this information in the past or the future, or we can make wishes and conjectures.

Verbs also enable us to ask and answer questions, give commands and suggestions, accept or refuse, and relate and communicate.

Yes, there are a lot of irregular forms that have to be memorized, but they are worth the effort. Verbs are about life. Live well with verbs!

The Verb *Be*

The most common verb is *be*. It is used to identify or describe a person or thing, or to tell its origin, state, or location.

The Present Tense of *Be*

I **am** tall.
You **are** my friend.
He **is** sick.
She **is** a smart girl.
It **is** a mistake.

We **are** at home.
You (all) **are** great helpers.
They **are** from South America.

exercise

12-1

Fill in each blank with the appropriate form of *be* in the present tense.

1. Bill _____ here.
2. Janet and Mary Jane _____ good friends.
3. Emily _____ on vacation.
4. Betty and I _____ teachers.
5. You _____ a good student.
6. I _____ not tired.

exercise

12-2

Answer each of the following questions in a complete sentence using the verb *be*.

1. What is your name? _____
2. Where are you from? _____
3. Who are your best friends? _____
4. Where are your best friends now? _____
5. What is in your hand? _____
6. What color is it? _____

Asking Questions with *Be*

Questions with the verb *be* are formed by reversing the subject and the verb:

I am	Am I . . . ?	We are	Are we . . . ?
You are	Are you . . . ?	They are	Are they . . . ?
He is	Is he . . . ?		
She is	Is she . . . ?		
It is	Is it . . . ?		

exercise

12-3

Change the following statements to questions.

1. He is here now. _____
2. You are happy. _____
3. I am sitting down. _____
4. He is asking directions. _____
5. They are building a new house. _____
6. She is turning left. _____
7. He is taking photographs. _____
8. She is riding a bicycle. _____

Making *Be* Negative

Sentences with *be* are made negative by placing **not** after the conjugated form:

I am not tired.	We are not working.
You are not smiling.	You all are not running.
He is not sitting in the park.	They are not sitting in the park.
She is not at home.	
It is not earning interest.	

Negatives are usually contracted:

I'm not	We aren't
You aren't	You (all) aren't
He isn't	They aren't
She isn't	
It isn't	

exercise

12-4

Make each of the sentences in Exercise 12-3 negative.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

The Past Tense of *Be*

I was in the city.	We were very happy.
You were shy.	You (all) were at school.
He was sick.	They were broken.
She was not tired.	
It was good.	

exercise

12-5

Change the answers in Exercise 12-1 to the past tense.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

exercise

12-6

Answer each question in a complete sentence using the past tense of be.

1. Where were you yesterday at 4:00? _____
2. Who was with you? _____
3. Were you indoors or outdoors? _____
4. How was the weather? _____
5. Were there other people there? _____