

VERB PHRASES

LESSON 7

THINK ABOUT

Sometimes when you write, you need to use a verb phrase instead of a single verb. A **verb phrase** has a **main verb** and one or more **helping verbs**, or auxiliary verbs. The main verb is the last verb in the verb phrase.

Rob *hailed* a cab. (main verb used alone)

Rob *is hailing* a cab. (The helping verb, *is*, comes before the main verb, *hailing*.)

Common Helping Verbs

am, is, are, was, were, has, have, had, do, does, did, can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would

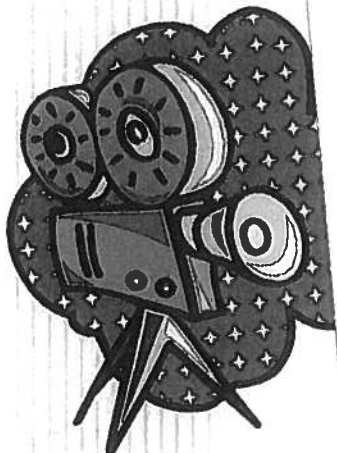
- A verb phrase can contain more than one helping verb.
Bo might have solved the problem.
I should have been working on my homework.
- Sometimes a helping verb can be separated from its main verb by an adverb.
I have already *mailed* the card.
He had not *started* his project.
- Helping verbs are always separated from the main verb in questions.
Did the movie *begin* yet?
Would you *consider* my idea?

STUDY A MODEL

Read this movie review. The helping verbs are red, and the main verbs are blue.

Flash! You **must** *see* the movie *Turn Around!* The producers **have** skillfully *combined* fabulous actors, a daring plot, and rapid dialogue. How **can** any movie fail with such a triple treat? Occasional special effects **did** *capture* my interest, but the plot **was** exceptional. The writer **had** *placed* the characters in so much peril that I **became** totally involved in the characters' lines. I **have** *seen* one other film by this writer-producer team, and it too **was** a hit. I **must** *award* this movie five stars.

- ← The verb phrase *have combined* is interrupted by the adverb *skillfully*.
- ← In the question, the subject *movie* comes between the helping verb *can* and the main verb *fail*.
- ← Notice that the verb *was* is used alone. Here it is a linking verb, not a helping verb.



PRACTICE

A Label each underlined verb H for helping verb or M for main verb.

1. am interpreting
2. were floundering
3. has been suspended
4. should boost
5. has always acknowledged
6. will never establish

B Read each sentence. Write the main verb that is used with the underlined helping verb.

1. Walter's garage has been turned into a bedroom.
2. Scientists might soon discover a cure for this disease.
3. This little computer can interpret other languages.
4. Mr. Riley will demonstrate his experiment.
5. Did you find your dog?
6. I do not recommend restaurants to others.

C Read the paragraph. Write the 10 verb phrases.

Have you ever noticed a movie's special effects? People do not really fly. Still, with movie magic, characters can zoom across a city. A special effects crew may strap an actor into a wired harness. Then the actor can be hoisted into the air. From there the actor may act in the scene. The camera crew also might film the actor before a solid blue screen. Later artists will digitally erase the wires and solid color from the film. With a new background, viewers will believe the impossible. People can fly!

A verb phrase has a main verb and one or more helping verbs.

The main verb is the last verb in the verb phrase.

WRITE

Write a review about a movie you have seen. Be sure to use verb phrases correctly.

Writing Tip

You can make your writing stronger and more interesting if you use active instead of passive voice for your sentences. In *active voice*, the subject is the doer. In *passive voice*, the subject receives the action.

Active voice: Today computers make many special effects.

Passive voice: Today many special effects are made by computers.