

SOME TRAITS OF THE VERB

- introductory information

The verb is the word or cluster of words in a sentence that denotes an “event”. This “event” can be:

an action

The engine runs well.

The children are making a lot of noise.

We have already seen the film .

a state of being

The weather has been very mild this winter.

Many of the participant remained for the final ceremonies.

She seems nice.

something between an action and a state of being

John has a lot of money.

I'm thinking about the problem.

We'll freeze in this weather.

a process

She became rich with her business.

The plant is growing into a well-formed specimen.

The weather will get warmer later in the summer.

a link (or equal sign)

Henrik is an engineer. (Henrik = Engineer)

Zelda is going to become a Libertarian. (Zelda = Libertarian)

The vacant lot has remained an eye sore for years.

(vacant lot = eye sore)

The verb can also indicate:

time

We are going to the movies. (now)

We will go to the movies. (later)

We went to the movies. (yesterday)

We have gone to the movies. (three times this month)

potentiality (with uncertainty)

He might bring me back some chocolate from Holland.

I could visit you on Thursday.

Should you finish your paper by tomorrow?

active or passive action

The wind ruined the paint on my garage.

(active - “wind” performs action)

The package was delivered early.

(passive - “package” is acted on)

We always enjoy thier humor. (active - “we” perform action)

The restrooms will be cleaned over the weekend.

(passive - “restrooms” are acted on)

Terminology associated with verb morphology:

“conjugation”

The form of the verb can change according to the subject pronoun.

The subject pronoun is the person or thing acting out the event.

I am a student.

(subject pronoun = I / perspective = about the self)

Are you a student?

(subject pronoun = you / perspective = to another person)

She is a student.

(subject pronoun = she / perspective = about another person)

These changes in the form of the verb are called “conjugations”.

“person”

The conjugation of a verb is determined by the “person” acting as the subject pronoun. The “person” shows the perspective of the speaker: These perspectives are numbered:

about the self (I/we) = 1st person

to another person (you) = 2nd person

about another person or a thing (he/she/it/they) = 3rd person

“number”

The conjugation of the verb can also change according to the “number” of the subject pronoun.

“singular” = one (I, she, he, it)

“plural” = multiple (we, they)

She earns a lot of money. (singular conjugation = earns)

They earn a lot of money. (plural conjugation = earn)

I am interested in history. (singular conjugation = am)

We are interested in history. (plural conjugation = are)

“agreement”

The verb conjugates to the subject pronoun.

The verb must agree with the subject pronoun.

“register”

Register deals with level of politeness or familiarity when addressing a person directly. The familiar form of register in English has nearly died out. But register still exists in many European languages.

Formal register: Where are you?

(French: *Où êtes vous?*; German: *Wo sind Sie?*)

Familiar register: Where art thou?

(French: *Où es tu?*; German: *Wo bist du?*)