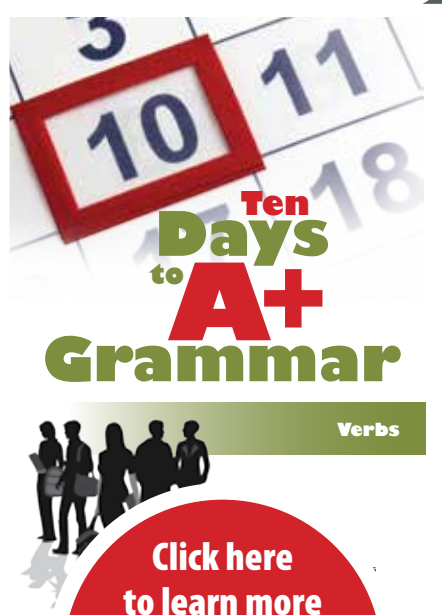




Ten Days to A+
Grammar™

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Verbs



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Day #1	
Teacher Instructions	6
Pretest – Verbs	7
Pretest – Verbs – Answer Key	10
Lesson – Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?	13
Day #2	
Teacher Instructions	16
Lesson – Verbs, Verbs, Verbs.....	17
Practice – Verbs Bring Stories to Life.....	18
Practice – Verbs Bring Stories to Life – Answer Key.....	19
Day #3	
Teacher Instructions	20
Lesson – Helping Verbs and Linking Verbs	21
Exercise A	22
Exercise B.....	24
Exercise B – Answer Key	25
Exercise C	27
Exercise C – Answer Key	28
Exercise D	29
Exercise D – Answer Key	30
Day #4	
Teacher Instructions	31
Lesson – Linking or Action.....	32
Exercise A	33
Exercise A – Answer Key	34
Exercise B.....	37
Exercise B – Answer Key	38
Exercise C	40
Exercise C – Answer Key	42
Day #5A	
Teacher Instructions	43
Lesson – A Quick Reminder about Verbs	44
Exercise A	45
Exercise A – Answer Key	46
Exercise B.....	47
Exercise B – Answer Key	48
Exercise C	49
Exercise C – Answer Key	50
Exercise D	51
Exercise D – Answer Key	52
Exercise E	53
Exercise E – Answer Key	54
Day #5B	
Teacher Instrucions.....	55
Lesson – A Bit More About Tenses	56

Exercise A	58
Exercise A – Answer Key	59
Exercise B.....	60
Exercise B – Answer Key	61
Exercise C	62
Exercise C – Answer Key	63
Exercise D	64
Exercise D – Answer Key	65
Exercise E	66
Exercise E – Answer Key	67
Day #6	
Teacher Instructions	68
Lesson – Regular and Irregular Verbs	69
Exercise.....	72
Exercise – Answer Key.....	74
Practice – Practice with Irregular Verbs.....	76
Practice – Practice with Irregular Verbs – Answer Key	78
Day #7	
Teacher Instructions	80
Lesson – Verbs that Give Us Trouble	81
Exercise.....	84
Exercise – Answer Key.....	85
Additional Practice – The New Video Game	86
Additional Practice – The New Video Game – Answer Key	87
Day #8	
Teacher Instructions	88
Lesson – Active or Passive Voice	89
Exercise A	90
Exercise A – Answer Key	91
Exercise B.....	93
Exercise B – Answer Key	94
Exercise C	95
Exercise C – Answer Key	96
Day #9	
Teacher Instructions	97
Review – Answer Fast.....	98
Review – Answer Fast – Answer Key.....	102
Day #10	
Teacher Instructions	104
Final Test – Verbs: Final Test	105
Final Test – Verbs: Final Test – Answer Key	109
Additional Review	
Additional Review #1 – Verbs.....	112
Additional Review #1 – Verbs – Answer Key.....	113
Additional Review #2 – Verbs.....	114
Additional Review #2 – Verbs – Answer Key.....	115

Introduction

TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: VERBS helps students understand how important verbs are in the English language. Through a variety of lessons and exercises, students will learn to identify and use verbs more effectively.

They will learn how carefully chosen verbs can add life to their writing and the importance of consistency and accuracy in verb tense. In addition, students will learn the differences between regular and irregular verbs and how to navigate those differences. The Unit will also cover the advantages of using active voice over passive to strengthen writing. Finally, students will learn how to choose correctly when it comes to troublesome verbs, such as *sit* and *set*.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Verbs takes a practical approach to verb usage, teaching what students most need to know about verbs and how to use them correctly and effectively in speech and writing.

Many students are often baffled and turned off when lessons begin with a great deal of grammatical terminology. These lessons do not emphasize the terminology, except where needed, as in, for example, the differences between *linking* and *helping* verbs. However, some familiarity with subjects, predicates, punctuation, parts of speech, etc., is assumed. In addition, various aspects of verbs such as knowing all the tenses or the emphatic form are beyond the needs of the students for whom these lessons are intended. Other information, such as verb phrases or verbs that could be used as either action or linking verbs (i.e., look, seem, appear, etc.,) are dealt with, but not in great detail.

One aspect of *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Verbs* that is different from the other Units in this series is that Day #5 offers the teacher a choice, depending upon the individual class and its needs:

- 5A. review what has been covered already, along with some assessment possibilities;
- 5B. an overview of additional tenses and how they influence the time factor of a sentence.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Reviewing verbs—what they are, how they are used, and why they are important
3. Reviewing helping and linking verbs and setting the stage for verb tenses
4. Helping students understand what verb tenses are and why they should not needlessly switch tenses
- 5A. Review of the first week of verbs
- 5B. Helping students recognize that changes in verb tense affect meaning and placement in time
6. Helping students understand the difference between regular and irregular verbs
7. Helping students use irregular verbs and troublesome verbs correctly
8. Helping students learn the difference between active and passive voice—and learn to write in active voice for most purposes
9. Reviewing what students have learned about verbs in *10 Days to A+ English: Verbs*
10. Final test



DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess how well students understand verbs and how to use them correctly
- To assess how well students understand the basics of verb tense
- To assess students' ability to use regular and irregular verbs correctly, as well as troublesome verbs, such as sit/set
- To assess how well students can recognize active voice and its superiority over passive voice for most purposes

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give students the pretest, "Verbs."
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, provide a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will complete a quick review of verbs and why they are important. They will learn about verb tense, regular and irregular verbs, and handling troublesome verbs correctly. They will also learn to make their own writing more effective by choosing verbs carefully and writing in active voice.
3. **Lesson.** Present "Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?" You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

While the message of the lesson is important, it is very important that the teacher handle it carefully. While it is true that poor language skills often lead others to think a person is poorly educated or even not very bright, it is important that students understand that such a stereotype isn't necessarily true. Of course, there are brilliant people in the world who have poor language skills, and there are poorly educated people who have brilliant language skills. However, people with poor language skills often encounter limitations in their ability to influence others, to gain respect, and to become successful.

DAY #1: Pretest

Verbs • Part A

Directions: Underline the verbs in the following sentences. Some sentences will have more than one verb, so make sure to underline every verb.

1. Marlon accidentally squeezed the toothpaste on the sink.
2. Those Miller children are shy and avoid other people.
3. Has anyone seen Stephanie?
4. Marguerite photocopied the reference material and gave it to the boss.
5. Have the Estradas arrived for dinner yet?
6. The family will not carry their luggage when they are in the airport on Thursday.
7. Mr. Lopez is really funnier than he seems to his kids.
8. Will you please bring some of your great artichoke dip to the party?
9. The parakeet imitated its owner's voice.
10. Ilya looked unhappy about the arrangements and left the hotel.

Verbs • Part B

Directions: Identify whether the underlined verb in each sentence below is in present tense, past tense, or future tense. Not all verbs are underlined. If a verb is in present tense, write "present" in the blank provided. If it is past tense, write "past" in the blank provided. If it is in future tense, write "future" in the blank provided.

11. _____ Joe will go to the store.
12. _____ The president gave his speech at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.
13. _____ Veronica scowled when her computer crashed.
14. _____ Sylvia absolutely adores her pet ferret.
15. _____ Russ really wants to travel to South America this summer.
16. _____ Jocelyn will come over as soon as she gets off work.
17. _____ Grandpa needed some extra help with his yard last year.
18. _____ Sue accidentally started a fire in the bedroom.

19. _____ Mrs. Yamaguchi finds a lot of bargains when she shops.
20. _____ The house is new.

Verbs • Part C

Directions: Some of the passages below include an unnecessary and incorrect shift in tense, from past to present, for example. If the sentence is correct in the way it uses tenses, put a “C” in the blank provided. If it is incorrect because of a shift in tense, put an “I” in the blank provided.

21. _____ Karina knew she needed to call a plumber when she saw water leaking all over the basement floor. She ran upstairs, looked up plumbers in her area on her computer, and began calling. No one answers. Finally, she reached Alvin’s Trusty Plumbing, and Alvin himself promised to come right over. He did not.
22. _____ Terrence and Midge decide that *Twilight in Manitoba* is just the movie they are in the mood to see. They drive 15 miles, pay for their tickets, and pick the best seats in the house. Then, the projector breaks down. They are not happy at all.
23. _____ Felipe challenged Brent to a game of pool, and Brent was happy to accept the challenge. He suspected that Felipe wasn’t nearly very good. Then, Felipe starts playing, and Brent sees that he is wrong. Brent went home very depressed, but Felipe went home happy.
24. _____ Courtney drove her sister and her dog to a cabin in the mountains, parking in the lot at the base of the mountain and skiing in. They pulled sleds carrying all of their supplies. When they get to the cabin, they see that a tree has fallen across the back of the cabin, crushing it. They turn around and ski back out again.
25. _____ The librarian looks over the top of her glasses and gives the two whispering teenagers a frown. They ignore her. The librarian walks over and tells them to quiet down. They quiet down for a minute, but then start talking again as soon as the librarian leaves. Their voices got louder and louder, when one of the girl’s cell phone rings. The librarian sighs, walks over, and points to the door. “Leave. Now,” she says firmly.

Verbs • Part D

Directions: Place an “I” by each sentence that contains an incorrect verb form and write the correct verb form in the blank. Write C in the blank of any sentence in which the verbs are correct.

26. _____ I’m so happy that the class has chose me as their president!
27. _____ The coach has drove the team so hard that everyone is exhausted.
28. _____ Haven’t you went to pick up some milk at the store?
29. _____ After the seventh hot dog, Nathaniel decided he had eaten enough.
30. _____ In every triathlon, Darin has ran the fastest of all the participants.
31. _____ We could have drank the lemonade, but we wanted Coke instead.

32. ____ Have you wrote your aunt a thank-you note yet?
33. ____ The cooks have flew around the country showing off their special lasagna.
34. ____ The ten-year-old has already blew out the candles on his cake.
35. ____ You would have fell if the dog had not grabbed your shirt sleeve.

Verbs • Part E

Directions: For each sentence below, underline the correct verb in parentheses.

36. Jada has (forgot, forgotten) her gym clothes every day this week.
37. Have you (sang, sung) in the choir every year since 7th grade?
38. The club has (given, gave) a lot of money to charity.
39. The tree house we loved so much has been (torn, tore) down.
40. She could have (went, gone) with Laura's older brother, but he stubbornly decided not to.
41. Paulina is (setting, sitting) by the window, waiting patiently for her date.
42. After Dolores finished cleaning the house, she was exhausted and (lay, laid) down on the sofa for half an hour.
43. Aretha and Donald (set, sat) all the dishes in the drainer to dry.
44. When they saw his paddles wash up on shore, everyone worried that the man in the canoe had (drownded, drowned).
45. Ethan has (laid, lain) his wet boots in the sun to dry.

Verbs • Part F

Directions: Place an "A" beside each sentence that is written in active voice. Place a "P" beside each sentence that is written in passive voice.

46. ____ In the storm, the roof was destroyed.
47. ____ Heinrich plays the tuba in a band.
48. ____ Lizzie watched the Super Bowl with her dad.
49. ____ The witnesses were asked to sign statements about the robbery.
50. ____ An annoying song was played over and over again on the sound system by the restaurant owner.

DAY #1: Pretest • Answer Key

Verbs • Part A

1. Marlon accidentally squeezed the toothpaste on the sink.
2. Those Miller children are shy and avoid other people.
3. Has anyone seen Stephanie?
4. Marguerite photocopied the reference material and gave it to the boss.
5. Have the Estradas arrived for dinner yet?
6. The family will not carry their luggage when they are in the airport on Thursday.
7. Mr. Lopez is really funnier than he seems to his kids.
8. Will you please bring some of your great chocolate dip to the party?
9. The parakeet imitated its owner's voice.
10. Ilya looked unhappy about the arrangements and left the hotel.

Verbs • Part B

11. Future
12. Past
13. Past
14. Present
15. Present
16. Future
17. Past
18. Past
19. Present
20. Present

Verbs • Part C

- 21. I
- 22. C
- 23. I
- 24. I
- 25. I

Verbs • Part D

- 26. I has chosen
- 27. I has driven
- 28. I have gone
- 29. CORRECT
- 30. I has run
- 31. I could have drunk
- 32. I have written
- 33. I have flown
- 34. I has blown
- 35. I would have fallen

Verbs • Part E

- 36. Jada has forgotten her gym clothes every day this week.
- 37. Have you sung in the choir every year since 7th grade?
- 38. The club has given a lot of money to charity.
- 39. The tree house we loved so much has been torn down.
- 40. She could have gone with Laura's older brother, but he stubbornly decided not to.
- 41. Paulina is sitting by the window, waiting patiently for her date.
- 42. After Dolores finished cleaning the house, she was exhausted and lay down on the sofa for half an hour.

43. Aretha and Donald set all the dishes in the drainer to dry.
44. When they saw his paddles wash up on shore, everyone worried that the man in the canoe had drowned.
45. Ethan has laid his wet boots in the sun to dry.

Verbs • Part F

46. P
47. A
48. A
49. P
50. P

DAY #1: Lesson**Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?**

When writers want to suggest that a character is uneducated or not very bright, what is one of the first things they do?

They have the character say something ungrammatical:

“He don’t live here no more.”

“I ain’t telling you none of that.”

“I bringed the money like you ask.”

Audiences get the message.

Why is that? It is because of *assumptions* we have about language. We may not be consciously aware of these assumptions, but they exist in our culture. We expect people who have gone to school to speak and write in certain ways. We expect intelligent people to use a certain kind of language. Like it or not, we associate poor grammar with lack of education or low intelligence—even if we aren’t aware of doing so.

This association may not be fair. It may not be right. It may not even be true most of the time. The association of poor language skills with low education or low intelligence, however, is an association that is widely held. People perceive it to be true.

That brings up the #1 reason why we study language rules in school: Getting an education involves meeting certain expectations, and one of those expectations is learning to use language correctly.

If you hate studying grammar rules, you may be thinking, “Well, I don’t care. It just simply doesn’t matter to me.” That may be true, but what if it *does* matter, someday? What if you are in line for a great job, and strong communication skills will help you? What if you want to change a law in your town, or you want to explain yourself in a court case? What if you want to make a good impression on your future spouse’s parents? What if you simply want to tell others your ideas? Maybe the language you use won’t matter—but what if it does? The truth is that most people, throughout their lives, need to tap into the power of words. If they can use words well, they are ahead of the game. If they can’t, they may have a much more difficult time earning respect for their ideas.

Respect can lead to power. People who can communicate well often have opportunities denied to others. There is power in words. Here are three real-life examples. They are true, though the names have been changed.

Case #1. Sue Atkinson was a passenger on an airplane, and two people brought their 95-year-old father with them to sit in the exit row. The man was clearly having problems both walking and knowing where he was, and it was quite clear that he would be unable to help in an emergency—something that is required of those sitting in the exit row. The flight attendants tried to get him to move, but the people with him were adamant, saying only, “He’s fine.” He clearly was *not* fine, yet no one was willing to make a fuss and have him moved.

Sue was upset that the flight attendants weren't willing to stand up for the safety of the passengers. She wrote a polite letter to the airline, telling what happened and suggesting that flight attendants should be *required* to move people who are clearly not able to assist in an emergency. She received an answer from the airline, as well as a \$100 gift certificate to use for another flight. She has not seen a similar problem with the exit row on any flights, and she travels a lot. Her sensible, well-written letter got results.

Case #2. Ron Tancredo wrote a letter to a college after a terrible experience signing up for a college job fair. The process he experienced turned into a near-riot, with people grabbing informational papers and pushing to the head of the line. He wrote an excellent letter of complaint, suggesting a more sensible way to handle the sign-up process. The college agreed. He received a letter of thanks, and the process was changed.

Case #3. Many years ago, when smoking was allowed nearly everywhere, Karl Osborne decided that his town should ban smoking in restaurants. He was sick of having smoke blown in his face while he ate his hamburgers. He spearheaded a change in the law, and restaurant owners were furious. So were smokers. However, his speaking and writing skills were so polished that he began to gain followers. He didn't yell, as some of the people did. He didn't call names. He simply stated his case, reasonably and clearly. Eventually, to everyone's surprise, the law was passed, largely due to his efforts. It is now one of the town's most popular ordinances.

What's the difference? You may be thinking, if you have something important to say, it doesn't matter how you say it. That belief may be true, to some extent, but the opposite is also true: Readers and listeners often dismiss an individual who speaks poorly, as not knowing what he or she is talking about. For example, imagine that you are a storeowner and receive the following two letters:

Dear owner

i went to ur store yesterday & the person who waited on me wuz rlly rude. i ask her if the socks were cotten and she says she don't care. i jus wanted u to no that my friends and me ain't coming to ur store again cuz the dum sales lady.

Mr. Joe Stern

Dear store owner,

I went into your store on Thursday, November 17, at around 2:00 p.m. to buy some socks. I liked your merchandise, but I had a question for the person who waited on me. I wanted to know if the socks were 100% cotton. She just shrugged her shoulders and said, "Who cares?" She didn't offer to try to find out. She simply acted as if I was an idiot for asking.

Needless to say, I left the store without buying the socks. I know it wasn't going to be a large purchase, but small purchases add up. Also, who knows how much I would have spent next time, if I'd had a good experience? I know that if I owned a store, I would want to know if someone was causing me to lose business. That's why I'm sending you this letter about my experience.

*Sincerely,
Mr. Joe Stern*

Which letter would you take more seriously? Many owners would look at the second and take some action. Many would dismiss the first writer as a crackpot. Maybe they shouldn't, but the truth is that they would. Whether we like it or not, *how* we say things matters. The better you can handle language, the more power you have in your life.

Discussion. Can you think of any examples when good communication skills have led to power—or when poor communication skills have held someone back? The following are some areas to think about:

- candidates for office
- leaders in your school
- teachers and principals
- neighbors
- famous people, either famous now or earlier in history