

Vocabulary Building

Non-action Verbs – Verbs that do not indicate an action in the sentence, but rather, a state of being, desire, opinion, sense, or perception.

Being Verbs – Verbs that describe how/ what the subject of the sentence is like at a particular moment. Being verbs can also be used with action verbs to indicate a continuous, ongoing action.

Subject – Who/what is doing something in the sentence or is being described. Subjects can be people, things, places, ideas, activities, etc.

Continuous Action – An action that takes place over a period of time or is in the process of taking place right now.

Are there more unfamiliar words?

Look up words you don't know on the Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary at www.learnersdictionary.com.

Want More Practice?

There are staff in the Learning Center who would love to help you with your writing!

The College Skills Zone

The College Skills Zone is a great place to engage in conversations that help you understand concepts, especially some basic grammar concepts, and then practice those skills. The College Skills Zone is a place where you can just drop in anytime during open hours.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center assistants are trained to help you with any aspect of the writing process, from understanding an assignment, to brainstorming, to revising your essays. You can drop in during open hours or make a 30-minute appointment for a specific time.

English Language Learner Specialist

A specialist for English Language Learners, Sarah Mosser, is available in the Learning Center during certain hours for drop-in or appointments. Because her schedule varies, it is best to make appointments.

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Linn-Benton
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WRITING CENTER

Grammar

Being Verbs



Go-To Guides

Go-To Guides are designed to help in all areas of the writing process.

A Brief Explanation

There are a few major types of non-action verbs. One of those is **being verbs**.

<u>Present</u>	Singular	Plural
1 st person	I am	We are
2 nd person	You are	You all are
3 rd person	He/She/It is	They are

<u>Past Tense</u>	Singular	Plural
1 st person	I was	We were
2 nd person	You were	You all were
3 rd person	He/She/It	They were

Being verbs have many uses. They are not actions, but rather can describe what/how something or someone is like at a particular moment.

Example: I **am** hungry.

Her face **is** so burned it's red.

They **were** too tired to notice that they missed their turn.

Notice that in the examples, the subject (I, face, or they) is not *doing* anything in the sentence. Rather, the being verb describes the subject's state of being at that moment.

Examples: She **is** a good student.

You **are** super cranky from all your studying.

We **were** good students too when we went to school.

Being verbs, though, can also be used with action verbs to describe continuous actions, whether past, present, or future.

Examples: They **are watching** TV in the other room.

She **was making** a pie for dinner.

In the examples, the being verbs are paired with an action verb to indicate a present or past ongoing action or a future action.

Examples

Present: I **am** anxious for the flight.

Past: I **was** really nervous the last time I flew, too.

Future: I **will be** nervous during the take-off and landing.

Correct: I **am** excited for my vacation next week.

Incorrect: I is excited for my vacation next week.

*Why is the above sentence incorrect?

Present Ongoing: We **are packing** for the trip.

Past Ongoing: We **were sleeping** last night when our dog-sitter called and cancelled.

Future Ongoing: We **are leaving** for the airport at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Correct: We **are going** to Mexico.

Incorrect: We am going to Mexico OR We are go to Mexico.

*Why are the above sentences incorrect?

More correct examples: They **are watching** TV in the other room. She **is making** a pie for dinner. We **are all going** to eat it soon, and we **are** very excited. I **am helping** her clean the kitchen while she makes the pie.

We **were cleaning** the kitchen when we heard a loud noise. Our friends **were screaming** and shouting at the television. Apparently, the other team **was winning**. The other team **was** probably **going** to win the game, and our friends **were going** to be sad for the rest of the night.

I **was** sad the other team **was doing** so well, but there **was** nothing I could do about it. My father, however, **was screaming** at the television, and my uncles **were** practically speechless. Apparently, our team **was** supposed to win this game.

Try it Out!

True or False?

1. T F Being verbs always indicate an action, something that is happening right now.
2. T F Being verbs can be used with action verbs to describe an ongoing action.
3. T F Being verbs have many uses.
4. T F Being verbs are the only types of non-action verbs.

ANSWERS: 1.F 2.T 3.T 4.F

Practice

1. **Circle all the being verbs in the following passages and underline the action verbs.**

A. We are going on vacation tomorrow. I am super excited. My husband is getting ready right now. He is excited, but he's also worried that he will forget something.

B. Last night was a great night. My friends came over for dinner, and because they were late, we were all very hungry, but the lasagna was ready in no time. As we were eating dinner, we were all laughing and telling jokes. My friend Becca was telling a story about her class, and it was very funny.

2. **Fill in the blanks with the correct being verb. If you are not sure what tense to use, look at the context of the sentence. Are there other verbs already in the sentence? What tense are they?**

Today _____ a really long day; it seems like it _____ taking forever. This morning, I _____ so tired, I felt like I could hardly get out of bed. When I got up, my husband _____ already awake, and made some coffee for me. We _____ eating breakfast when he got sick, and had to go back to bed. Now I _____ at work, and he _____ in bed. Tonight, we _____ just going to relax and watch some T.V, so that hopefully he will feel better in the morning.

3. **Write two sentences with being verbs.**
