

The Prose Toolbox Series

VERBS

ADVERBS

**AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF TWO
RELATED PARTS OF SPEECH**

Verbs and Adverbs Summary Sheet

VERBS

MAIN VERBS take **TENSE**—test sentence: “Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.”

Some verbs are **PHRASAL VERBS** (verbs of more than one word): *back up, calm down, cross out, hand over, throw away, try on, wash off*.

Verbs take **VERB SUFFIXES**: *-en, -ize, -ate, -ify or -fy*.

HELPING VERBS are added to **MAIN VERBS** to create **VERB PHRASES**. There are 23 **HELPING VERBS**:

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

In the absence of a true **MAIN VERB**, a **HELPING VERB** can serve as the **MAIN VERB**.

It is often helpful to convert **PASSIVE VERBS** (in passive sentences) into the active form (with the **PERFORMER OF THE ACTION**) to the left:

- **passive**: *The trembling limbs are rustled by the strong wind.*
- **active**: *The strong wind rustles the trembling limbs.*

It is often helpful to convert **BLAND VERBS** (*say, stop*) to **VIVID VERBS** (*chatter, halt*). Also, don't be fooled by **BLAND VERBS + ADVERBS** like “ran swiftly.”

Weaker verb forms that often need replacing with better verbs are the verb *to be* (*is, am, are, was, were*) and the verbs *have, had, and has*. Often these weak verbs can be improved by **PERSONIFYING THE INANIMATE**.

It is often necessary to use the **SUBJUNCTIVE**: *If I were a mermaid.*

The **VERBALS** are **INFINITIVES**, **PARTICIPLES**, and **GERUNDS**—words that originate in the verb family but then convert into non-verb uses.

INFINITIVES (verbs used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs):

- to swat / to sway

INFINITIVE PHRASES:

- to swat flies with a flyswatter
- to sway gently with the breeze

PARTICIPLES (verbs used as adjectives):

- the talking macaw (*present participle*)
- the tainted Spam (*past participle*)

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES:

- talking about his brightly colored feathers
- tainted by the salmonella bacteria

GERUNDS (verbs used as nouns):

- Shouting makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.
- Dionysus tried begging.

GERUND PHRASES:

- Shouting all day long makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.
- Dionysus tried begging for loose change.

ADVERBS

ADVERBS modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

Many **ADVERBS** are simply adjectives with **-ly** added to them: *silently, surely, aparently*.

Here is a list of **non -ly adverbs**:

- **place**: somewhere/anywhere, here/there, in/out, somewhere
- **frequency**: never/sometimes/always, rarely/seldom/often
- **time**: already, just, now/soon/later, then, tomorrow/today/yesterday
- **and others**: fast, well

Some adverbs appear inside verbs: *will rapidly be running* [and] *do not want*. Such adverbs (including *n't*) are not part of the verb.

Adverbs often answer the questions *when? where? how often? and how?*

Adverbs require careful placement: there is a difference between *Miss Scarlett almost flosses every morning* and *Miss Scarlett flosses almost every morning*.

It is often better to delete **INTENSIFIERS**: *very, quite, rather, so, really, too, definitely, awfully, totally, incredibly, particularly, fairly, major, absolutely*.

Adverbs can take the **COMPARATIVE** form (*later, more gentle*) and the **SUPERLATIVE** form (*latest, most gently*).

Clauses beginning with the **SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS** are **ADVERB CLAUSES**. Commonly, **ADVERB CLAUSES** fill either the left-hand side or the right-hand side of a sentence:

- Seven copies of myself will grow inside me because seven is a mystical number.
- Because seven is a mystical number, seven copies of myself will grow inside me.

ADVERBIAL CLAUSES begin with these **SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS**: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*.

Verbs 1: Main Verbs Take Tense

The two most common tenses are *present tense* (something done today) and *past tense* (something done earlier, like yesterday, for example). Therefore, the test sentence “**Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED**” can help us to identify main verbs.

Here are four words: *brilliant*, *dance*, *onion*, *pretend*. Let’s use our test sentence to determine which of these words are verbs:

- Today I brilliant; yesterday I brillianted. (*doesn’t make sense*)
- Today I dance; yesterday I danced. (*makes sense*)
- Today I onion; yesterday I onioned. (*doesn’t make sense*)
- Today I pretend; yesterday I pretended. (*makes sense*)

By using our test sentences, we can determine that *dance* and *pretend* are verbs; *brilliant* and *onion* are not verbs.

Be flexible with the test sentence.

Some verbs are irregular: the past tense form of irregular verbs is not the *-ed* ending. Example: “Today I forget; yesterday I forgot.”

Some verbs can’t literally be performed by “I.” In such cases, try a different pronoun, like “it” for example: “Today it rains; yesterday it rained.”

Exercise 1: Practice using the test sentence. Each of the following sentences contains one main verb. Don’t copy the sentence. Instead, write the test sentence “**Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED**” to demonstrate which word in the sentence is the main verb.

- **Example:** The rat is quenching his thirst in Sumida River.
 - **Answer:** Today I quench; yesterday I quenched.
1. We listen to the night sounds.
 2. In his youth he was captured by bandits.
 3. The monkeys howled in the mysterious swamp.
 4. The waiters share the complexion of a flour tortilla.

Verbs 2: Phrasal Verbs

As a rule, main verbs consist of one single word. However, **phrasal verbs** are exceptions to this rule. Phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus a preposition. Here are a few examples: *back up, calm down, cross out, hand over, throw away, try on, wash off*.

A vast majority of phrasal verbs are created by adding one of these prepositions: *in, out, up, down, on, off*.

Exercise 2: For each of the following, write the two-word phrasal verb only.

- **Example:** I thought of the coarse white flesh packed in like feathers.
 - **Answer:** packed in
1. The matchmaker poured out a cup of water and splashed some in Natasha's face.
 2. We saw footage of state troopers peering into the cars that were backed up for miles on the interstate.
 3. The ambulance at top speed floats down past beacons and brakes speed before entering the crowd.
 4. Rilke speaks of a man who walks outdoors and keeps on walking, because of a church that stands somewhere in the East.
 5. They've taken no notice of the icons, and they sit without praying or taking off their hats.

Verbs 3: Common Verb Suffixes

Some verbs can be recognized by their suffixes. Here are four verb suffixes: *-en*, *-ize*, *-ate*, *-ify* or *-fy*

Exercise 3: For each of the following, identify a verb that ends with a verb suffix. Write that word only, and underline the suffix.

- **Example:** It may **signify** a spiritual awakening and prompt you to enter a monastery.
- **Answer:** signify

1. I soften the shell of my life before that moment of truth appears.
2. I realize that this is a world where anything is possible.
3. I walk in a hometown parade so that I can celebrate a salmon derby.
4. Once you've swept the shelves of spoons and plates, you must also simplify the larder.

Verbs 4: Helping Verbs

Earlier we learned to identify main verbs using the test sentence “**Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.**” Now we’ll turn our attention away from main verbs so that we can study the second category of verbs: *helping verbs*.

There are 23 helping verbs. Our “test” for helping verb is “Is it on the list?” Here is the list:

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

When we add a helping verb to a main verb, we create a **verb phrase**. Verb phrases can be two, three, or four words long.

- **2-word verb phrase:** can walk
- **3-word verb phrase:** will have walked
- **4-word verb phrase:** may have been walking

Note: Helping verbs appear to the left of main verbs.

Note: A phrasal main verb will add one word to the length of the verb phrase. For example, the verb phrase *was being poured out* consists of two helping verb (*was being*) and a two-word phrasal verb (*poured out*).

Exercise 4: For each of the following, write the verb phrase only (one or more helping verbs, plus the main verb). Single underline the helping verbs; double underline the main verbs.

- **Example:** Not only the weak will be brought to their knees.
 - **Answer:** will be brought
1. You think that the poem must have been written for the benefit of someone else.
 2. We shall be saying finally, with tremendous eloquence, “Lead us.”
 3. The poem is the nudge you need to fall headlong into the life that has been waiting for you all along.
 4. The beads and receipts and dolls and vases are cluttering the room.
 5. The gray nest had fallen from the ash tree.

Verbs 5: Active and Passive Verbs

Study these two sentences:

- **active sentence:** A dawn bird's chirp breaks the silence.
- **passive sentence:** The silence is broken by a dawn bird's chirp.

By studying these two sentences, we note the following:

- Though the word order differs, these two sentences say the same thing.
- The concepts **active** and **passive** have nothing to do with how much *action* occurs in the sentence.
- The **passive sentence** contains two extra words: (1) the helping verb *is* and (2) the preposition *by*.

In addition, when we examine the subjects and verbs of the **active** and **passive** sentences above, we notice a curious situation. In the **active** sentence, the subject is *performing* the action of the verb: the *chirp* is doing the *breaking*. But in the **passive** sentence the performer of the verb has been kicked out of the subject position and demoted to the end of the sentence. This is why **active** sentences are *often* preferable to **passive** sentences.

By studying the sentences above, we can create this rule:

- It usually preferable to place **actors** to the left of **actions**.

Examples:

- **example 1:** The trembling limbs are rustled by the strong wind.
- **example 2:** The strong wind rustles the trembling limbs.

The **action** in these two sentences is the **action** of *rustling*. The **actor** (the person or thing performing the action) is the *wind*. In example 1 (the passive sentence), the *trembling limbs* are *not* the **actor**. The *trembling limbs* are not rustling anything. In example 2 (the **active** sentence), the *wind* is the actor. The **active** sentence correctly places the **actor** to the left of the **action**.

In summary, **active** sentences are generally to be preferred because, unlike **passive** sentences, **active** sentences place **actors** to the left of **actions**.

Exercise 5: Each of the following is a **passive** sentence. Rewrite each so that it is **active** instead of **passive**. By studying the examples above, you'll find that you need to *flip-flop* the order of the sentence elements—get the item(s) at the beginning and the item(s) at the end to swap places.

- **example:** The cats were worshipped by the ancient Egyptians.
- **answer:** The ancient Egyptians worshipped the cats.

1. Most of these tracks were made by a fox.
2. The human child was stolen by fairies.
3. The prodigious blasphemies were spoken by the bombing-plane.
4. A desolate heart broke the wings of the dream.

Verbs 6: Vivid Verbs

Some verbs are **bland**; others are **vivid**. **Bland** verbs are overused verbs; they are also less precise than **vivid** verbs.

Say, go, look, and stop are four examples of **bland** verbs. The lists below provide numerous alternatives to these **bland** verbs:

- **say**—*discourse, harangue, chatter, debate, announce, assert, bawl, bellow, cry, holler, sigh, whisper, murmur, nag, repine, wail, squawk*
- **go**—*travel, journey, depart, proceed, retire, withdraw, pass*
- **look at**—*observe, perceive, watch, contemplate, eye, gaze, regard, view, notice, observe*
- **stop**—*arrest, belay, cease, check, halt, stay, desist*

In writing, it is a good idea to replace some (probably not all) of our **bland** verbs with **vivid** verbs. Using a thesaurus makes this task much easier.

Exercise 6: Copy each sentence, except that, in each sentence, replace the **bland** verb with a more **vivid** verb chosen from the lists above. Underline your **vivid** verb.

- **Example:** He said, “I’d love to, Dad, if I could find the time.”
 - **Answer:** He bellowed, “I’d love to, Dad, if I could find the time.”
1. I will go down to the lovely Sur Rivers and dip my arms in them up to the shoulders.
 2. We are running out of the glass rooms with our mouths full of food to look at the sky and say thank you.
 3. Let’s stop for one second, and not move our arms so much.

Verbs 7: Replacing the Verb To Be

The verb *to be* takes the common forms *is, am, are, was, were*. It is a dormant verb that fails to provide action. Though it is often necessary to use the verb *to be*, it is also true that some uses of *to be* can be avoided.

- **with a *to be* verb:** Hercules *is* a great hero.
- **improved:** Hercules *towers* over the other Greeks.
- **with a *to be* verb:** Igraine *was* standing in the rain.
- **improved:** The rain *poured* down on Igraine.

Exercise 7: Copy each sentence, except that, in each sentence, replace the verb *to be* with a more **active** and **vivid** verb. Feel free to alter as many words as are necessary. Underline your **active** and **vivid** verb.

- **Example:** In Mary Oliver’s poetry, the wind is everywhere. (*Make the wind do something more active.*)
 - **Answer:** In Mary Oliver’s poetry, the wind howls all about us.
1. I am alone in the garden, separated from my class. (*Make the “I” do something more active—something that indicates the person’s sadness.*)
 2. Meanwhile the wild geese, which are heading home again, are high above us. (*Make the geese do something more active.*)
 3. We stood by a pond that summer day, and the sun was hot, as though scolded by God. (*Make the sun do something more active.*)
 4. Some might complain that we were cold. (*Make the “we” do something more active—something that indicates their coldness.*)

Verbs 8: Bland Verbs Plus Adverbs

The best way to fix a **bland** verb is to replace that **bland** verb with a better verb. However, merely adding an **adverb** to a **bland** verb does not really solve the word-choice problem. Example:

- Dagwood **walked** through the park.

After writing this sentence, we realize that *walked* doesn't really convey the meaning we want to express. So we add the **adverb** *happily*.

- Dagwood **walked happily** through the park.

Walked happily is a **bland verb + adverb** combination. For most **bland verb + adverb** combinations, a better verb exists.

- Dagwood **skipped** through the park. (Or *pranced* or *gamboled* or *cavorted* or *boogied*.)

Exercise 8:

- *bickered, bolted, crammed, pierced, slashed, squabbled, stomped, tore*

Rewrite each of the following sentences by replacing the **bland verb + adverb** combination with a **vivid** verb from the list above. Underline your **vivid** verbs.

- **Example:** Eleanor walked clumsily down the sidewalk.
- **Answer:** Eleanor stumbled down the sidewalk.

1. Ferdinand *cut* himself *deeply* with his razor.
2. Gretta *ran* across the finish line *swiftly*.
3. Hiram *spoke loudly* when he heard the bad news.

Verbs 9: More Weak Verbs—*Have, Had, and Has*

The verbs *have, had, and has* are similar to the *to be* verbs in that they fail to show any action. At times these verbs are necessary, but at times they can be replaced with more **active** or more **vivid** verbs.

Exercise 9: Rewrite each of the following sentences. In each case, replace the verb *have, had, or has* with a more **vivid** verb. Underline your **vivid** verbs. Feel free to make other word changes or additions as necessary.

- **Example:** The vultures have large wings.
 - **Answer:** The vultures spread their large wings.
1. Igraine had a headache. (*Add some action. What is her head doing?*)
 2. Jezebel has a much-loved teddy bear. (*Add some action. How do we know that she really loves this teddy bear?*)
 3. The rabbits had the head of romaine lettuce. (*Add some action. What are they doing with the lettuce?*)

Verbs 10: Personify the Inanimate

In real life inanimate things just sit there. But in writing we can give these poor inanimate things a little life. By using **vivid** verbs, we can create the impression that the **inanimate** has come to life. Example:

- **inanimate:** The lawn chairs *are* on the lawn.
- **animate:** The lawn chairs *invite* all passersby to enjoy a relaxing moment.
- **inanimate:** The sun *is* in the sky.
- **animate:** The sun *embraces* the earth with its warmth.

Note that the **animate** examples above are actually examples of personification—the giving of human or living qualities to the inanimate or non-living.

Exercise 10: Rewrite each of the following sentences so that the **inanimate** things are personified. In each case, underline your **vivid** verb. Feel free to make other word changes or additions as necessary.

- **Example:** The vault contained all of Scrooge's treasures.
- **Answer:** The vault swallowed all of Scrooge's treasures.

1. A large boulder was in the center of the field.
2. The river was part of the landscape.
3. Many crazy thoughts were in Kreskin's brain.

Verbs 11: Consistent Verb Tense

The rule: *Once you begin in a certain tense, stay in that tense.* What this usually means is:

- start in present, stay in present, or
- start in past, stay in past.

Therefore, if we begin with “Luella **looked** out his window,” we must continue with “She **watched** the rain spatter on the pavement.” We would not say “She **watches** . . .” Why?

Looked is the first verb in the sequence. It is a past tense verb, and it *fixes* the tense of our narrative in the past tense. Conversely, if we had begun with “Luella **looks** out the window,” we would have committed ourselves to writing in the present tense.

Something good to know: When writing papers about literature, use the present tense. Thus, “Winnie-the-Pooh **sings** his Rain Song,” not “Winnie-the-Pooh **sang** his Rain Song.”

Exercise 11: For each of the following write the incorrect verb. Then write the correct verb. You do not need to copy the complete sentences.

- **Example:** Morgan rode his scooter down the hill. He crashes into a dumpster.
 - **Answer:** crashes—crashed
1. Winston opens his diary. He wrote “Down with Big Brother” in letters big enough to be legible across the room.
 2. Oliver is a little tea pot. His handle was short and stout.
 3. Yertle climbed the tower of turtles. From the top, he sees for miles around.

Verbs 12: Subjunctive Mood

The **subjunctive** mood expresses itself in a few ways. We will look at only one of the forms of **subjunctive** mood—the one that is most likely to crop up in our writing. Here’s the rule:

- In the presence of *if*, use *were* instead of *was*.

Using the **subjunctive** correctly lends your writing an air of erudition.

- **unlearned sounding:** If I *was* a barista, I would make the greatest lattes in town.
- **learned sounding:** If I *were* a barista, I would make the greatest lattes in town.

Exercise 12: Rewrite each of the following sentences. Correctly employ the rule of **subjunctive** mood in each. Underline the **subjunctive** verb form.

- **Example:** I don’t think she would go out with you even if hell was freezing over.
 - **Answer:** I don’t think she would go out with you even if hell were freezing over.
1. If I was by the seashore, I would hear the mermaids singing each to each.
 2. It is as if a magic lantern was throwing the nerves in patterns on a screen.

Verbs 13: Verbals—Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

We will now turn our attention to the **verbals**. **Verbals** are words (or word groups) that *begin* in the verb family, but then move elsewhere to function as some other non-verb part of speech.

The Infinitive: Infinitives are easy to recognize: they consist of *to* + a verb. Some **infinitives**:

- *to swat*
- *to sway*
- *to swear*

On one hand, **infinitives** have verb-like properties. For example, *to swat*, *to sway*, and *to swear* are all actions we can perform. On the other hand, they are not used as verbs. Instead of being used as verbs, **infinitives** can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

Infinitive Phrases: Now, if we add some words to our **infinitives**, we create something known as the **infinitive phrase**. Here are our three **infinitives** turned into three **infinitive phrases**:

- *to swat flies with a flyswatter*
- *to sway gently with the breeze*
- *to swear like a sailor*

Note: Don't confuse the **infinitive to** with the preposition *to*:

- **infinitive phrase:** to swat flies with a flyswatter
- **prepositional phrase:** to the world

With an **infinitive**, the word after *to* is always a verb (like *swat*, for example). With a preposition, the word after *to* is not a verb (a word like *the*, for example).

Note: Infinitives look very much like verbs, but **infinitives** do not serve as verbs. Example:

- It wants to open itself, like the door of a little temple.

In this sentence, the word *open* looks like a verb: after all, it is an action that the door can perform. However, the verb in the sentence is *wants*. The **infinitive phrase** *to open itself* is actually a noun in this sentence.

Exercise 13: From each of the following sentences copy the **infinitive phrases** only. Underline all **infinitives**.

- **Example:** What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys.
 - **Answer:** to borrow the car keys
1. To be alive as this song is played is a victory.
 2. Any eruption of the real into our familiar life is bound to feel like an earthquake.
 3. For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings, that then I scorn to change my state with kings.
 4. To walk on despite all the pleas for you to come back is to know that you are free from the clutches of guilt.

Verbs 14: Verbals—The Participle

Verbs used as adjectives are called *participles*.

- Normally we think of *talk* as a verb. But use it to modify a macaw—*the talking macaw*—and *talk* has been transformed to an adjective, hence, a **participle**.
- Normally we think of *taint* as a verb. But use it to modify Spam—*the tainted Spam*—and *taint* has been transformed to an adjective, hence, a **participle**.
- Normally we think of *tempt* as a verb. But use it to modify grapes—*the tempting grapes*—and *tempt* has been transformed to an adjective, hence, a **participle**.

The three participles we looked at above are *talking*, *tainted*, and *tempting*. You'll notice that two different forms are used: the *-ing* form and the *-ed* form. These, in fact, are the two main forms of **participles**:

- All **present participles** end in *-ing*.
- Most **past participles** end in *-ed*.

Note: Remember that **participles** are verbs *used as adjectives*. Don't confuse **participles** with actual verbs. Example:

- The pitcher pounced upon the bunted ball.

In this sentence both *pounced* and *bunted* are *-ed* words. *Pounced* is the actual verb in the sentence; *bunted* is functioning as an adjective, describing the *ball*. Therefore, *bunted* is a participle; *pounced* is not.

Exercise 14: Determine which words in the following sentences are participles. For each, write the participle, then the noun the participle is describing. Also, label the participle either *present* or *past*.

- **Example:** Bathsheba rehearsed the beginning notes of "We Shall Overcome."
 - **Answer:** beginning—notes—present
1. The freshly baked pie sat in the windowsill.
 2. Everyone in the neighborhood hated the barking dog.
 3. Take the fairy's hand and leave this weeping world.
 4. The benched pitcher wished he were better defensively.

Verbs 15: Verbals—Participial Phrases

We have studied **participles**; now we turn to **participial phrases**. (Note that, when referring to phrases, the word *participle* becomes the word *participial*.) We turn **participles** to **participial phrases** simply by adding words to them.

- *Talking* is a **present participle**; *talking about his brightly colored feathers* is a **participial phrase**.
- *Tainted* is a **past participle**; *tainted by the salmonella bacteria* is a **participial phrase**.
- *Tempting* is a **present participle**; *tempting to all who passed by* is a **participial phrase**.

Exercise 15: Identify the **participial phrases** in each of the following sentences. For each, write the phrase (not the complete sentence) and underline the **participle**.

- **Example:** Rehearsing the beginning notes of “We Shall Overcome,” Bathsheba prepared to lead the Civil Rights march.
 - **Answer:** rehearsing the beginning notes of “We Shall Overcome”
1. The pie, baked at 350 degrees, sat in the windowsill.
 2. The baby bawled loudly, knowing she needed her mother’s milk to grow strong and healthy.
 3. The dog, barking continually, got on the nerves of everyone in the neighborhood.
 4. Bunted down the third base line, the ball rolled just foul.

Verbs 16: Verbals—Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

Verbs used as nouns are called **gerunds**. All **gerunds** end with *-ing*.

- Normally we think of *shout* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *Shouting makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse*—and *shout* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a **gerund**.
- Normally we think of *beg* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried begging*—and *beg* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a **gerund**.
- Normally we think of *juggle* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *Juggling is considered the career of the future*—and *juggle* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a **gerund**.

Gerund Phrases: We have seen that **infinitives** can be turned into **infinitive phrases** simply by adding words to the **infinitive**. We have also seen that **participles** can be turned into **participial phrases** simply by adding words to the **participle**. The same principle holds true with **gerunds**. Let's look once again at our examples:

- ***Shouting all day long*** makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse. In this sentence, *Shouting* is the **gerund** and *Shouting all day long* is the **gerund phrase**.
- *When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried ***begging for loose change****. In this sentence, *begging* is the **gerund** and *begging for loose change* is the **gerund phrase**.
- ***Juggling flaming chain saws*** is considered the career of the future. In this sentence, *Juggling* is the **gerund** and *Juggling flaming chain saws* is the **gerund phrase**.

THE SOMETHING TEST: One easy way to test for a **gerund phrase** is to try replacing the phrase with the word *something*. *Something* and a **gerund phrase** are usually interchangeable.

Here are the three samples from above; in each case, the gerund phrase has been replaced by *something*.

- ***Something*** makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.
- *When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried ***something****.
- ***Something*** is considered the career of the future.

Exercise 16: Identify the **gerund phrases** in each of the following sentences. For each, write the phrase (not the complete sentence) and underline the **gerund**.

- **Example:** Magnifying small print with a magnifying glass is a pleasant activity for those with poor eyesight.
 - **Answer:** magnifying small print with a magnifying glass
1. Working for the postal service requires patience.
 2. If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving, perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness.
 3. Listen—put your ear close, and hear chattering of songs that are to come.
 4. It is conceivable that soldiers would resist pushing doll buggies.

Verbs 17: Verbals—Participle Versus Gerund Versus Verb

Problem: Present participles, gerunds, and many verbs end in *-ing*. So how is one to tell the difference between the three? Let's start by focusing on the difference between **participles** and **gerunds**. Here are three test questions:

1. **What part of speech is it?** Participles function as adjectives; **gerunds** function as nouns.
 - **participial phrase:** *Shouting all day long*, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands. [*Shouting* is an adjective describing *Cleopatra*.]
 - **gerund phrase:** *Shouting all day long* makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse. [*Shouting* is a noun—it's the subject of the sentence.]
2. **Is it removable?** Participial phrases are removable; **gerund phrases** are not. If you remove a **participial phrase** from a sentence, you still have a complete sentence; but if you remove a **gerund phrase** from a sentence, what you have left will make no sense.
 - **participial phrase:** *Shouting all day long*, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands. [Remove the phrase; you still have a sentence.]
 - **gerund phrase:** *Shouting all day long* makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse. [Remove the phrase and all you have left is a fragment.]
3. **Try the *something* test.** Gerund phrases can (usually) be replaced by the word *something*; participial phrases cannot.
 - **participial phrase:** *Shouting all day long*, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands. [Replace the phrase with the word *Something*. It sounds awkward.]
 - **gerund phrase:** *Shouting all day long* makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse. [Replace the phrase with the word *Something*. It sounds just fine.]

The above information helps us to distinguish between **participles** and **gerunds**. As for verbs, all *-ing* verb words will be preceded by one or more helping verbs. Examples:

- One **is making** notes under the light.
- We **had been traveling** for days.

In these two examples, the helping verb *is* and the helping verbs *had been* precede the *-ing* main verbs *making* and *traveling*.

Exercise 17: For each, write the *-ing* word only. Label it either *participle*, *gerund*, or *verb*.

- **Example:** We know we are wrecking the world and we are afraid.
 - **Answer:** wrecking—verb
1. Keeping whiskers and claws behind her door is what the cat lady on Howard Street is known for.
 2. Today I am teaching them the alphabet and how to sound words out.
 3. The meadowlarks, veering over the ditch, flit up and away from the car.
 4. The rainbow appears, hanging high on the ends of your wings.
 5. The sunrise is flaring all over the eastern sky.
 6. We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding of the cosmos.
 7. We loved each other as ever, but our lives were moving in different directions.
 8. Whispering in their ears, we give the trout unquiet dreams.

Verbs 18: Double Duty Verbs

We've studied **main verbs** and we've studied **helping verbs**. Now we'll turn our attention to certain **helping verbs** that can function as **main verbs**. The first three bullet points of our **helping verbs** list contains these words:

- *is, am, are, was, were*
- *be, being, been*
- *has, have, had*

In the absence of true **main verbs**, these verbs become the **main verb** by default. **Examples:**

- Gregorio **is hyperventilating**.
- Gregorio **is** a man who enjoys hyperventilating.

In the first example, *is hyperventilating* is a two-word verb phrase: *is* is the **helping verb**; *hyperventilating* is the **main verb**.

In the second example, *is* is followed, not by a verb, but by a noun—*a man*. Therefore *is* is the only verb—and therefore the **main verb**—of that sentence. **More examples:**

- The Riders of Rohan **have slain** the Orcs.
- The Riders of Rohan **have** an advantage over the Orcs.

In the first example, *have slain* is the two-word verb phrase: *have* is a **helping verb**; *slain* is the **main verb**.

In the second example, *have* is followed, not by a verb, but by a noun—*an advantage*. Therefore *have* is the only verb—and therefore the **main verb**—of that sentence. **More examples:**

- The Orcs **have been slain** by the Riders of Rohan.
- The Orcs **have been** cruel to Merry and Pippin.

In the first example, *been* is a **helping verb**. *Have been slain* is a three-word verb phrase.

In the second example, *been* is followed, not by a verb, but by an adjective—*cruel*. Since *have been* is a two-word verb phrase, the word to the left—*have*—is the **helping verb**; the word to the right—*been*—is the **main verb**.

Exercise 18: For each of the following, write the **main verb** only. If the **main verb** is a true **main verb**, do nothing; if the **main verb** is a **helping verb** serving as a **main verb**, place a box around it.

- **Example:** My man downfield is waving his arms.
- **Answer:** waving
- **Example:** My man is downfield.
- **Answer:**

1. The grasshopper is eating sugar out of my hand.
2. The grasshopper is in my hand.
3. They were soldiers, like my sons, cradling fearsome guns.
4. The soldiers were cradling fearsome guns.
5. I am loving these mid-September morns in the northern Rockies.
6. I am most alive on a mid-September morn in the northern Rockies.
7. You have slept your way to improved health.
8. You will have nothing better than sleep.

Adverbs 1: Created from Adjectives

Most adverbs end in *-ly*. Knowing this greatly simplifies our study of **adverbs**.

In many cases, a simple *-ly* addition to an adjective will create an **adverb**. Examples:

- **adjective:** *silent*
- **adverb:** *silently*
- **adjective:** *sure*
- **adverb:** *surely*
- **adjective:** *apparent*
- **adverb:** *apparently*

Exercise 19: Each sentence below contains one *-ly* **adverb**. Write that **adverb** only.

- **Example:** I dimly sense a great change coming.
 - **Answer:** dimly
1. The groves are receiving night, rather than sitting passively as night falls upon them.
 2. For most of us, pain and loss usually prepare the way.
 3. We saw their scorn, but scarcely noticed as they turned back our clocks.
 4. The boxer fiercely strikes the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes.

Adverbs 2: Act as Modifiers

Like adjectives, **adverbs** are modifiers. Whereas adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

But, primarily, an adverb will tell us something about how a certain verb is performed.

Also, adverbs are far more flexible than adjectives, meaning that they can often be moved around within a sentence without breaking any grammatical rules.

Examples:

- Soothing blue skies fill the sky till the sun shines **brightly**.
- I shave her thumbnail down **carefully** so that she feels no pain.

In these two examples, the adverb *brightly* describes the verb *shines* and the adverb *carefully* describes the verb *shave*. Note that in the first example the adverb is directly next to the verb, but in the second example the adverb has moved away from the verb.

Exercise 20: These are the same sentences from the previous exercise. This time, in addition to identifying the adverb, we'll also identify the verb being described. Write the *-ly* adverb, then the verb it describes.

- **Example:** I dimly sense a great change coming.
 - **Answer:** dimly—sense
1. The groves are receiving night, rather than sitting passively as night falls upon them.
 2. For most of us, pain and loss usually prepare the way.
 3. We scarcely saw their scorn, hardly noticed as they turned back our clocks.
 4. The boxer fiercely strikes the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes.

Adverbs 3: Distinguishing from Adjectives

Though the *-ly* suffix is the trademark of **adverbs**, it also appears on some adjectives as well. To distinguish between them, we look to the word being described (or modified). Examples:

- Although the wind blows **terribly** here, the moonlight also leaks between the roof planks of this ruined house.

We note the *-ly* word *terribly*. *Terribly* describes the verb *blows*; therefore, we know that *terribly* is an adverb.

- So take the **lively** air and learn by going where to go.

We note the *-ly* word *lively*. *Lively* describes the noun *air*; therefore, we know that *lively* is an adjective.

- Death arrives **slowly**, leaving without a trace.

We note the *-ly* word *slowly*. *Slowly* describes the verb *arrives*; therefore, we know that *slowly* is an adverb.

- The **lowly** worm climbs up a winding stair.

We note the *-ly* word *lowly*. *Lowly* describes the noun *worm*; therefore, we know that *lowly* is an adjective.

Exercise 21: First write the *-ly* word. Then write the word that the *-ly* word describes. Then write the part of speech of the *-ly* word: either *adverb* or *adjective*.

- **Example:** It swiftly arises around me, spreading the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth.
- **Answer:** swiftly—arises—adverb
- **Example:** We speak through sickly smiles.
- **Answer:** sickly—smiles—adjective

1. My feet were honored in this way by these heavenly socks.
2. The brothers greeted the girl joyfully.
3. Then return to the world, and you may finally walk in the world of Man.
4. Sitting before the oven I hear the orange coils tick the early hour before school.

Adverbs 4: Non -ly Adverbs

Most **adverbs** are *-ly* words; however, there are also some non *-ly* adverbs. Many of the non *-ly* adverbs are listed below:

adverbs of place:

- somewhere/anywhere
- here/there
- in/out
- somewhere

adverbs of frequency:

- never/sometimes/always
- rarely/seldom/often

adverbs of time:

- already
- just
- now/soon/later
- then
- tomorrow/today/yesterday

and a couple others:

- fast
- well

Exercise 22: From the sentences below, write only the non *-ly* adverb and the verb being described.

- **Example:** I protested the weapons build-up and later worked with Navajo uranium miners to gain compensation for cancer deaths.
- **Answer:** later—worked

1. Let us enjoy the moment, though tomorrow we starve.
2. One day, this kind of knowing just happens.
3. Proof lies in the work of Japanese master Basho, whose poems have already endured for three centuries.
4. She took me to her elfin grotto, and there she wept.
5. The tarbrush fell to earth somewhere in Missouri, unnoticed among a herd of Guernsey cows.

Adverbs 5: Adverbs That Appear Inside Verbs

In most cases all the words within a verb phrase are part of the verb. However, if there are any non-verb words within a verb phrase, those words will be **adverbs**.

Will be running is a three-word verb phrase. But what about *will rapidly be running*? The verb tests we've learned will work for each word in the phrase.

- **main verb:** *running*—Today I *run*; yesterday I *ran*.
- **helping verb:** *will*—It's on the list.
- **helping verb:** *be*—It's on the list.

What about *rapidly*? Main verb? Today I *rapidly*; yesterday I *rapidlied*? No: it sounds awkward.

Helping verb? Is it on the list? No: it's not on the list. Therefore, *rapidly* is not a verb—it's an adverb.

Note: Of the adverbs that appear within verbs, *not* is among the most common. However, *not* often appears as part of a contraction. To determine which words in a verb phrase are verbs and which are adverbs, we must *unpack* contractions.

Example:

- I **don't want** them to make my little girl a princess.

First we unpack the verb phrase: *do not want*. The verb in this sentence is *do want*; the word *not* (*n't*) is an adverb.

Exercise 23: Identify the verb phrases found in the sentences below. First write the verb phrase; then write the adverb.

- **Example:** At times the eye of heaven shines too hot, and yet the eye of heaven is often dimmed.
 - **Answer:** is dimmed—often
1. Here on the flanks of the Olympics, the rain will always fall on our parades.
 2. I have silently gazed on the silver, the gold, the cloths, and the silks from Novgorod.
 3. Today she wouldn't know our names. (*First unpack the contraction.*)
 4. The pretense will eventually destroy him.

Adverbs 6: Functions of Adverbs

We have learned that **adverbs** modify or describe the actions of verbs. At this point we'll focus on being more specific about the relationship between adverbs and verbs. One way to do this is to focus on the questions that adverbs answer:

- When? (adverbs of time or frequency)
- Where? (adverbs of place or direction)
- How often? (adverbs of degree)
- How? (adverbs of manner)

Here are some examples:

- **When?** I can **already** tell you think I'm a dragon.
- **Where?** He went on to describe a pencil drawing of young apple trees he had seen **somewhere**.
- **How often?** Their fate was **seldom** held in their own hands.
- **How?** We take our newborn **tenderly** In our arms, making good thoughts.

Exercise 24: For each of the following, write the adverb and the question that the adverb answers. The questions are *when?* *where?* *how often?* and *how?* Each question will be used twice.

- **Example:** I burst into tears on the forecourt, filled suddenly with the pain of his aloneness.
 - **Answer:** suddenly—how?
1. Daily, their radio tells me the news from behind them.
 2. I shall walk softly there, and learn by going where I have to go.
 3. Let us enjoy this moment, though tomorrow we starve.
 4. My father worked like this, making small mounds he'd later gather up in his bucket.
 5. One day, a few months before our parting, we clung to each other like monkeys, weeping helplessly at the seeming madness of it all.
 6. The others wanted to move to Los Angeles where they would rarely call their mothers.
 7. The people push through the streets while I remain here and no one sees me.
 8. To be local was to be welcome anywhere.

Adverbs 7: Modifying Adjectives or Other Adverbs

Till now, our study of **adverbs** has focused on those adverbs that modify or describe verbs. Now we'll spend some time studying adverbs that modify or describe adjectives or other adverbs.

Analyzing adverbs that modify or describe adjectives or other adverbs is a two-step process. Some examples:

- **an adverb modifying an adjective:** He is literally nonexistent.

The pronoun is *he*; the adjective describing *he* is *nonexistent*; the adverb describing *nonexistent* is *literally*. Moving backwards, we jump from *literally* to *nonexistent* to *he*.

- **another adverb modifying an adjective:** It is true, even if unashamedly small.

The pronoun is *it*; the adjective describing *it* is *small*; the adverb describing *small* is *unashamedly*. Moving backwards, we jump from *unashamedly* to *small* to *it*.

There are fewer cases of adverbs modifying other adverbs, but here is an example:

- **an adverb modifying an adverb:** The years pass very quickly with this earth.

The verb is *years*; the adverb describing *years* is *quickly*; the adverb describing *quickly* is *very*. Moving backwards, we jump from *very* to *quickly* to *pass*.

These are the adverbs most commonly used to modify other adverbs: *very*, *so*, *almost*, *too*, *quite*, *not*.

Exercise 25: Use the *moving backwards* pattern demonstrated above. Numbers 1 and 3 contain adverbs modifying or describing other adverbs. So your three-word answer will be formatted as *adverb* → *adverb* → *verb*. Numbers 2 and 4 contain adverbs modifying or describing adjectives. So your three-word answer will be formatted as *adverb* → *adjective* → *noun or pronoun*.

- **Example:** That fire showed me the way to where, waiting for me, was the one I knew so well.
 - **Answer:** so—well—knew
 - **Example:** Big, robust people crouch behind badly cracked pipes.
 - **Answer:** badly—cracked—pipes
1. She very deliberately waited, perhaps for my father to come home.
 2. Sal has been incredibly romantic, the way he's run away from his responsibilities.
 3. Quite recently, I ran my hand over this dangerous animal's side.
 4. The cool yellow of this blouse clashes with the buttermilk heather in my skirt, which makes me slightly queasy.

Adverbs 8: Misplaced Adverbs

Adverbs require precise placement so as not to create confusion or misreading. The simple rule to avoid such confusion is to place all modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify. Example:

- Colonel Mustard read the instructions for removing tartar from his teeth *slowly*.
- Colonel Mustard *slowly* read the instructions for removing tartar from his teeth.

In the first example, the adverb *slowly* is misplaced. *Slowly* does not refer to the proper speed for removing tartar, but to Colonel Mustard's reading speed. Therefore, the second example is correct. Another example:

- Miss Scarlett *almost* flosses every morning.
- Miss Scarlett flosses *almost* every morning.

The first example implies that Miss Scarlett gets close to flossing—she walks into the bathroom and holds the floss in her hands—but she never quite gets around to actually doing it. The second example, therefore, is correct.

The *limiters* are a group of adverbs that can be especially troublesome. Be on the watch for words like *almost*, *barely*, *just*, *hardly*, *only*, and *nearly*.

Exercise 26: For each, use this sentence: *Mr. Green was asked to repair the station wagon.* Then add the word *only* according to the instructions given.

1. Add the word *only* to indicate that no one else would be repairing the station wagon.
2. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green was not ordered to make the repairs; the choice is up to him.
3. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green could not sell the station wagon or dismantle the station wagon or anything else—just repair it.
4. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green is not allowed to repair any other vehicles.

Adverbs 9: Avoiding Intensifiers

One type of **adverb** is the **intensifier**. The most common of these is the word *very*. Study the examples:

- I was **very excited** to be representing the Sweater Club.
- I was **excited** to be representing the Sweater Club.

Do you really feel that the person in the first sentence is far more excited than the person in the second sentence? Probably not.

Intensifiers are devices for adding unearned impact to a sentence. Though they exist, they are often better off left unused. **Intensifiers** leave the reader with a sneaky suspicion that, if we had worded our ideas well to begin with, we wouldn't have needed the **intensifier**.

- **common intensifiers:** *very, quite, rather, so, really, too, definitely, awfully, totally, incredibly, particularly, fairly, major, absolutely*

Note: However, retain **intensifiers** that actually say something. For example, in the sentence *I feel surprisingly feisty today*, the **intensifier** *surprisingly* adds information that would be lost if the word were deleted.

Exercise 27: Rewrite each of the following sentences. In each case, keep all the words of the sentence except one—the **intensifier**.

- **Example:** Scooter was incredibly angry when his traffic ticket arrived in the mail.
 - **Answer:** Scooter was angry when his traffic ticket arrived in the mail.
1. Around the really ancient track marched the army of unalterable law.
 2. The spring and the summer and the winter frost move my very faint heart with grief.
 3. I am rather warm, crossing dazed to sow the doubtful sea with drought.
 4. The razor-tailed wren will definitely pretend he's your friend.

Adverbs 10: Comparative and Superlative Forms

The same **comparative** and **superlative** rules that apply to adjectives will also apply to **adverbs**. Examples:

- Oliver came home *late*. (*Late* is an adverb telling when Hautboy came home.)
- Oliver came home *later* than Fagin. (**comparative**—two people)
- Of all the people who attended the Characters from Dickens reunion, Oliver came home the *latest*. (**superlative**—three or more people)

Adverbs that end in *-ly* are better served by adding *more* and *most*. Examples:

- Anne's novel was *warmly* received.
- Emily's novel was *more warmly* received than Anne's. (of the two)
- Charlotte's novel was the *most warmly* received of all. (of the three)

Well and *badly* are exceptions to the rule. For these adverbs, the **positive**, **comparative**, and **superlative** forms are:

- *well* – *better* – *best*
- *badly* – *worse* – *worst*

Exercise 28: For each of the following, which is the necessary form of the adverb: **comparative** or **superlative**? (If two people or things are being compared, the answer will be **comparative**; if three or more people or things are being compared, the answer will be **superlative**.)

- **Example:** I believe we should apprentice ourselves to whales and dolphins [**eagerly**] than to any human guru.
 - **Answer:** comparative
1. Many girls went with pitchers to the reedy brook, but Lizzie looked at us [**placidly**].
 2. Those of us who stayed behind hold our heads [**proudly**] than those who left the land during the hard times.
 3. It is possible to step into a new life [**gracefully**] than your neighbor.
 4. There are many ways to serve the world, but in being true to that small voice within, you are serving the world [**profoundly**].

Adverbs 11: Adverbial Clauses

Adverbial clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**, listed here:

- *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*

We can take any sentence, add a **subordinating conjunction** to the front of it, and we will have created an **adverbial subordinate clause**. Example:

1. Take a sentence: *the pair had left for points south*
2. Add a **subordinating conjunction** to the front of the sentence: *after*
3. And we get an **adverbial subordinate clause**: *after* *the pair had left for points south*
4. We add this clause to another sentence: *we fetched the bluebird's mistimed egg out of its box*
5. And we get our finished product: *We **fetched** the bluebird's mistimed egg out of its box **after** the pair **had left** for points south.*

Now, let's examine this sentence to see what makes our clause *adverbial*. As it turns out, rather than referring to its own verb (*had left*), the clause refers to the verb in the other portion of the sentence (*fetched*). The clause modifies the verb *fetched* by telling when the fetching was done.

Note: Most sentences that contain **adverbial subordinate clause** are flip-floppable, meaning that the two halves can trade places. Example:

After *the pair **had left** for points south*, we **fetched** *the bluebird's mistimed egg out of its box*. (Also, note the added comma.)

Exercise 29: For each of the following, list three words: the first word of the adverbial clause—the last word of the adverbial clause—the verb being modified or described.

- **Example:** If a man draws a door on a rock, only he will pass through it.
 - **Answer:** if—rock—will pass
1. Though I might stumble under the load, I know that hope is a burden all of us shoulder.
 2. Seven copies of myself will grow inside me because seven is a mystical number.
 3. They hid the bowl and the spoon so that no one else could use them.
 4. When those close to us implore us to stay behind and look to their needs, we must support that dream we know our lives are crying out for.

Verbs and Adverbs—Practice Test

- A. A leaf of grass is no less than the work of the stars.
- B. A stretcher will come to gather us up.
- C. He thrust his hand into the pile of gold, only keeping what his one hand could hold.
- D. His work has been performed by café poets.
1. Which sentence contains a misplaced adverb?
a) A b) B c) C d) D
2. Which sentence contains a one-word “to be” verb?
a) A b) B c) C d) D
3. Which sentence contains a passive verb?
a) A b) B c) C d) D
4. Which sentence contains an infinitive?
a) A b) B c) C d) D
5. Which sentence contains a 3-word verb?
a) A b) B c) C d) D
- XX
- E. I let the cat in because the rain was splattering each window and wall.
- F. I stared, and victory had filled up the little rented boat from the pool of standing wastewater.
- G. When men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.
- H. If you were to find nothing now, you must surely rent an apartment in the City of Death.
6. Which sentence contains an adverb that appears inside the verb?
a) E b) F c) G d) H
7. Which sentence does not contain an adverbial clause?
a) E b) F c) G d) H
8. Which sentence contains an example of personifying the inanimate?
a) E b) F c) G d) H
9. Which sentence contains an example of the subjunctive mood?
a) E b) F c) G d) H
10. Which sentence does not contain a verb of longer than 1 word?
a) E b) F c) G d) H
- I. If you have been spending time with Indians, you’ve discovered how the oral tradition works.
- J. She speaks very clearly in her language of dreams.
- K. Standing in ruins beside the cliffs, the palace called out for our attention.
- L. The museum will be free of charge, open for the pilgrimages of ghosts.
11. Which sentence contains a phrasal main verb?
a) I b) J c) K d) L
12. Which sentence contains an intensifier that could be removed?
a) I b) J c) K d) L
13. Which sentence contains a participial phrase?
a) I b) J c) K d) L
14. Which sentence contains a 2-word verb that features a helping verb doing the work of a main verb?
a) I b) J c) K d) L
15. Which sentence contains a 3-word verb?
a) I b) J c) K d) L
- XX
- M. The rock had sunk more solidly into place than the torn sponge.
- N. The horses in blinders are tired from their tracing concrete circles around Central Park.
- O. When my father worked like this, he would make small mounds that he’d later gather in his bucket.
- P. Colleges might have been missing the opportunity to tap into the students’ street smarts.
16. Which sentence contains a comparative or superlative form?
a) M b) N c) O d) P
17. Which sentence contains a gerund phrase?
a) M b) N c) O d) P
18. Which sentence contains a non -/y adverb?
a) M b) N c) O d) P
19. Which sentence contains an adverbial clause?
a) M b) N c) O d) P
20. Which sentence contains a 4-word verb?
a) M b) N c) O d) P

ANSWER KEYS

Verbs 1: Main Verbs Take Tense

Exercise 1:

1. Today I listen; yesterday I listened.
2. Today I capture; yesterday I captured.
3. Today I howl; yesterday I howled.
4. Today I share; yesterday I shared.

Verbs 2: Phrasal Verbs

Exercise 2:

1. poured out
2. backed up
3. floats down
4. keeps on
5. taking off

Verbs 3: Common Verb Suffixes

Exercise 3:

1. softene
2. realizee
3. celebratee
4. simplifyy

Verbs 4: Helping Verbs

Exercise 4:

1. must have been written
2. shall be saying
3. has been waiting
4. are cluttering
5. had fallen

Verbs 5: Active and Passive Verbs

Exercise 5:

1. A fox made most of these tracks.
2. Fairies stole the human child.
3. The bombing-plane spoke the prodigious blasphemies.
4. The wings of the dream broke a desolate heart.

Verbs 6: Vivid Verbs

Exercise 6:

1. I will go [replace “go” with a vivid verb from the list] down to the lovely Sur Rivers and dip my arms in them up to the shoulders.
2. We are running out of the glass rooms with our mouths full of food to look at the sky and say [replace “say” with a vivid verb from the list] thank you.
3. Let’s stop [replace “stop” with a vivid verb from the list] for one second, and not move our arms so much.

Verbs 7: Replacing the Verb *To Be*

Exercise 7: [suggested answers]

1. I weep [or something to that effect] alone in the garden, separated from my class.
2. Meanwhile the wild geese, which are heading home again, soar [or something to that effect] high above us.
3. We stood by a pond that summer day, and the sun burned [or something to that effect] hot, as though scolded by God.
4. Some might lament that we shivered [or something to that effect].

Verbs 8: Bland Verbs Plus Adverbs

Exercise 8: [suggested answers]

1. Ferdinand slashed [or something to that effect] himself deeply with his razor.
2. Gretta dashed [or something to that effect] across the finish line swiftly.
3. Hiram screamed loudly when he heard the bad news.

Verbs 9: More Weak Verbs—*Have, Had, and Has*

Exercise 9: [suggested answers]

1. Igraine's head throbbled.
2. Jezebel squeezed a teddy bear.
3. The rabbits nibbled the head of romaine lettuce.

Verbs 10: Personify the Inanimate

Exercise 10: [suggested answers]

1. A large boulder sat in the center of the field.
2. The river flowed through the landscape.
3. Many crazy thoughts grew in Kreskin's brain.

Verbs 11: Consistent Verb Tense

Exercise 11:

1. wrote—writes
2. was—is
3. sees—saw

Verbs 12: Subjunctive Mood

Exercise 12:

1. If I were by the seashore, I would hear the mermaids singing each to each.
2. It is as if a magic lantern were throwing the nerves in patterns on a screen.

Verbs 13: Verbals—Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

Exercise 13:

1. To be alive as this song is played
2. to feel like an earthquake
3. to change my state with kings
4. To walk on despite all the pleas for you to come back

Verbs 14: Verbals—The Participle

Exercise 14:

1. baked—pie—past
2. barking—dog—present
3. weeping—world—present
4. benched—pitcher—past

Verbs 15: Verbals—Participial Phrases

Exercise 15:

1. baked at 350 degrees
2. knowing she needed her mother's milk to grow strong and healthy
3. barking continually
4. Bunted down the third base line

Verbs 16: Verbals—Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

Exercise 16:

1. Working for the postal service
2. keeping our lives moving
3. chattering of songs that are to come
4. pushing doll buggies

Verbs 17: Verbals—Participle Versus Gerund Versus Verb

Exercise 17:

1. Keeping—gerund
2. teaching—verb
3. veering—participle
4. hanging—participle
5. flaring—verb
6. unfolding—gerund
7. moving—verb
8. Whispering—participle

Verbs 18: Double Duty Verbs

Exercise 18:

1. eating
2. is
3. were
4. cradling
5. loving
6. am
7. slept
8. have

Adverbs 1: Created from Adjectives

Exercise 19:

1. passively
2. usually
3. scarcely
4. fiercely

Adverbs 2: Act as Modifiers

Exercise 20:

1. passively—sitting
2. usually—prepare

3. scarcely—noticed
4. fiercely—strikes

Adverbs 3: Distinguishing from Adjectives

Exercise 21:

1. heavenly—socks—adjective
2. joyfully—greeted—adverb
3. finally—walk—adverb
4. early—hour—adjective

Adverbs 4: Non -ly Adverbs

Exercise 22:

1. tomorrow—starve
2. just—happens
3. already—endured
4. there—wept
5. somewhere—fell

Adverbs 5: Adverbs That Appear Inside Verbs

Exercise 23:

1. will fall—always
1. have gazed—silently
2. would know—not
3. will destroy—eventually

Adverbs 6: Functions of Adverbs

Exercise 24:

1. Daily—how often?
2. softly—how?
3. tomorrow—when?
4. later—when?
5. helplessly—how?
6. rarely—how often?
7. here—where?
8. anywhere—where?

Adverbs 7: Modifying Adjectives or Other Adverbs

Exercise 25:

1. very—deliberately—waited
2. incredibly—romantic—Sal
3. Quite—recently—ran
4. slightly—queasy—me

Adverbs 8: Misplaced Adverbs

Exercise 26:

1. **Only** Mr. Green was asked to repair the station wagon.
2. Mr. Green was **only** asked to repair the station wagon.
3. Mr. Green was asked **only** to repair the station wagon.
4. Mr. Green was asked to repair **only** the station wagon.

Adverbs 9: Avoiding Intensifiers

Exercise 27:

1. Around the ~~really~~ ancient track marched the army of unalterable law.

2. The spring and the summer and the winter frost move my ~~very~~ faint heart with grief.
3. I am ~~rather~~ warm, crossing dazed to sow the doubtful sea with drought.
4. The razor-tailed wren will ~~definitely~~ pretend he's your friend.

Adverbs 10: Comparative and Superlative Forms

Exercise 28:

1. superlative
2. comparative
3. comparative
4. superlative

Adverbs 11: Adverbial Clauses

Exercise 29:

1. Though—load—know
2. because—number—will grow
3. so that—them—hid
4. When—needs—must support

Verbs and Adverbs Practice Test

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. B
9. D
10. C
11. C
12. B
13. C
14. D
15. A
16. A
17. B
18. C
19. C
20. D

Verbs and Adverbs Final Test

1. D
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. C
7. A
8. B
9. D
10. C
11. C
12. D
13. A
14. B
15. B
16. B
17. A
18. A
19. A
20. D