

Helping Verbs

Definition: helps the main verb express action or a state of being.

Examples:

- can speak
- will learn
- should have been fed

Together, the main verb and its helping verb or verbs are called a verb phrase.

Examples:

- Many students can speak Spanish.
- I will be learning about helping verbs today.

Commonly Used Helping Verbs

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

Some words can be used
as both helping verbs and
main verbs.

Helping Verb:

- I do enjoy the movies.

Main Verb:

- I will do the dishes.

Sometimes a verb phrase is interrupted by another part of speech.

Examples:

- Students should not forget their homework.
- Did you call your friends this weekend?

The word NOT and its contraction, -n't, are adverbs telling to what extent; neither is part of a verb phrase.

Example:

- Students should not forget their homework.

Helping Verbs Song (sung to the tune of “Jingle Bells”)

Helping verbs, helping verbs,

There are twenty-three:

AM, IS, ARE, WAS and WERE

BEING, BEEN, and BE....oh!

HAVE, HAS, HAD, DO, DOES, DID,

SHALL, WILL, SHOULD, and WOULD.

There are five more helping verbs:

MAY, MIGHT, MUST, CAN, COULD.