

Word-Classes in E4AWP

2. VERBS

English has three kinds of verbs:

1. **full verbs** (also called **main verbs** or **lexical verbs**)

- ✓ tell you “what happened” or “what the situation is”;
- ✓ have **regular** and/or **irregular** forms → **verbal paradigms**;
- ✓ can be used **transitively** and/or **intransitively**;
- ✓ have an **active** and a **passive** form.
- ✓ **grammatical collocations** (e.g.: *to aim at + -ing form* or *to + basic form*, *to call for*, *to deal with*, *to focus on*, *to protect against*, *to result in*, *to result from*, *to suffer from*, *to be infected with* and so on ...);
- ✓ **lexical collocations** (e.g.: *to administer a drug*, *to become ill*, *to become infected*, *to develop cancer*, *to develop a vaccine*, *to give sb a vaccine*, and so on);
- ✓ **false friends** (e.g.: *to administer*, *to attend*, *to arrange*, *to expect*, *to occur*, *to pretend*, *to process*, *to realize*, *to recover*, and so on);

2. **auxiliaries**

- ✓ to be (was/were, been), to have (had, had), to do (did, done);
- ✓ are used to make complex verbal structures.

3. **modals** (also called **auxiliary modals**)

- ✓ can, could; may, might; will, would; shall, should; have to, must, need, ought to ... and so on
- ✓ add subjective extra meanings.

Transitive and intransitive uses

Some verbs can be used either transitively [T] or intransitively [I]. Look at the following examples:

1) to breed (bred, bred, breeding)¹

- ✓ Many animals **breed** only at certain times of the year. [I]
- ✓ Highland cows **have been bred** for their meat. [T, passive form]
- ✓ Dogs **have been** selectively **bred** for generations to exhibit specific physical and behavioral traits [T, passive form]
- ✓ Rabbits **are bred** for their long coats. [T, passive form]
- ✓ Greyhounds **were** originally **bred** as hunting dogs. [T, passive form]
- ✓ She **breeds** sheep. [T]
- ✓ They are attempting to **breed** a new disease-resistant type of corn. [T]
- ✓ Many plants **are bred** to withstand drought and use natural resources like water more efficiently. [T, passive form]

2) to grow (grew, grown, growing)²

- ✓ He **grows** roses. [T]
- ✓ They **grow** a lot of wheat in this region. [T]
- ✓ The Guinea pigs **grow** well. [I]
- ✓ My cold **has grown into** bronchitis. [I]
- ✓ Tomatoes **grow** best in direct sunlight. [I]
- ✓ Some of these creatures **grew** to a length of over 12 feet. [I]
- ✓ The land is used to **grow** crops. [T]

¹ Remember the Italian translation of the verb **to breed** in such contexts: (intr.) *riprodursi*; (tr.) *allevare, far accoppiare, selezionare* (una specie animale o vegetale), *coltivare*. Compare it with the verb **to farm**: (tr.) *coltivare, allevare*.

² Remember the Italian translation of the verb **to grow** in such contexts: (intr.) *crescere*; (tr.) *coltivare*.

Warning: pay attention to the differences between English and Italian! Please reflect on the following sentences and the transitive/intransitive use of the verbs in red³:

1) to enter (entered, entered, entering)

- ✓ “Huge concern about increased risk of *peste des petits ruminants* **entering** Europe [...]”;
- ✓ “KBP BioSciences [...] today announced that the US FDA-approved KBP-7026 to **enter** clinical trials for the potential treatment of respiratory diseases such as asthma and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)”;
- ✓ “[...] Drug-resistant strains of bacteria could be fatal if they **enter** the human body through uncooked or improperly cooked food [...]”;
- ✓ “Tuberculosis Among Foreign-Born Persons **Entering** the United States. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Elimination of Tuberculosis [...]”;

2) to suffer (suffered, suffered, suffering)

- ✓ 25% of people who **suffer from** migraines experience vertigo along with their other headache symptoms.
- ✓ Persons experiencing sleep insufficiency are also more likely/susceptible to **suffer from** chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, depression, and obesity, as well as from cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity.
- ✓ Newborns **suffer** the most serious consequences of listeriosis, including pneumonia, a blood infection, and meningitis.
- ✓ Crops **suffered** serious damage as a result of the floods.
- ✓ Declawing may also be performed to protect people, particularly those who are geriatric, diabetic or have compromised immune systems and so may **suffer** life-threatening complications from cat scratches.

Thus, a **transitive verb** is any verb accompanied by a direct object and from which a passive can be formed; while an **intransitive verb** is any verb that indicates a complete action without being accompanied by a direct object and that does not form a passive.

**passive form = auxiliary verb “to be”
+ past participle of a full verb**

³ Some transitive verbs, such as **enter**, **fit**, **have**, **lack**, **resemble**, **suit**, **suffer**, can never be used in the passive voice.