

# Dr. Shirley's Greek Courses

## Grammar

### Introduction to Verbs

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A **Verb** is the action word of a sentence or clause. A clause should have one main verb; it may also have subsidiary verbs.

1. A **Transitive Verb** describes an action which is associated with the Subject and transferred to the Object.  
eg. The dog bit the man. "dog" is the subject, "man" is the object.
2. An **Intransitive Verb** describes an action which does not affect any other person or object.  
eg. The dog barks.
3. **The Verb "to be"**, and similar verbs of **Incomplete Predication**, are used as a **Copula** - to link the Subject to a Predicate Substantive (noun) or Predicate Adjective. eg. become, happen, seem, appear, think, consider, declare. These verbs act rather like an "equals" sign, and are sometimes referred to as **"Equative Verbs"**  
eg. The dog is a Bulldog. The dog is black. The dog became tame.

The **Voice** of a verb indicates the relationship between the verb and its subject.

1. **The Active Voice** : the subject produces the action : eg. The dog bit the man.
2. **The Passive Voice** : the subject receives the action : eg. The man was bitten by the dog.
3. **The Middle Voice** (in Greek) roughly equivalent to the English Reflexive : the subject produces the action, and is closely involved in the result. eg. The dog sits himself down. The man washes himself.

The **Mood** of a verb shows the manner in which the verb functions

1. **The Indicative Mood** is used for statements of fact, or for direct questions. eg. The dog bit the man.
2. **The Subjunctive Mood** is sometimes referred to as the **"Mood of Doubtful Assertion"**; it is used for statements which are doubtful or are contingent upon circumstances. eg. If it be true that . . . . .  
It may also be used for an **Indirect Command, or for Exhortation** . eg. Let's do something . . . (where "let's" is short for "let us") - *it is not known for sure that those addressed will agree to do the action.*  
Modern colloquial English often uses an Indicative in place of a Subjunctive. eg. If it's true . . .
3. **The Optative Mood** (used in Paul's Epistles, but rare elsewhere in the NT) is used to express the wish that something might or might not happen. eg. "Let it not be!" (often translated as "God forbid")
4. **The Imperative** is used for commands, prohibitions, and requests. eg. Give the dog a bone!
5. **The Infinitive** is a **verbal noun** - it can be used as the subject or the object of a sentence.  
eg. (as subject) To study is good. (as object) The students wanted to study.
6. **The Participle** is a **verbal adjective** - In English, the Active Participle usually ends in "-ing" and the Passive Participle in "-ed", eg. barking, running, having, loving, loved. Greek can also use it to indicate the person doing an action, eg. **The one saying** that black is white is a liar. (He who says . . .) **The having gone out cat** wants to come in. (The cat went out and now it wants to come in again.)

There is debate as to whether or not the Infinitive and the Participle should be classed as Moods.

They are included here for completeness, and because their precise classification is difficult.

The **Tense** of a Verb tells us how and when the action took place.

In English, tense is used mainly to indicate the time of the action - Present, Past, Future.

In Greek, the tense also indicates the type of action - whether it is continuous or repeated ("Present", Imperfect), or whether it is completed or took place once (Aorist), or whether it took place in the past but still endures to the present (Perfect) or at the time of reporting in the past (Pluperfect).

**Person** refers to the person involved in the action of a verb :

First Person Singular "I"

First Person Plural "We"

Second Person Singular "Thou", "You"

Second Person Plural "You" "Y'all"

Third Person Singular "He" "She" "It"

Third Person Plural "They"

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