

MAIN VERBS & HELPING (AUXILIARY) VERBS

Besides regular and irregular, verbs are listed as either Main Verbs or Helping (Auxiliary) Verbs. To help you understand how a helping (auxiliary) verb works, picture the following.

A person you never saw before walked up to you and said "I can", your first response would be "This person is a nut". If you are brave enough, you might ask "You can what?"

"I can" as a statement on its own does not make sense. You need another word to complete the sentence. "I can walk", "I can run", "I can help" all make sense, it gives complete information. In these cases "walk", "run" and "help" are the Main Verbs and "can" is the **Helping or Auxiliary Verb**. The helping verb helps the main verb make sense.

Another example of a helping verb is the verb "be". The sentence "I am walking" tells you three important things. First, it tells you who is doing the action ("I"). Second, it tells you what the action is ("walking") and finally, it helps you to understand when the action takes place or the **Tense** of the verb ("am" and the "ing" ending of the verb implies the action is happening now). Helping verbs often tell us when the action takes place.

There are a total of 23 helping verbs. They are:

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

1. Twelve of these verbs, when used as helping verbs, combine with the base or dictionary form only. They are

can	could	did
do	does	may
might	must	shall
should	will	would

Examples

I will work. He can go. We should stop. You may go. They do go.