

## WHAT IS A VERB?

### Definition of a verb:

Verbs are the engines of sentences. That is, verbs tell us what subjects **DO** or what subjects **ARE** or what **HAPPENS** to subjects. In the sentences below, all the capitalized words are verbs:

John **WALKS** for exercise.

(What did John do?)

John **SEEMS** healthy.

(What is John?)

John **SEEMS** healthy because he **EXERCISES**.

(He is what? Because he does what?)

John **GOT MARRIED** when he **WAS** a young man.

(What happened to John?)

John **IS** the father of two children.

(What is John?)

John **VOTED** in every school board election.

(What did John do?)

John **WORKS** at the post office.

(What does John do?)

John **HAD** a bad car accident last year.

(What happened to John?)

### EXERCISE: Underline the verb(s) in each sentence TWICE.

**Example:** John voted in every school board election.

1. John got married before he got hired at the post office.
2. His wife, Sarah, works at the library.
3. Sarah lived in Santa Barbara her whole life.
4. She met John at her cousin's house.
5. Her cousin, Eli, lived in Santa Maria.
6. Her cousin was a good friend of John's.
7. When they got married, Eli was John's best man.
8. Eli was also a postal worker.
9. He helped John to apply for a job with the post office.
10. Now they both work at the Santa Maria Post Office.

### Two Kinds of Verbs: LINKING VERBS AND ACTION VERBS

Sometimes verbs are described as the **ACTION WORDS** in the sentence: verbs tell us what a subject is doing. For example, in the sentences above, the subject "John" is definitely "doing" - - he **VOTES**, **WALKS**, and **WORKS**. In other sentences above, **SEEMS** and **IS** are also verbs. But are they actions? Not exactly. These verbs are called **LINKING VERBS**. Linking verbs link the subject of the sentence to words that describe or identify it.

#### Some Linking Verbs

John **SEEMS** healthy.

John **IS** a postal worker.

John **APPEARS** happy.

John **LOOKS** mad!

John **FEELS** hungry.

(Linking verbs link a subject to an adjective or noun in the predication: "healthy John," "postal worker John," etc.)

#### Some Action Verbs

John **VOTES** in the election.

John **SINGS** in the choir.

John **WASHES** his car.

John **EATS** lunch before he **WALKS**.

John **EATS** the soup for lunch.

(Action verbs tell us what the subject does: John votes, John walks, etc.)

