The simple predicate, or verb, may consist of two or more words. These words are called the **verb phrase**. A verb phrase is made up of a main verb and one or more helping verbs.

A **main verb** can stand by itself as the simple predicate of a sentence.

- Many different people **lived** in the American colonies.
- The colonists **were** hardworking.

Helping verbs help the main verb express action or show time.

- Ships from England would **bring** supplies to the settlers.

**Identifying Verb Phrases**

Underline the verb phrase in each sentence. Include main verbs and helping verbs.

1. The colonists would build a home as quickly as possible.
2. Wood from nearby forests was used for their homes.
3. In later years, some houses were made of brick.
4. Poor settlers could make their furniture from the many trees of the forest.
5. Wealthy families could order fancy furniture from England.
6. The colonists may have brought some tools and household items with them.
7. They did eat some new foods, such as corn.
8. Most colonists would wear rough, homemade clothing called homespun.
9. Adults and children did like games and contests.
10. Sometimes, they might fly a kite.
11. Colonial children might have become good at familiar games such as marbles and hopscotch.
12. You would have recognized some of their favorite playthings—jump ropes, dolls, and other toys.
13. Many families would have been the proud owners of pet cats and dogs.
14. Farm children might have owned a pet lamb or pony.
15. Life in colonial times could be both difficult and fun.
A. Identifying Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

Underline the main verb once and the helping verb twice in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE** I am learning about life in colonial America.

1. Master craftsmen would teach young boys certain skills.
2. The young boys were called apprentices.
3. Some apprentices could learn all about fine furniture.
4. Others might be taught about the printing press.
5. An especially talented boy would be apprenticed to a lawyer or doctor.
6. Some girls were trained as housekeepers or cooks.
7. Many children did attend some type of school.
8. All should have learned daily living skills from their parents.
9. A farm boy would help his father with the chores.
10. A girl’s mother would show her daughter how to spin and weave.

B. Writing Verb Phrases

Add a helping verb to complete the verb phrase in each sentence below.

1. Some families ____________ visit colonial towns such as Williamsburg, Virginia.
2. ________________ you toured the Governor’s Palace there?
3. A visitor ________________ see how people in the colonies actually lived.
4. You ________________ watch craftsmen making beautiful glass bowls.
5. Criminals ________________ placed in stocks in front of the jail.
6. ________________ you ever see pictures of someone with his head and hands locked in the wooden stock?
7. ________________ you remember the uniformed soldiers parading around the town?
8. All the shops ________________ filled with items from colonial times.
9. You ________________ buy a tin whistle or a three-cornered hat.
10. The restaurants ________________ filled with people enjoying delicious colonial foods.
11. ________________ you ever eaten your dinner by candlelight?
12. ________________ you think you would like to visit Williamsburg?
Verb Phrases

A. Writing Sentences Using Verb Phrases

Make a verb phrase by adding a helping verb to each main verb below. Then write a sentence using the verb phrase. Underline the verb phrase.

**EXAMPLE**

made

*Eric has made six baskets in a row.*

1. play

__________________________________________________________________________________________

2. read

__________________________________________________________________________________________

3. seen

__________________________________________________________________________________________

4. run

__________________________________________________________________________________________

5. remember

__________________________________________________________________________________________

6. take

__________________________________________________________________________________________

B. Writing Using Verb Phrases

Use at least three of the following verb phrases in a story. Write the story on the lines below and underline the verb phrases that you have used.

- have discovered
- could make
- might choose
- were making
- would promise
- did invent
- will try
- can break

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