Helping Verbs

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***Helping Verbs***(also known as auxiliary verbs) are **used with another verb** and **help** the main verb **show action**. But **not every sentence** has a **helping verb**!

There are **23**

**helping verbs**

be

do

have

is

does

had

are

did

has

am

were

was

being

been

may

should

will

might

would

can

must

could

shall

It’s **not necessary** to **know all** of them by heart. Just **know** a helping verb **when you see one.** ☺

Ways to **Identify** a **Helping Verb…**

* If there is a **word** in front of the main verb that you know **isn’t** a **noun, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, etc.**, it could be a **helping verb.**

-*ex. She had eaten the pie before lunch. What is had? It’s not a noun or pronoun, or a preposition, or a conjunction, or a regular verb…*

* Helping verbs seem to **back up the main verb**; the sentence **sounds strange without it**.

*-ex. I have come to the meeting. If you take out have, the sentence sounds odd. “I come to the meeting.”*

*-ex. She has been eating. When you take out has and been, you have “She eating.” Does that sound right?*

* Look for words that are **still verbs**, but **don’t convey action**. They **“help” another verb** instead. Look for **“useless” verbs**.

*-ex. He did give her the book. Did is still a verb. But it doesn’t show action. Instead, it helps the main verb, give.*

* Helping verbs **can** also **start a question**.

*-ex. Did you take the medicine? Rearrange the sentence to read “You did take the medicine.” Now, it’s clear that did is the helping verb. Careful, not every question has a helping verb. The sentence “Who are you doesn’t have one.*

Now do these guided problems. Underline the helping verb. The first one has been done for you.

1. I have finished my homework.
2. He speaks faster than she does.
3. Small fish are eaten by big fish.
4. Do you want some coffee?

Hint: Try to rearrange the question.

1. You should have seen a doctor.