

THE ACTION VERB

Recognize an action verb when you find one.

Explode! Scream! Sneeze! Type! Kick! What are these words doing? They are expressing action, something that a person, animal, force of nature, or thing can *do*. As a result, we call these words *action verbs*.

Read the examples below:

In the library and at church, Michele **giggles** inappropriately.

Giggling is something that Michele can *do*.

Because of the spicy Jamaican pepper, David **reached** for his glass of iced tea.

Reaching is something that David can *do*—happily, if his mouth is on fire.

Carlos **watched** pretty women in skimpy bikinis parading on the beach.

Watching is something that Carlos can *do*.

The squirrel **stuffed** its cheeks with acorns.

Stuffing is something that a squirrel can *do*.

The hurricane **stirred** the ocean into a frenzy.

Stirring is something that a hurricane can *do*.

The alarm clock **buzzed** like an angry bumblebee.

Buzzing is something that the alarm clock can *do*.

The coffee maker **gurgled** on the kitchen counter.

Gurgling is something that the coffee maker can *do*.

If you are unsure whether a sentence contains an action verb or not, consider every word in the sentence and ask yourself, “Can a person or thing *do* this?”

Read the sentence below:

During biology class, Omesh napped at his desk.

Is **during** something that *you* can *do*? Can you **biology**? Is there someone **biologying** outside right now? Can you **class**? Do your obnoxious neighbors keep you up until 2 a.m. because they are **classing**? Can you **Omesh**? What does a person do when he is **Omeshing**? Can you **nap**? Bingo! Sure you can! You would probably prefer napping to listening to a biology lecture. Can you **at**? Of course not! Can you **his**? Show me **hising**. Can you **desk**? Demonstrate **desking** for me!

In the sentence above, there is only one action verb: **napped**.

