

Essential Verbs for ESOL Level 1 and Level 2

Verb (base)	Short definition	Past simple	Past participle	Present participle (-ing)	Gerund (-ing)
agree	have the same opinion; accept a suggestion	agreed	agreed	agreeing	agreeing
allow	give permission	allowed	allowed	allowing	allowing
answer	respond to a question	answered	answered	answering	answering
apply	make a formal request	applied	applied	applying	applying
arrange	organise plans or an appointment	arranged	arranged	arranging	arranging
arrive	reach a place	arrived	arrived	arriving	arriving
ask	request information or help	asked	asked	asking	asking
attend	go to an event, class or meeting	attended	attended	attending	attending
avoid	stay away from; prevent	avoided	avoided	avoiding	avoiding
believe	think something is true	believed	believed	believing	believing
book	reserve a place, ticket or service	booked	booked	booking	booking
borrow	take and use, intending to return	borrowed	borrowed	borrowing	borrowing
bring	carry to a place	brought	brought	bringing	bringing
build	make by putting parts together	built	built	building	building
buy	purchase	bought	bought	buying	buying
call	telephone; speak to	called	called	calling	calling
cancel	stop an arrangement	cancelled	cancelled	cancelling	cancelling
carry	hold and take from one place to another	carried	carried	carrying	carrying
change	make different; replace	changed	changed	changing	changing
check	look at carefully; verify	checked	checked	checking	checking
choose	select	chose	chosen	choosing	choosing
clean	make something not dirty	cleaned	cleaned	cleaning	cleaning
close	shut; finish	closed	closed	closing	closing
compare	look for similarities and differences	compared	compared	comparing	comparing
complain	say you are unhappy about something	complained	complained	complaining	complaining
confirm	state that something is correct or true	confirmed	confirmed	confirming	confirming
continue	keep going	continued	continued	continuing	continuing
cook	prepare food using heat	cooked	cooked	cooking	cooking
cost	have a price	cost	cost	costing	costing
create	make something new	created	created	creating	creating
decide	make a choice	decided	decided	deciding	deciding
deliver	take goods to a place	delivered	delivered	delivering	delivering
describe	say what something is like	described	described	describing	describing
discuss	talk about a topic	discussed	discussed	discussing	discussing
divide	split into parts	divided	divided	dividing	dividing
download	copy data from the internet or a device	downloaded	downloaded	downloading	downloading

drive	control a car or other vehicle	drove	driven	driving	driving
earn	get money for work	earned	earned	earning	earning
email	send a message electronically	emailed	emailed	emailing	emailing
encourage	give support or confidence	encouraged	encouraged	encouraging	encouraging
enjoy	take pleasure in	enjoyed	enjoyed	enjoying	enjoying
explain	make something clear	explained	explained	explaining	explaining
fill	make full; complete a form	filled	filled	filling	filling
find	discover; locate	found	found	finding	finding
finish	complete	finished	finished	finishing	finishing
follow	go after; obey instructions	followed	followed	following	following
forget	fail to remember	forgot	forgotten	forgetting	forgetting
give	provide	gave	given	giving	giving
help	assist	helped	helped	helping	helping
improve	make better	improved	improved	improving	improving
include	make part of a group	included	included	including	including
increase	become or make larger	increased	increased	increasing	increasing
inform	tell someone officially	informed	informed	informing	informing
invite	ask someone to come	invited	invited	inviting	inviting
join	become part of	joined	joined	joining	joining
keep	continue to have; not lose	kept	kept	keeping	keeping
learn	gain knowledge or skill	learnt	learnt	learning	learning
leave	go away from a place	left	left	leaving	leaving
lend	give temporarily for someone to use	lent	lent	lending	lending
listen	pay attention to sounds	listened	listened	listening	listening
live	have your home in a place	lived	lived	living	living
look	direct your eyes; watch	looked	looked	looking	looking
lose	misplace; not win	lost	lost	losing	losing
meet	see someone at an arranged time	met	met	meeting	meeting
need	require	needed	needed	needing	needing
offer	say you will give or do something	offered	offered	offering	offering
open	unlock; start	opened	opened	opening	opening
order	ask for goods or services	ordered	ordered	ordering	ordering
pay	give money for something	paid	paid	paying	paying
plan	decide in advance	planned	planned	planning	planning
practise	do repeatedly to improve a skill	practised	practised	practising	practising
prefer	like one thing more than another	preferred	preferred	preferring	preferring
prepare	get ready	prepared	prepared	preparing	preparing
prevent	stop something happening	prevented	prevented	preventing	preventing
prove	show something is true	proved	proven	proving	proving
provide	give what is needed	provided	provided	providing	providing

receive	get	received	received	receiving	receiving
recommend	suggest as a good choice	recommended	recommended	recommending	recommending
reduce	make smaller or less	reduced	reduced	reducing	reducing
register	sign up; record your details	registered	registered	registering	registering
remember	keep in your mind	remembered	remembered	remembering	remembering
repeat	say or do again	repeated	repeated	repeating	repeating
replace	put something new instead	replaced	replaced	replacing	replacing
report	give information formally	reported	reported	reporting	reporting
request	ask for something politely or formally	requested	requested	requesting	requesting
respond	reply	responded	responded	responding	responding
return	go back; give back	returned	returned	returning	returning
save	keep for later; not waste	saved	saved	saving	saving
search	look for carefully	searched	searched	searching	searching
send	cause to go to someone	sent	sent	sending	sending
share	use or give to others	shared	shared	sharing	sharing
show	let someone see	showed	shown	showing	showing
sign	write your name to agree	signed	signed	signing	signing
solve	find an answer to a problem	solved	solved	solving	solving
spend	use money or time	spent	spent	spending	spending
start	begin	started	started	starting	starting
study	learn about a subject	studied	studied	studying	studying
suggest	put forward an idea	suggested	suggested	suggesting	suggesting
support	help; give assistance	supported	supported	supporting	supporting
teach	help someone learn	taught	taught	teaching	teaching
tell	give information in words	told	told	telling	telling
travel	go from place to place	travelled	travelled	travelling	travelling
understand	grasp the meaning	understood	understood	understanding	understanding
use	employ for a purpose	used	used	using	using
visit	go to see a place or person	visited	visited	visiting	visiting
wait	stay until something happens	waited	waited	waiting	waiting
work	do a job; make effort	worked	worked	working	working
write	produce words in text	wrote	written	writing	writing