



Verbs

Background Information

A **verb** is a word that shows action or occurrence or a state of being. It tells what something or someone was doing, is doing, or will do. A verb, like the hot sphere called the sun, brings life to nouns and is the source of all energy. It is like a bright red ball in the hands of a child — it is never still. This is why in Montessori a large red sphere represents the verb and when analyzing grammar on paper, a large red circle is used. Once the students have been given the first verb activity, they can learn its symbol. The NAMC blackline masters contain words and worksheets pertaining to verbs.

At this level, students will work with verbs in the **indicative mood**, which expresses a factual statement or asks a question (e.g., I walk the dog. Where did you go?). They will also become familiar with the **imperative mood**, which gives a command (e.g., Walk the dog). It is not necessary for the students to know the terms “indicative” or “imperative,” although students will become

familiar with the term “command” in the activities.

Students will also work with tenses. A verb’s **tense** indicates when an action or state occurs in time. The **present tense** indicates that the action is taking place now, the **past tense** indicates that the action has already taken place, and the **future tense** indicates that the action will take place at a later point in time. For the most part, students will work with the present and past tenses at this level.

Students will also discover that not all kinds of verbs show physical action or action that can be seen:

- Verbs that show activity in the mind are called **verbs with internal energy**. Examples of verbs: think, imagine, plan, contemplate. Examples of sentences containing a verb with internal energy: She is thinking about her cat. He plans to go to that movie. In each of these sentences, the verb shows the internal energy of what the subject is doing.
- Verbs that link the subject with the predicate and show state of being are called **linking verbs**. Examples of linking verbs: feel, seem, become, sound, look, taste, is, are. Examples of sentences containing a linking verb: I feel fine. The rain sounds loud. The plate looks dirty. In each of these sentences, the verb links the subject with the subject’s state of being.

Teachers may wish to refer to the Background Information in Simple Sentence Analysis to review relevant terms such as subject, predicate and object.

ACTIVITY 1

Getting to Know Verbs

Purpose

To become familiar with the verb and its function and to learn its symbol.

Material

Grammar solid symbols for noun and verb—the black pyramid and red sphere.

Box of grammar symbols.

Eight classroom objects. Examples: metal inset, scissors, ruler.

Red coloring pencil.

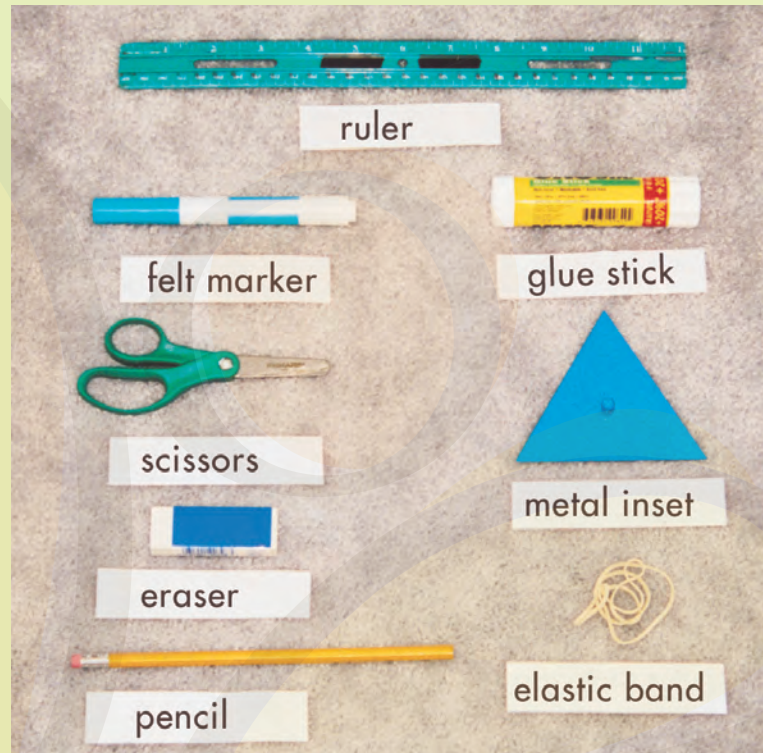
Slips of white paper.

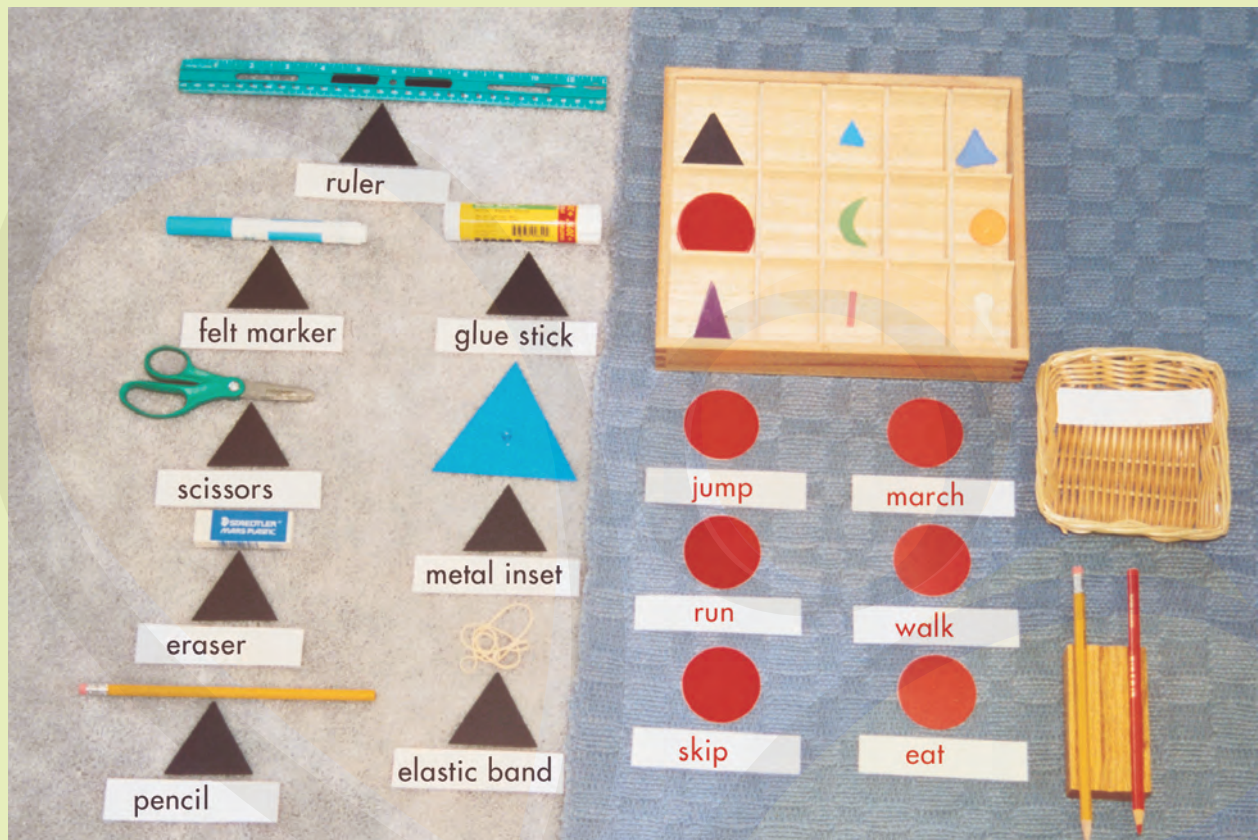
Impressionistic verb chart (from the NAMC blackline masters).

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1 and review if needed in Year 2.
- Announce that the students will have an opportunity to investigate another part of speech: verbs.
- Arrange the classroom objects on the mat.
- Invite the students to take turns naming each object.
- As the students name the objects, print the words in pencil on slips of white paper.
- Invite the students to take turns matching names to the appropriate objects.
- Using a red coloring pencil, print the word “jump” on a slip of paper.
- Invite a student to read the word and perform the action.
- Place the slip of paper separately from the objects.
- Repeat the above three steps, using a different word each time (e.g., march, skip, eat), until each student in the group has been given a turn.





- Ask a student the following question: “Where is the ruler?” The student will likely point to the ruler on the mat.
- Continue asking each of the students to find an object and point to it on the mat.
- Ask students the question: “Where is the jump?” The student will not be able to say where the “jump” is.
- Ask the students to show you a few other action words (e.g., skip, eat). They will not be able to do so because action words (verbs) are not concrete objects (nouns).
- Explain to the students that nouns can be matched to objects on the mat, but action words cannot be matched to any objects.
- Explain to the students that words that indicate an action, such as clap, jump, and walk, are called verbs.
- Give the students plenty of opportunity to come up with other examples of verbs.
- Now ask the students what shape is the sun. (A ball, a sphere.) Then ask what happens to coal when it is set on fire. (Burns, becomes red hot.)
- Show the students the black pyramid. Does it move easily? (No, it has a flat bottom, so it is stationary.) Explain that nouns are like that too. They do not express movement, only persons, places or things.

- Show the students the red sphere. Let it roll around to show movement. Explain that like the sun that gives life to all things and a ball that naturally moves about, verbs are words that give life and movement to nouns. Verbs are red because that is what happens to coal (nouns) when it is set on fire.
- Present the impressionistic verb chart (from the NAMC blackline masters). Describe how it shows the verb radiating energy on the noun family.
- Explain that there are not enough red spheres for every verb, so the students will use large red circles instead. Show the students the symbols.

- Encourage the students to take turns placing the proper symbols above the words on the mat.
- Ask the students to record each word and its symbol in their journals.

Extensions

- Make a list of five or more action verbs that relate to a particular kind of activity, such as sports (e.g., skate, swim, jump, run, drive). Draw the symbol for verbs above each word listed.
- Look in a favorite story for five or more sentences that contain action verbs. Copy them into the journal, then draw the symbol for verbs above each verb.

ACTIVITY 2

Learning About Simple Command Verbs

Purpose

To become familiar with basic verb commands.

Material

Grammar box IV.

Filling box IVA.

Box of grammar symbols.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1 and review if needed in Year 2.
- Invite a student to a mat on which all of the materials are placed.
- Announce that today the student will further explore verbs.
- Remove the cards needed (set IVA) from filling box IVA. Shuffle the cards so that they are not in the proper order and invite the student to sort the cards by placing them in the appropriate compartments of grammar box IV.
- Choose a rectangular phrase card and place it on the mat. Ask the student to read aloud the phrase and reproduce the first phrase using the small individual word cards found in the compartments of grammar box IV:



Open the book

Shut the book

open the book

- Invite the student to place the correct grammar symbol above each word.
- Ask the student to read aloud the phrase again and perform the action, then rearrange the small word cards. One combination will read: the open book. Point out that the order of the words changes the intent of the phrase. (Some will not make sense.)
- Define and discuss the term “command” and the use of verbs to indicate a command.
- Place the labels back to their original order and invite the student to remove the verb card “open” and replace it with the verb card “shut.”

- Have the student read aloud the new phrase and perform the action. Make sure that the correct grammar symbol is above the correct word.

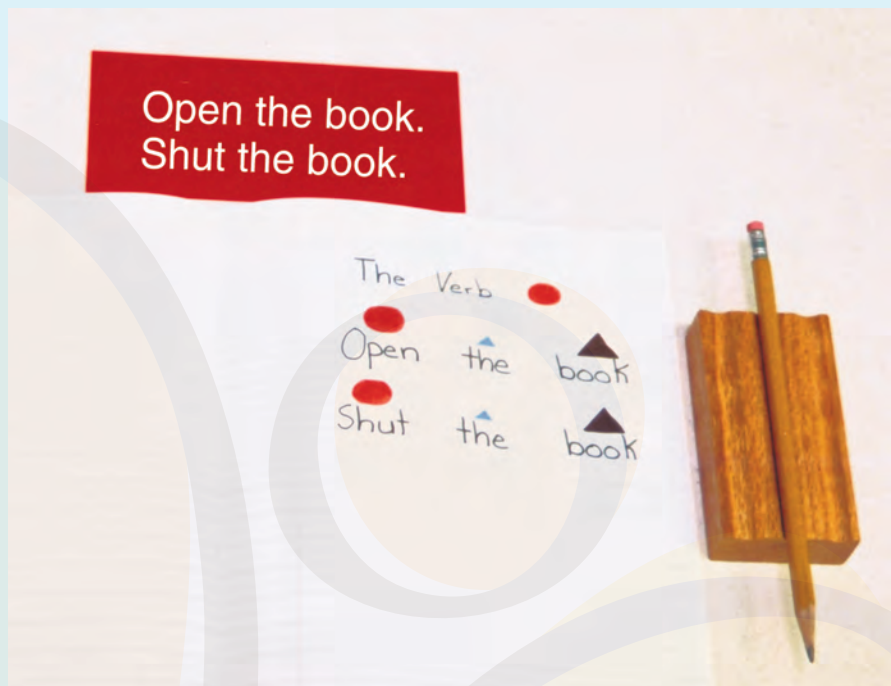
- Review with the student that the words “open” and “shut” are action words and are called verbs. Then do the steps for a three-period lesson: This is... Show me.... What is this?

- Ask the students to record the words from the rectangular phrase card in their journals and draw the appropriate grammar symbol above each word.
- Continue to present the five remaining verb filling boxes in the same manner as the previous activity, giving small grammar activities when appropriate. The boxes include the following:

IVA — simple commands with direct object

IVB — simple commands with direct object and adjectives

IVC — simple commands with direct objects and commands with opposite actions



IVD — simple commands with direct objects and commands with opposite actions

IVE — simple commands with direct objects and related actions

IVF — 33 intransitive verbs (for ages 9–12)

Extension

- Play the game, Simon Says. Invite one student to be Simon, who will give verb commands to the other students to perform. For example, when Simon says, “Simon says jump,” the other students jump. (If they do not jump, they are out and sit down.) However, if Simon simply says, “jump,” without first saying “Simon says,” then the students who do not jump are safe and the ones who do are “out.” Take turns being Simon.