Rationale: There are three types of verbs which you will encounter on an everyday basis: action, linking, and helping. Each of these verbs affects the structure of a sentence differently. For example, subject/verb agreement (a common type of error to appear on the SAT) is affected by the type of verb in the sentence; thus to make sure your subjects and verbs agree, you need to be able to identify what type of verb, or predicate, is in a particular sentence.

Definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Verbs</th>
<th>A verb that expresses a physical or mental action. What is actually being done in a sentence. Action verbs indicate past or present.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking (or State-of-Being) Verbs</td>
<td>A verb which links the subject of the sentence to a complement (either a predicate noun, or a predicate adjective).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping Verbs</td>
<td>A verb which comes before the main verb of the sentence and extends the meaning or conveys a more complex (rather than just past and present) sense of time.</td>
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Action Verbs:

In order to identify action verbs, ask the following questions:

Identify the verbs: “What is happening in the sentence?” or “What is the action in the sentence?”

Can that verb be substituted for am, is, or are and does the sentence still sound logical? If the answer is no, you have an action verb on your hands; if yes, you have a linking verb.

Example: She tasted the beef stew.
If you replace “tasted” with “is” you get: She is the beef stew. Unless something along the lines of Sweeney Todd has happened, this sentence does not make sense. Therefore, “tasted” is an action verb here.

Example: The beef stew tasted wonderful.
If you replace “tasted” with “is” you get: The beef stew is wonderful. In this case, the sentence makes grammatical sense, although it may or may not be true. Therefore, "tasted" is a linking verb here.

Exercise 1: Identify and underline the action verbs in the following sentences. Note, not all of the verbs will be action verbs.

1. Max runs home.
2. Max ran home.
3. Max is a dog, and he loves his name.
4. Ms. Tuttle does not want to write sentences about dogs, but she can think of nothing else.
5. Ms. Tuttle believes that teaching grammar is an honor, especially when she does so in front of Ms. Ballard.
6. HSPVA is a fabulous school; we have won many awards in the past.
7. In the not so distant past, Ms. Ballard taught Ms. Tuttle during Ms. Tuttle’s junior year of high school; Ms. Ballard was just as amazing then as she is now.
8. Making up sentences is a difficult task, but it is a task that is worthwhile.
Linking Verbs:

The following verbs are frequently linking verbs: any form of the verb be [am, is, are, was, were, has been, are being, might have been, etc.], become, and seem. These verbs connect the subject of the sentence to a complement—either a predicate noun or a predicate adjective.

Predicate Noun ➔ renames the subject of the sentence.
Predicate Adjective ➔ an adjective which follows the linking verb and describes the subject of a sentence.

Example: She is a woman. She is beautiful.
Woman=a predicate noun        beautiful=a predicate adjective.

BUT: She is a beautiful woman.
Woman=a predicate noun, beautiful=an adjective (which modifies "woman" not "she," so it is not a predicate adjective)

Some verbs have multiple personalities, in that they can be either action or linking verbs. Consider the following: appear, feel, grow, look, prove, remain, smell, sound, taste, and turn. Sometimes these verbs are linking verbs; sometimes they are action verbs.

To determine if a verb is an action verb, replace the verb in question with the verb “is” or “are” (as shown above).

Exercise 2: Identify and underline the linking verbs in the following sentences. Note, not all of the verbs will be linking verbs.

1. You are a funny man.
2. He is not a funny man because he does not make me laugh.
3. One of the funniest men I know is he.
4. I was feeling sad and then my puppy, Max, came over to see me and licked my face.
5. Love is all you need, as the Beatles would say.
6. Sometimes I ask my family for example sentences, but they rarely help me.
7. Rain can be beautiful, but pouring rain is horrid.

Helping Verbs:

Helping verbs are verbs that come before the main verb, or the verb conveying the action of the sentence. Helping verbs do just what they sound like - they help verbs by making them complete. More specifically, helping verbs can help a verb to tell us exactly when something occurred in time and refine the meaning of a sentence by setting the mood or tone.

Before we continue with examples, here is a list of the most common helping verbs in the English language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>has</th>
<th>could</th>
<th>should</th>
<th>does</th>
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<tr>
<td>will</td>
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<td>were</td>
<td>be</td>
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<td>been</td>
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So how do helping verbs work?

Example I:
Mary completes her homework.
Mary completed her homework.
Mary does complete her homework.
Mary did complete her homework.

In the first sentence, Mary is doing the action (completing her homework) right now. In the second sentence, Mary does the action of completing her homework in the past, but exactly when is unclear. In the third sentence, it is clear that Mary does, on a regular basis, complete her homework, but in the fourth sentence the meaning changes. Mary did complete her homework. The word 'did' gives us the idea that Mary completed her homework recently.

Example II:
Jim completes two courses before he graduates.
Jim must complete two courses before he graduates.
Jim might complete two courses before he graduates.

There is a vast difference between the meaning of the three sentences above which is simply based upon the choice of either using only an action verb, the helping verb 'might', or the helping verb 'must.' The first indicates that Jim is currently completing two courses, but tells little else. The second indicates that Jim has to complete the courses, while the last says that completing the courses is optional and may or may not happen.

Example III:
'To be' verbs - am, is, are, was, were, be, being, and been - can either be linking verbs or helping verbs, but there is a difference.

I am going to the store.

In this sentence, 'am' is a helping verb, and the complete verb in the sentence is 'am going.' Now contrast this sentence with this one:

I am glad.

In this sentence 'am' is a linking verb which connects the subject, "I", with the adjective "glad" to show that the subject is in the state of being glad.

Exercise 3: Identify and underline the helping verbs in the following sentences. Note, not all of the verbs will be helping verbs.

1. Max is a dog.
2. Max could be the name of a cat, but it is my dog's name.
3. Boomer might be jealous that I have been writing all these sentences about Max.
4. It would seem that I am still stuck on writing sentences about dogs.
5. I would love to write about something else too.
6. If you would give me suggestions for topics, I would write about them!
7. What movies have you seen recently?
8. I really ought to make more time to watch films with my dogs.
Exercise 4: Label all of the verbs in the following sentences. Action verbs = AV, linking verbs = LV, and helping verbs = HV. Note: some of the words which "look" like verbs are actually verbals (verbs acting like participles, gerunds, or infinitives).

1. Once upon a time, there was (LV) a child who liked (AV) to pretend (*I) he could (HV) fly (AV).
2. In his dreams, he would (HV) fly (AV) over mountains, lakes, and streams.
3. He was (LV) a very smart kiddo.
4. His parents worried (AV) because they thought (AV) that he wanted (AV) to leave (I) them.
5. He loved (AV) them.
6. The boy did (HV) not want (AV) to leave (I) his parents.
7. He just loved (AV) the idea of flying (G); he loved (AV) the freedom that he experienced (AV).
8. One day, when he was (HV) dreaming (AV), he dreamed (AV) so completely that reality fell (AV) away.

TO BE CONTINUED...