

# Main and Helping Verbs

Verbs that are made up of more than one word are **verb phrases**. In a verb phrase, the **main verb** names the action. The **helping verb** helps tell the time of the action. Some common helping verbs are *has, have, had, am, is, are, was, were, do, does, did, can, could, will, would,* and *should*.

- The main verb is always the last word in a verb phrase. (Animals *are losing* habitats.)
- There may be more than one helping verb in a verb phrase. (We *should have saved* more wetland habitats.)
- Helping verbs such as *is* and *are* show that action is happening in the present. (Forests *are cut* down for wood.) *Was* and *were* tell that the action happened in the past. (Once millions of acres of forest *were standing* in this area.) *Will* tells that the action is happening in the future. (Trees *will disappear* if we don't conserve them.)

**Directions** Underline the verb phrase in each sentence.

1. For years, people have given names to their pets.
2. Our dog is named Groucho.
3. Pets can perform fascinating tricks.
4. Groucho has entertained us for years.
5. He could have been a standup comic.
6. Sometimes he will walk on his hind legs.
7. You should see his stubby tail.
8. No one can resist his floppy ears.

**Directions** Find the verb phrase in each sentence. Write the helping verb on the first line and the main verb on the second line.

9. We should respect wild animals.  
should \_\_\_\_\_ respect \_\_\_\_\_
10. They are sharing the planet with us.  
are \_\_\_\_\_ sharing \_\_\_\_\_
11. They can frighten us at times.  
can \_\_\_\_\_ frighten \_\_\_\_\_
12. Most of them are frightened by us too.  
are \_\_\_\_\_ frightened \_\_\_\_\_