

# Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

A **verb phrase** is a verb that has more than one word. The **main verb** shows action. A **helping verb** shows the time of the action. In the following sentence, *telling* is the main verb, and *are* is the helping verb.

The people are telling stories.

The helping verbs *am*, *is*, and *are* show present time. *Was* and *were* show past time. *Will* shows future time. The helping verbs *has*, *have*, and *had* show that an action happened in the past. In the following sentences, *had* and *will* are helping verbs.

He had told that story before. He will tell that story again.

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

1. Native Americans had told interesting legends.
2. They were explaining the world around them.
3. I have heard legends about the sun and the moon.
4. In some stories, animals are talking like people.
5. Someday I will entertain you with the stories.



**Directions** Look at the underlined verb in each sentence. Write *M* if it is a main verb. Write *H* if it is a helping verb.

6. I am writing a legend.
7. I have set the story in a forest.
8. The flowers are talking to the trees.
9. The huge trees will care for the little flowers.
10. You will hear my story soon.

    M      
    H      
    M      
    M      
    H