

1000 Verbs to Write By

by Deanna Carlyle

All the writing advice in the world can't replace good tools and lots of practice. This is why I've compiled the following list of over a thousand action verbs. I needed a handy, printable reference tool that didn't strain my eyes or my wrists. Try it for yourself sometime. It works.

For "walked" or "ran"

lumbered
plodded
scurried
sidled
slink/slunk
proceeded
wended
scuttled
went on his way
shuffled
scuffed
scuffled
stumbled
shambled
waddled
wobbled
scooted
slouched
scrambled
scampered
minced
trotted
strolled
sauntered
ambled
marched
stepped

paced
roamed
roved
meandered
shadowed
pursued
trekked
continued on
drifted past/along
strayed
glided along
strode
stalked
stomped
strutted
swished
swaggered
stamped
tramped
trudged
traipsed
trod/treaded/trodden
limped
hobbled
lurched
staggered
tripped
crawled
crossed
traversed

inched across
hurtled
galloped
charged
darted
advanced
approached
bushwhacked
chased
climbed
crept along, crept
away
sneaked/snuck
tiptoed
stepped lightly
pussyfooted
dashed
danced
pranced
descended
ascended
dodged
edged
eluded
emerged
entered
evacuated
escaped
evaded
fled

flitted
flew
hailed off
groped his way
launched across
scaled
lunged
moved
paraded
passed
patrolled
plowed
prowled
propelled
pursued
raced
sailed
rushed
sidestepped
skidded
skipped
stole
stomped
steered
swerved
veered
listed
trampled
ushered
waded
wandered
hiked
withdrew
ambulated
perambulated
absconded
trailed after
bolted
tore
tore along

made rapid strides
covered ground
sprinted
careered
scudded
hastened
raced
hurried
jogged
cantered
loped
tripped
took flight
decamped
drifted

For "reacted"

reeled back
rocked back
flushed
blanched
blushed
scowled
nodded her consent
nodded his
agreement
smiled
grinned
grimaced
fell silent
shrugged and said
admitted with a nod
shook his head
beamed
smirked
simpered
listed
tilted
swayed
keeled over

flinched
shivered
sniffed
blinked
retracted
sighed
exhaled
inhaled
flicked
flung
reclined
shifted
relaxed
swallowed
pouted
looked + adj.
yielded
hesitated
made no attempt to
frowned
made no answer
fell silent
paused
stared
gaped
started
startled
slackened
reclined
drew back
stepped back
stiffened
resisted
retreated
raised an eyebrow
cocked her head to
one side
put her head to one
side
tilted her head

chuckled
yawned
laughed
snickered
giggled
stifled a yawn
stifled a laugh
took a deep breath
glanced off
glared
shrugged
devoid of emotion
grinned
sneered

For "said"

uttered
mumbled
drawled
parroted
echoed
said half-aloud
snarled
blurled
moaned
muttered
murmured
cooed
whispered
crooned
hollered
shrilled
sassed
prompted
questioned
demanded
queried
replied
suggested
responded

sang out
coffed
screamed
yelled
yelped
shouted
inquired
chirped
squealed
squeaked
asked herself
asked
assured
commanded
cried out
exclaimed
advised
announced
growled
stuttered
stammered
instructed
told
jeered
scolded
lamented
mocked
objected
questioned
roared
speculated
snapped
spat
stated
whined
jabbered
prated
prattled
gibbered
cackled

gabbled
sputtered
blathered
rambled on
rattled on
maundered
digressed
sermonized
preached
came out with
declaimed
pontificated
harangued
ranted
rhapsodized
gushed
spouted
let slip
enlightened him
pointed out
chatted
revealed
boasted
crowed
vaunted
bragged
disparaged
belittled
notified
addressed
blabbed
nattered
bantered
yakked
whispered
wondered aloud
rejoined
retorted
replied
recited

repeated
remarked
came out with
conveyed
declared
summoned
imparted
mentioned
added
put before
revealed
let out
divulged
disclosed
made known
vented
aired
breathed
betrayed
recited
predicted
advanced
averred
avowed
avouched
assumed
imagined
professed
claimed
purported
insinuated
cited
named
offered
proposed
pleaded
imputed
implied
asserted
expressed

pledged
ascribed
affirmed
professed
admitted

For "jumped"

vaulted
leapt/leaped
pounced
startled
flinched
sprang
lunged
launched
jerked
jolted
erupted
exploded
shot from

For "took"

drew
withdrew
pulled out a
picked
selected
chose
plucked
removed
snatched out
scooped up
rooted out
snatched
trapped
took up
raised
picked up
hoisted
set upright

elevated
seized
prized open
wrenched
wrested
produced
extracted
extricated
accepted
fetched
grabbed
snatched
took hold of
jimmied
gathered
grasped
gripped
fingered
nabbed
packed
ransacked
appropriated
swiped
snared
dragged
acquired
obtained
gained
procured
garnered
gleaned
pilfered
lowered
took down
tore down
swapped

For "pulled"

pulled out
removed

took out
extracted
produced
tugged
extricated
lugged
drew
dragged
yanked

For "pushed"

propelled
ballasted
set in motion
drove
trundled
shoved
thrust
pressed forward
made one's way
squeezed through
roused
prompted
forged ahead

For "put"

stashed
placed
posed
posited
plunked down
mounted
positioned
stationed
set before
dropped
crammed
stuffed
stuck
lodged

plopped
plunked
parked
stationed
planted
perched
inserted
lay
set
set upright
stood on end
upended
deposited
consigned
relegated
strapped
tossed
threw
flung
lobbed
hurled
heaved
cast
slapped onto
draped
dunked
eased
shifted
interposed
installed

For "looked, saw"

glared
glanced off
regarded
made out
descried
remarked
had in sight
glowered

squinted
shot him a look
fixed her with a stare
sighted
ogled
cast a glance
his eyes begged her
to amplify
gazed
gaped
spotted
surveyed
turned an eye on
looked upon
distinguished
fixed her gaze on
noted
recognized
identified
took a look
took a glance
stared
leered
scowled
scanned
peered
squinted
gaped
noticed
observed
considered
watched
viewed
took in
studied
examined
inspected
scrutinized
perused
sized up

took stock of
skimmed
glanced through
flipped through
perceived
discerned
beheld
watched for
looked on
eyed
detected
contemplated
kept in sight
held in view
stood guard
kept watch
monitored

**For "thought,
remembered"**

wondered
asked herself
pondered
noticed
reflected
struck her as
entertained the
notion
held in one's mind
It occurred to her
It came to her
realized
knew
she considered.
she considered this.
he was tempted to
brought to mind
he was taken with
the idea that
she reasoned

understood
considered
went over
reviewed
pictured
featured
imagined
pretended
hoped
feared
envisioned
deliberated
envisaged
called up
conjured up
conceived of
fancied
allowed the conceit
judged
suspected
intended
expected
planned
concentrated
mused
ruminated
recalled
mullied over
brooded over
projected
anticipated
concluded
esteemed
took heed
kept in mind
guessed
supposed
formed an image of
conjured
hatched

fabricated
fashioned
formulated
concocted
reasoned that
turned it over in her
mind
flirted with the idea
recollected
bore in mind
deduced
inferred
thought back to
put her in mind of
called to mind
reminded her of
acknowledged
weighed
reconsidered
thought better of

**For "felt, seemed,
showed, looked
like"**

sensed
had the impression
understood
detected
seemed
appeared
betrayed
indicated
betokened
foretokened
revealed
bespoke
suggested
signified
connoted
hinted at

alluded to
implied
intimated
presaged
portended
forewarned
disclosed
displayed
lay open
made manifest
exposed
bared
struck her as
looked as if
looked like
had the look of
had every
appearance of
had the earmarks of
resembled
sounded like
exhibited
evidenced
showed
manifested
emblematic of

For "touched"

clutched
pawed
gripped
grasped
took hold of
adjusted
felt
manipulated
maneuvered
twiddled
palpated
palmed

handled
thumbed
rummaged through
caressed
fondled
stroked
grazed
rubbed
tugged
squeezed
scratched
pinched
patted
tapped
tamped
rapped
brushed
bedaubed
dappled
dabbed
swept across
scraped
glanced
alighted
pressed
wrung
kneaded
shoved
gouged
grazed
prodded
ticked
trapped
jabbed
poked
pressed
probed
goaded
twisted
wedged

pried
prized open
pry/pried
pulled
pushed
primped
preened
rattled
pumped
mangled
massaged
felt
flattened
smoothed
scooped up
flicked
flipped
flogged
fondled
groped
handled
held
knifed
mauled
tapped
drummed
wiggled
worked
stubbed
scoured
scrubbed

For "had, held"

bore
exhibited
showed
displayed
betrayed
wielded
carried

was furnished with
contained
wore
sported
spanned
suspended
grasped
gripped
clutched
contained
toted
possessed
retained
embraced
evinced

For "hit"

beat
socked
bumped
clapped
thumped
lashed
pummeled
punched
rammed
crashed
thwacked
slapped
smacked
pumped
impacted
attacked
hacked
swiped
swung
trounced
tackled

For "was, were"

stood
sat
took up
perched
lay
hung
took place
contained
spanned
loomed
occupied
remained
stayed
persisted
befell (happened)
bechanced
occurred
happened

For "sat"

slumped
eased into
lowered himself
sank into
sat himself
was seated
plopped down
crouched
squatted
hunkered down
roosted
perched
settled
straddled
sat astride
sat bestride
reposed
leaned
reclined

lollod
lounged
sprawled
lodged

For "stood"

got to his feet
jumped up
rose
rose to his feet
got up
remained upright
held herself erect
stationed herself

For "smelled"

got scent of
sensed
sniffed
detected
snuffled
snorted
inhaled
scented
snuffed
breathed in
savored
perceived
discerned
reeked
stunk
assaulted the nostrils

For "tasted, drank"

savored
relished
nibbled at
tried
sipped
gulped

took a deep swallow
chewed
ingested
ruminated
sampled
sank his teeth into
bit into
crunched
melted
licked
slurped
chugged
smacked
suckled
sucked
swigged
swilled
chomped
ground
munched
gnawed
rended
quaffed
imbibed
tipped
nipped
supped
drained
washed down
swilled down
guzzled down
lapped up
soused
quenched

For "heard"

overheard
caught
detected
picked up

perceived
apprehended
eavesdropped
listened
listened in
gathered
heard tell of
strained her ears
harked
harkened
attended to
took heed of
took in
gave audience to
gave an ear to
lent an ear to
heard him out
within earshot
out of earshot

For "lie down, lay"

reclined
eased onto
flopped onto
lay prone
lollid
luxuriated
lay prostrate
lay recumbent
lay back
rested
reposed
lazed
sprawled
lounged
slouched
slumped

For "entered"

stepped inside

went in
came in
sailed in
burst in
set foot in/on
broke in
forced her way in
intruded
penetrated
passed into

For "left, exited"

ran off
walked off
went out
departed
retreated
decamped
deserted
repaired
retired
withdrew
quit
took off
fled
sallied forth
bowed her way out

For "turned"

wheeled around
twisted to one side
whirled about
rotated
spun on her heels
pivoted
revolved
swiveled
reeled
trundled
circled

edded
swirled
sheered
veered

shifted
divagated
angled off
shunted

Essential Tools for the Wordsmith

The Describer's Dictionary by David Grambs. What my list does for verbs, Grambs' does for adjectives. And how! 400 pages' worth.

The Oxford-Duden Pictorial English Dictionary. Do you know what it looks like but not what it's called? Nearly 1000 pages organized by domain. Includes extensive index.

The Facts on File Visual Dictionary, by Jean-Claude Corbeil. Similar to the Oxford-Duden but with fewer, more detailed entries.

The Macmillan Visual Dictionary. Similar to the Oxford-Duden but with fewer, more detailed entries. In color.

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