

## What Makes a Verb Strong and How to Use Them?

Verbs are commonly referred to as the "action" words and a "strong verb" refers to specific action words that create an image in the reader's mind.

As a writer or speaker, we want to utilize strong verbs to not only entertain the audience but also to create a more accurate account of what we are talking about.

Using strong verbs allows us to be more direct in our language and eliminate wordiness.

While there are a plethora of strong verbs, **weak verbs** are usually in the form of "**to be**" verbs such as (**am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been**). Saying this, we do not want to completely eliminate "to be" verbs, but we want to be conscious of our usage.

We can write, *she went to the store...* which make me think of [this](#).

or

we can utilize a stronger verb and write, *she sprinted to the store* where I think of a more vibrant image like [this one](#).

In essence, switching one or two key verbs can transfer your writing from adequate to profound.

Here's a list of strong verbs that can help a paper come alive:

### SOME STRONG VERBS

|             |            |            |            |          |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| distinguish | refute     | expose     | exist      | present  |
| inquire     | accomplish | represent  | express    | base     |
| resemble    | symbolize  | influence  | regard     | act      |
| reflect     | consider   | contradict | value      | educate  |
| appear      | process    | transform  | analyze    | undergo  |
| impact      | discuss    | preserve   | suffer     | struggle |
| personify   | challenge  | eradicate  | abolish    | embody   |
| convey      | exhibit    | demand     | offer      | believe  |
| supply      | presume    | assume     | experience | impress  |
| emerge      | evoke      | portray    | display    | organize |
| develop     | claim      | state      | argue      | evolve   |

|             |            |             |           |           |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| note        | encourage  | describe    | reveal    | define    |
| serve       | outline    | incorporate | achieve   | delegate  |
| administer  | streamline | operate     | create    | establish |
| tackle      | persuade   | expedite    | project   | involve   |
| consolidate | supervise  | maintain    | recommend | coach     |
| prioritize  | upgrade    | install     | launch    | solve     |
| design      | manage     | promote     | overcome  | deliver   |

By using strong verbs, we can make a paper or dialogue stronger. It will not only be more entertaining, but it will be more concise and detailed.

SOURCE: [HTTP://WHATELSE.PBWORKS.COM/W/PAGE/12202441/STRONG-VERBS#STRONGVERBS](http://whatelse.pbworks.com/w/page/12202441/strong-verbs#strongverbs), [HTTP://PRTL.UHCL.EDU/PORTAL/PAGE/PORTAL/WC/FILES/TIPSHEET%20USING%20STRONG%20VERBS%20-%20A](http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/wc/files/tipsheet%20using%20strong%20verbs%20-%20a)

## Strengthening Phrases

Oftentimes we can condense and strengthen sentences by editing strings of prepositional phrases and using a strong verb instead. By placing emphasis on the main verb of the sentence we can make a weak sentence strong.

Let's take a look at two examples:

### Example #1

**Weak:** I was a manager of a group of six people.

**Strong:** I managed a six-person group.

Notice how the highlighted words have been omitted and the strong sentence is much more condense and concise, which should be the goal of our writing.

### Example #2

**Weak:** She was responsible for collecting all the data for the school project.

**Strong:** She collected all the school project data.

The highlighted words above are taken out and the sentence is re-worded to make it more charged.

SOURCE: [HTTP://PRTL.UHCL.EDU/PORTAL/PAGE/PORTAL/WC/FILES/TIPSHEET%20USING%20STRONG%20VERBS%20-%20A](http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/wc/files/tipsheet%20using%20strong%20verbs%20-%20a)

## Conclusion

Verbs are the words that can make a paper appear livelier and we should try to use them when appropriate. We need to be conscious to avoid pretentious language by keeping the verb choice appropriate to our audience.

Try to avoid the passive voice by keeping "to be" verbs to a minimum.

Think about the central message of the sentence and if there is a way of saying it with a better verb that gives more life to the central object in the sentence.