

**Substitute:** Sometimes a good replacement just pops into your brain. Substitute the "to-be" verb with a more specific verb.

Example: "That cherry pie sure *is* good."

That cherry pie sure \_\_\_\_\_ good.

**Rearrange:** Start the sentence differently to see if this helps eliminate a "to-be" verb.

Rearrange and change the words as necessary.

Example: "The monster *was* in the dark tunnel creeping."

"Down the dark tunnel \_\_\_\_\_ the monster."

**Convert:** Change another word in the sentence into a verb. Look for a noun or adjective that you can convert to a strong verb.

Example: "Charles Schulz *was the creator* of the Peanuts cartoon strip."

"Charles Schulz \_\_\_\_\_ the Peanuts cartoon strip."

**Combine:** Look at the sentences before and after the one with the "be" verb to see if one of them can combine with the "be" verb sentence, eliminating the "be" verb.

Example: "The child *was sad*. The sensitive young person *was feeling* that way because of the news story about the death of the homeless man."

"The news story about the death of the homeless man \_\_\_\_\_ the sensitive child."

**Drop -ing:** Change an -ing verb (a participle) to a regular verb (an infinitive).

Example: "You should *be asking* her for help."

"You should \_\_\_\_\_ her for help."

**Remove:** Drop unnecessary words or phrases.

Example: "What she hoped to find *was* a new best friend."

"She \_\_\_\_\_ to find a new best friend."

**Show vs. Tell:** Write a more descriptive sentence(s) that shows what you mean rather than tells what you mean.

Example: "The girl *was* happy to get a new puppy."

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