

**LANGUAGE LINK****Rikki-tikki-tavi**  
**Rudyard Kipling**

Pupil's Edition page 21

**Choosing Specific Verbs**

Many words in the English language have similar meanings—some general, some more specific—but no two words mean exactly the same thing. In an action story, **specific verbs** add an element of interest and liveliness that may not exist with more common verbs. As you read the following passage, notice Rudyard Kipling's deliberate and effective use of vivid verbs, which have been italicized.

"Then he *was battered* to and fro as a rat is shaken by a dog—to and fro on the floor, up and down, and round in great circles, but his eyes were red and he held on as the body *cartwhipped* over the floor, upsetting the tin dipper and the soap dish and the flesh brush, and *banged* against the tin side of the bath."

A verb is a word used to express action or a state of being.

	Action Verbs	Linking Verbs
<b>General</b>	run, talk	is, may be
<b>Specific</b>	trot, chatter	grow, taste

Carefully selected verbs create visual images in the mind of the reader. In the example above, for instance, the verbs *was battered*, *cartwhipped*, and *banged* create more interest than if the author had used *was thrown*, *rolled*, and *bit*.

**EXERCISE A Recognizing Verbs**

Underline five verbs in the following passage from "Rikki-tikki-tavi." Double-underline any you find particularly vivid.

"One day, a high summer flood washed him out of the burrow where he lived with his father and mother and carried him . . . down a roadside ditch. He found a little wisp of grass . . . there and clung to it till he lost his senses. When he revived, he was lying in the hot sun in the middle of a garden path, very dragged indeed, and a small boy was saying: 'Here's a dead mongoose. Let's have a funeral.'"

**EXERCISE B Using Active Verbs**

Each of the following verbs is from "Rikki-tikki-tavi." On the lines provided, use each verb in an original sentence.

- swayed

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

2. coil

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3. trot

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4. sprang

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5. creep

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6. sobbed

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7. shrieked

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8. fluttered

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9. crush

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10. clucking

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