

Permission Verbs

Permission verbs express authority to complete an action. Most verbs are semi-modals. With the exception of let (which is a regular verb), permission verbs must be followed by an infinitive form. The “be” part of each verb must conjugate to the subject and can be changed to express tense.

Verb	Use	Example
Be supposed to	Strong suggestion	<i>I am supposed to go to the shops later</i>
	Expectation unlikely to happen	<i>It is supposed to rain later today</i>
	Indication from others	<i>She is supposed to be the best doctor there is</i>
Be allowed to	Permission from another person (informal)	<i>I am allowed to go shopping tomorrow</i>
Be permitted to	Permission from authority (formal)	<i>I am permitted to build a new house</i>
Be able to	Power from another person	<i>I am able to get into the house because she gave me the key</i>
	Ability	<i>I am able to speak 4 languages</i>
Let	Permission from another person (informal)	<i>I will let him go the shops later</i>

- △ The expression “What’s that supposed to mean?” expresses surprise, shock and disagreement.
- △ Allow and permit can give permission with the structure subject + verb + object + to + infinitive. Let can do so with subject + verb + object + infinitive.
- △ Watch out with lets and let’s.
- △ Watch out with suppose and supposed.