


Transitive & Intransitive Verbs

A Quick Grammar Guide
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Verbs

- ◆ Tell *what is happening*
- ◆ Tell *what has happened*
- ◆ Tell *what is going to happen*
- ◆ Tell what condition *exists, has existed, or is going to exist*
- ◆ Tell what a noun or pronoun *does*

Transitive Verbs

- ◆ Must be completed by a **noun** or a **pronoun object**
- ◆ The noun or pronoun that completes the verb by receiving the action of the verb is called the *object complement* or *direct object*

The tourist **lost** his *map*.
The tourist **lost** his *bags*.
The tourist **lost** his *son*.

The tourist **lost** *it*.
The tourist **lost** *them*.
The tourist **lost** *him*.

Direct object or
object complement

Direct object or
object complement

Transitive Verbs

Object form
(him, her, them, it)

- ◆ A *pronoun object* must be in object form.
- ◆ The *subject* and *object* of a transitive verb are never the same.

The manager saw *him*.

Carol wrote the *article*.

The *tourist* lost his *map*.

James caught the *ball*.

subjects

objects

Linking Verbs

- ◆ Link the subject to the completing word.
- ◆ Must be completed by a noun or a pronoun.
- ◆ Completed by a word that refers to or renames the subject.
- ◆ Completing word can be a noun, a pronoun, or adjective.

Linking Verbs

- ◆ Concerned with a **state of being**

or

- ◆ Concerned with a **condition.**

Our class **was** quiet last week.

The fee **seems** reasonable.

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Linking Verbs

- ◆ Connect a **noun** to a word that refers to the noun or renames it.

The **sky** is *blue*.

Ms. **Brady** is my *teacher*.

Linking Verb

- ◆ The verb *to be* is often used as a linking verb.

Forms of
to be:

- am
- are
- was
- were
- will be
- has been

I *am* your friend.
You *are* the best
employee.
She *was* helpful.

They *were* late.
Kelly *will be* there.
Adele *has been* ill.

Linking Verbs

- ◆ When the linking verb is completed by a **pronoun**, the pronoun must be in the **subject or nominative form**.
- ◆ The word that completes the linking verb refers to the **subject**.

The caller was **he**.
The speaker will be either **she** or **her sister**.

Timeless Tip

In spoken English, *the caller was him* and *the speaker will be her* are acceptable; prefer traditional forms for writing.

Linking Verbs

- ◆ A noun or pronoun that completes the linking verb by renaming the subject is called a *predicate noun* or *predicate nominative*.
- ◆ A noun, pronoun, or adjective that occurs in the predicate and refers to the subject is called a *subject complement*.

Linking Verbs vs. Helping Verbs

- ◆ A **linking verb** is completed by a word that refers to or renames a **subject**.

I am your friend.

A **linking verb** requires **subject** or **nominative forms** in the complement.

The **surprise** was it.

Subject form

- ◆ A **helping verb** is completed by a word that is acted upon by the **verb**.

I am building a deck.

- ◆ A **helping verb** does not require subject or nominative forms in the complement.

You **are helping** him.

Object form

Linking Verbs

- ◆ Other commonly used linking verbs are usually completed by words that modify the subject.
- ◆ The modifying word is called a predicate adjective.

The songs *sound* pleasant.

The muffin *tasted* sweet.

We *felt sad* when we heard the story.

Brad *looked good* in the film.

Don't *grow impatient* with our trainees.

Linking Verbs

- ◆ To check if a verb is linking, substitute some form of *to be* for the verb. If it is completed by an **adjective**, it is a linking verb.

The songs **are pleasant**.

The muffin **was sweet**.

We **were sad** when we heard the story.

Brad **was good** in the film.

Don't **be impatient** with our trainees.

Linking Verbs

- ◆ Linking verbs are NEVER completed by adverbs.
- ◆ If the modifier ends in /y it is most likely an adverb.

NOT:

Everyone felt *badly* about what happened.

WRITE:

Everyone felt *bad* about what happened.

Timeless Tip: Good vs. Well

- ◆ Do not confuse *good* and *well*.
- ◆ *Well* is normally an adverb.
- ◆ *Good* is an adjective.
- ◆ Use *good* to complete a linking verb, unless you mean *healthy*.

NOT:

The cover for the new book looks *well*.

I am *good*. (in response to "How are you?")

WRITE:

The cover for the new book looks *good*.

I am *well*.

Intransitive Verbs

- ◆ An *intransitive verb* is complete without a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective following it.
- ◆ Intransitive verbs do not have **objects**.
- ◆ The action ends with the intransitive verb.

The wind *blows*. (IV)
The boy *blows* the **balloon**. (TV)

The candle *burned* brightly. (IV)
The hunter *burned* the wooden **stakes**. (TV)

Intransitive Verbs

- ◆ Some verbs change their function with different sentences.

TRANSITIVE:

Prairie farmers *grow* wheat.

LINKING:

Wheat *grows* tall in August.

INTRANSITIVE:

Wheat *grows* in the prairies.

END

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