

## LINKING AND ACTION VERBS

**Linking Verb:** A linking verb is a verb that links a word in the predicate to the subject. That word will either be a noun (predicate noun), which will rename the subject or an adjective (predicate adjective), which will describe the subject.

**Action Verb:** A verb that shows action. It may or may not have a noun or pronoun following it that receives the action of the verb (direct object).

There are some words (sense words) that will be linking or action verbs depending on how they are used in a sentence. For example:

*Mary seems to like the house.*

Seems is an action verb, but there is no direct object here.

*The house seems large.*

Seems is a linking verb - large is a predicate adjective that describes the subject, house.

These are the verbs that could be action or linking verbs:

|        |        |       |
|--------|--------|-------|
| appear | look   | sound |
| become | seem   | stay  |
| feel   | remain | taste |
| grow   | smell  |       |

**Practice Exercise:** Write down the verbs in the following sentences. Then tell whether they are action or linking verbs.

1. The ghost appeared in the doorway.
2. The child appeared tired.
3. Bill became the president of the student council.
4. The cloth on the table felt soft and fuzzy.
5. Jeannie grows taller every day.
6. The tree grows every day.
7. John felt sick after lunch.
8. The leftover food from the picnic smelled rotten.
9. Steve smelled the flowers.
10. Please stay in the house.
11. Mom tasted the soup.
12. The soup tasted salty.
13. Jenny looks at the pictures in the book.
14. Jenny looks beautiful in that dress.
15. The radio sounded the emergency alarm.

### **Answers: Linking and Action Verb Practice**

1. appeared - action
2. appeared - linking (tired is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, child)
3. became - linking (president is a predicate noun modifying the subject, Bill)
4. felt - linking (soft and fuzzy are predicate adjectives modifying the subject, cloth)
5. grows - linking (taller is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, Jeannie)
6. grows - action
7. felt - linking (sick is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, John)
8. smelled - linking (rotten is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, food)
9. smelled - action
10. stay - action
11. tasted - action
12. tasted - linking (salty is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, soup)
13. looks - action
14. looks - linking (beautiful is a predicate adjective modifying the subject, Jenny)
15. sounded - action

## Transitive/Intransitive Verb

Verbs can be classified as transitive or intransitive.

**Transitive Verb:** An action verb that has a direct object. *Trans-* means across. The action is going from the subject to a noun or pronoun that is the direct object of the action verb.

*She walked a tightrope.*

She walked what? A tightrope. Tightrope is the direct object of the verb, *walked*. Walked is a transitive verb.

**Intransitive Verb:** *In-* means not, thus intransitive means no action going from subject to direct object. An action verb with no direct object is intransitive. All verbs of being are intransitive.

*She walked down the street.*

There is no noun or pronoun that directly follows the action verb, *walked*, in this sentence. *Down the street* is an adverbial prepositional phrase that tells where she walked. It is not a direct object.

*Bill is in room 13.*

There is no action here. Therefore, the verb is intransitive.

**Practice Exercise:** Write down the verbs in the following sentences. Then write after the verb whether it is transitive (T) or intransitive (INT).

1. Jenny bought a present for Tom.
2. Jim is running in the track meet.
3. You will find the letter soon.
4. Have you noticed the broken window?  
(Change to a statement before you decide on an answer.)
5. The soup is salty.
6. Mike is the second oldest in the family.
7. Linda gave Tony an award for his work.
8. The teacher distributed the tests.
9. Did you get a good grade?
10. Bob participated in the contest.

**Answers: Transitive/Intransitive Verb Practice**

1. bought (T) - transitive
2. is running (INT) - intransitive
3. will find (T) - transitive
4. have noticed (T) - transitive
5. is (INT) - intransitive
6. is (INT) - intransitive
7. gave (T) - transitive
8. distributed (T) - transitive
9. did get (T) - transitive
10. participated (INT) - intransitive

## THE INTRANSITIVE VERB

### **Recognize an intransitive verb when you see one.**

An intransitive verb has two characteristics. First, it is an action verb, expressing a doable activity like arrive, go, lie, sneeze, sit, die, etc. Second, unlike a transitive verb, it will *not* have a direct object receiving the action.

Here are some examples of intransitive verbs:

1. Huffing and puffing, we arrived at the classroom door with only seven seconds to spare.

Arrived = intransitive verb.

2. James went to the campus cafe for a steaming bowl of squid eyeball stew.

Went = intransitive verb.

3. To escape the midday sun, the cats lie in the shade under our cars.

Lie = intransitive verb.

### **Realize that many verbs can be both transitive and intransitive.**

An action verb with a direct object is transitive while an action verb with no direct object is intransitive. Some verbs, such as arrive, go, lie, sneeze, sit, and die, are always intransitive; it is impossible for a direct object to follow.

Other action verbs, however, can be transitive or intransitive, depending on what follows in the sentence. Compare these examples:

1. Because of blood sugar problems, Rosa always eats before leaving for school.

Eats = intransitive verb.

2. If there is no leftover pizza, Rosa usually eats whole-grain cereal.

Eats = transitive verb; cereal = direct object.

3. During cross-country practice, Damien runs over hills, through fields, across the river, and along the highway.

Runs = intransitive verb.

4. In the spring, Damien will run his first marathon.

Will run = transitive verb; marathon = direct object.

## Verb Phrase Recognition Practice

**Definition:** A verb phrase is a group of related words that contains one or more helping verbs and a main verb. For example....

*Jim has been working on his science project.*

The verb phrase is **has been working**. **Has** and **been** are the helping verbs, and **working** is the main verb.

Sometimes the helping verbs are separated by other words, and thus one has to look carefully for the parts of the verb phrase. For example....

*Has Joan written her report yet?*

The verb phrase is **has written**. The helping verb is **has** and the main verb is **written**. Note that the verb phrase is separated by the subject, **Joan**. Sometimes you can find the verb phrase more easily in a question sentence by changing it to a statement.

*Joan has written her report.* (Note that the verb phrase is now together.)

*Gene will always do his work on time.*

The verb phrase is **will do**. **Will** is the helping verb and **do** is the main verb. Notice that the word, **always**, is an adverb separating the verb phrase. It is NOT part of the verb phrase.

*Don't buy that present.*

The verb phrase is **do buy**. **Do** is the helping verb and **buy** is the main verb. Note that **n't** (meaning "not") is not a part of the verb; it is an adverb, making the verb negative.

**Practice Exercise:** Write down the verb phrase in each of these sentences. Be careful; watch for separated helping verbs and watch for adverbs that separate the verb phrase.

1. Will you buy me a drink?
2. Sam is not going to the dance.
3. Al should have mowed the lawn today.
4. Theresa will be playing her clarinet at the concert tonight.
5. Rosie could have worked on that project today.
6. Tony and Jim have been chosen as finalists at the science fair.
7. Hasn't the tailor finished the suit?
8. My grandmother has carefully repaired the broken vase.
9. Maria will probably leave for New York on Wednesday.
10. Does that offer still stand?

## Answers : Verb Phrase Recognition Practice

1. will buy (subject, *you*, is separating the verb phrase)
2. is going (adverb, *not*, is separating the verb phrase)
3. should have mowed
4. will be playing
5. could have worked
6. have been chosen
7. has finished (*n't* stands for *not* and thus is an adverb; and *tailor* [the subject] is separating the verb phrase.)
8. has repaired (*carefully* is an adverb)
9. will leave (*probably* is an adverb)
10. does stand (*still* is an adverb; *offer* is the subject separating the verb phrase.)

## HELPING VERBS

Just remember this sentence and you will know how to set up a chart of the 23 helping verbs!

The largest "family" is the "BE" family with eight members. The other five families have three members each.

| Helping Verbs                             |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>may</b><br><b>might</b><br><b>must</b> | <b>be</b><br><b>being</b><br><b>been</b><br><b>am</b><br><b>are</b><br><b>is</b><br><b>was</b><br><b>were</b> | <b>do</b><br><b>does</b><br><b>did</b> | <b>should</b><br><b>could</b><br><b>would</b> | <b>have</b><br><b>had</b><br><b>has</b> | <b>will</b><br><b>can</b><br><b>shall</b> |
|   | (main)  | (main)                                 |   | (main)                                  |   |

Notice that verbs in three of the families may also stand alone and be the main verb of a sentence. For example:

- We are teaching you about helping verbs. ("are"-helping verb, "teaching"-main verb)
- We are in the fourth grade at Brisas Elementary. ("are" is the main verb)

Other things to keep in mind:

- Not every sentence will have a helping verb with the main verb.
- When you see an "ing" verb such as "running", be on the lookout for a helping verb also.
- Sometimes there is another word which separates the helping verb from the main verb. One common example is "not", as in: The boy couldn't find his socks. The helping verb is could and the main verb is find.
- A sentence may contain up to three helping verbs to the main verb. An example would be: The dog must have been chasing the cat. The helping verbs are: must, have, and been; the main verb is chasing.