**transitive**

[**adjective**](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adjective)

[Save Word](https://www.merriam-webster.com/saved-words)

To save this word, you'll need to log in.

**[Log In](https://www.merriam-webster.com/login)**

tran·​si·​tive | \ ˈtran(t)-sə-tiv  , ˈtran-zə-; ˈtran(t)s-tiv \

**Definition of *transitive***

**1:**characterized by having or containing a direct objecta *transitive* verb

**2:**being or relating to a relation with the property that if the relation holds between a first element and a second and between the second element and a third, it holds between the first and third elementsequality is a *transitive* relation

**3:**of, relating to, or characterized by [transition](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transition)

**What is the difference between a *transitive verb* and an *intransitive verb*?**

A *transitive verb* is a verb that requires a [*direct object*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/direct%20object), which is a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase that follows the verb and completes the sentence's meaning by indicating the person or thing that receives the action of the verb. The direct object typically answers the question *what?* or *whom?*:

The kids *like* pickles.

That really *annoys* me.

Have they *sold* their house yet?

An *intransitive verb* is not used with a direct object. If something comes after an intransitive verb, that is, in the position usually inhabited by the direct object, it doesn't answer *what?* or *whom?*; instead it answers a question like *where?*, *when?*, *how?*, or *how long?*:

Her car *died* suddenly last week.

Someone was *coughing* loudly.

A single verb can have both transitive and intransitive uses:

They are *playing* soccer.

They've been *playing* all afternoon.

A transitive verb can also have an [*indirect object*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/indirect%20object), which is a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase that comes before a direct object and indicates the person or thing that receives what is being given or done. Many common verbs can be used with both direct and indirect objects. In the following examples the indirect object is in italics:

Find *her* a chair.

Can you read *me* the letter?

Who gave *her lawyers* the information?

He's saving *Caitlin* a piece.

**Examples of *transitive* in a Sentence**

 In “I like pie” and “She makes hats,” the verbs “like” and “makes” are *transitive*.