

Transitive Verb

Definition of Transitive Verb

A transitive verb is a type of [action verb](#) that links the [subject](#) with the [object](#) (a person or a thing) of a [sentence](#), which is receiving the action. The word “transitive” is derived from a Latin word *trans*, which means to “go across.”

It can be difficult to recognize a transitive verb. It has two prominent features:

- It acts as an action verb, expressing an activity.
- It uses a [direct object](#) that receives an action.

For instance, in the sentence, “We lost a daughter but gained a meathead” (“All in the Family” by Norman Lear and Michael Ross), “lost” is a transitive verb, as it has an object “a daughter.” The same is the case of “gained,” which has the object “meathead”.

Everyday Use of Transitive Verb

- Gucci returned the documents to the administrator.
- The students are playing.
- The director discussed marketing strategies offered in the advertisement.
- Mariam gave her brother a mobile phone.
- Alex sent a letter from Canada.
- My mother gave me a gift on my birthday.

In these sentences, all the underlined verbs are transitive. Each of them has a direct object, which receives the action they demonstrate.

Examples of Transitive Verb in Literature

Example #1: *If Tomorrow Comes* (by Sidney Sheldon)

“She picked up the gun. She raised the gun to her temple and squeezed the trigger. Tracy Whitney stepped out of the lobby of her apartment building into a gray...As Tracy approached the bank, she glanced at her watch. Eight-twenty ...”

In these lines, Sheldon has used nearly all sentences with transitive verbs as shown underlined. In the first two sentences, “picked up” and “raised” are transitive verbs with the objects “gun.” The same pattern is being followed by the other sentences.

Example #2: *Hedda Gabler* (by Henrik Ibsen)

[Raises the pistol and points.] Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!
Faugh — don't use that sickening word! [Looks up at him and laughs.] Do you too believe in that legend?

In these lines, the verb “shoot” points to the object “you,” the verb “use” points to the object “sickening word,” and the verb “believe” points to the object “legend.” All these transitive verbs make it clear who is receiving the action.

Example #3: *The Old man and the Sea* (by Earnest Hemingway)

“They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. They picked up the gear from the boat. The old man carried the mast on his shoulder ... They walked up the road together to the old man's shack and went in through its open door ... “He's taken it,” he said. “Now I'll let him eat it well. The old man had seen many great fish. The old man unhooked the fish, re-baited the line with another sardine and tossed it over. Then he worked his way slowly back to the bow. He washed his left hand and wiped it on his trousers.”

This passage makes excellent use of transitive verbs, each pointing to direct objects that are the recipients of the action.

Transitive Verb	Direct Object
sat	the terrace
picked up	the gear
carried	the mast
walked up	the road
taken	it
eat	it
seen	many fish
unhooked	the fish
tossed	it
worked	his way
washed	his left hand
wiped	it

Example #4: *Jane Eyre* (by Charlotte Bronte)

“This precious vessel was now placed on my knee... I could not eat the tart... I felt an inexpressible relief. I pronounced his name, offering him at the same time my hand: he took it ... I devoured my bread and drank my coffee with relish.”

In this example, the transitive verbs are as follows:

Transitive Verb	Direct Object
placed	my knee
eat	the tart
felt	relief
pronounced	his name
offering	him
took	it
devoured	my bread
drank	my coffee

Function

Since a transitive verb is an action verb, it shows that its relevant noun is doing something, acting on something else, which is the object. The basic

the idea that the sentence meant to express, by linking the meaning to its object. In other words, it consummates the full idea that a sentence expresses by linking the subject that is doing the action with the object that is at the receiving end. It also helps the learners to correctly use passive sentences with or without an agent.