

ELG, 4th Handout, verbs, modifiers & other things

Verbs can assert an action, express a condition, or show existence (a state of being). The two categories of main verbs are *Action* and *Linking*. The verb *to be* in its various forms is the most common Linking verb.

A verb is a word that expresses action or a state of being, which means that it makes a statement about the subject. For example, "The boy *stole* the candy bar." The word *stole* is an action verb, as most English verbs are. But—and this is an important but—some verbs do not express action; they connect, or link, the subject to a noun or adjective in the predicate. For example, "Harmon *is* old," "Her cooking *smells* good," and "My dog's name *was* Corky." Any form of the verb *to be* and in many cases any verb of the senses, such as *smell*, *taste*, *look*, *feel*, as well as some other verbs like *grow* or *become* (*appear*, *seem*, *remain*, *stay*, *prove*, *turn* – in some instances), are called copulative or LINKING verbs. (from *The One-Minute Grammarian*)

Action verbs are classified as *transitive* or *intransitive*.

In the active voice, *Transitive verbs* cannot complete their meaning without the help of a direct object.

*Intransitive verbs* do not take a direct object, or to put it another way, they do not need objects to complete their meaning.

Identify the underlined verbs as action or linking verbs. If they are action verbs, tell whether they are transitive or intransitive.

1) Clyde is a timid cat.

Linking verb

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2) He <sup>AV</sup> carries great weight, but he <sup>DO</sup> fears almost everything. <sup>AV</sup> <sup>DO</sup>

Transitive Transitive

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3) Yesterday I <sup>AV</sup> watched him cower at a dust ball.

Transitive

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LV

4) Luckily, Kelsey is his best friend. Kelsey  fights  with all foes of Clyde.

5) What part of speech is **cower** in the third sentence? Can you tell how it functions?

*This is tough. It is an ~~#~~ infinitive, and the heart of the infinitive phrase "him cower at a dust ball." More on this later.*

**More Work**

Identify the adverbs and adjectives in the following sentences. Draw arrows to show what other word each modifies.

6) The American shorthair is a medium-sized cat, a favorite for overcrowded shelters.

*Adj Adj                      Adj. Adj.                      Adj.                      Adj.*

*(Arrows: "The" → "American", "shorthair" → "is", "medium-sized" → "cat", "a" → "favorite", "overcrowded" → "shelters")*

7) To an excellent chef, the delicious meal is a work of art; to a hungry cat, any meal is delicious.

*Adjectives                      Adj's                      Adj.                      Adj's                      Adj.*

*(Arrows: "To" → "excellent", "delicious" → "meal", "a" → "work", "to" → "hungry", "any" → "meal", "delicious" → "is")*

8) Unfortunately, Rosemary's favorite orange chair is still badly stained.

*Adv                      Adv                      Adj's.                      Adv's*

*(Arrows: "Unfortunately" → "entire sentence", "Rosemary's" → "favorite", "orange" → "chair", "badly" → "stained")*

9) It was difficult to believe, but fat boy Orange was asleep in the big bed, again.

*PA                      Compound Adj.                      Adj's.*

*(Arrows: "difficult" → "to believe", "fat" → "boy", "big" → "bed")*

10) We sat by the quiet lake and patiently waited for something to happen.

*Adj's                      Adv*

*(Arrows: "quiet" → "lake", "patiently" → "waited")*

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Identify the prepositions, objects of prepositions, and prepositional phrases in the following sentences. Place parentheses around prepositional phrases and draw arrows showing the word or words each prep. phrase modifies.

11) Turning the corner, I was faced (with a dreaded trash tornado.)

12) Grit blew into my eyes; a plastic bag grabbed onto my leg and would not dislodge; a crushed, wet milk can slapped me in the face.)

13) (At that moment,) I knew that I had to leave my home near 42 Street or risk grave consequences.

14) Never in the history of my life has so fortunate an event occurred.

15) (For the past many years) I have been living happily in the Garden State (near Atlantic City,) America's playground.

Name the part of speech of each word underlined in the following sentences.

16) Oh, cats are not always friendly, but that is not justification for biliousness.

17) Successful vegetarians and animal-rights activists mingled with famous cats and infamous dogs at the rally, which occurred last night.

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Underline and identify the predicate adjectives, predicate nouns, direct objects, indirect objects, and object complements in the following sentences.

18) Those [who possess talents] <sup>S AV DO</sup> should develop and <sup>AV DO</sup> use them wisely.

19) The gentleman <sup>S</sup> already <sup>AV</sup> had many cats, <sup>DO</sup> but <sup>S LV PA</sup> he <sup>S</sup> was happy <sup>S</sup> (when a neighbor  
gave <sup>AV IO DO</sup> him some more].

21) Good <sup>S LV PA</sup> friends <sup>PA</sup> are sympathetic and helpful; bad <sup>S AV</sup> friends <sup>AV</sup> ask (for favors.)

<sup>S (you)</sup> Hand <sup>AV IO DO DO</sup> Angus that coat and tie.

24) My great <sup>S</sup> grandmother <sup>AV DO</sup> could see the wrinkles (of the moon.)

25) She <sup>S</sup> could also <sup>DO S AV</sup> see events [that were hidden (in the mists) (of time.)