



Verbs



Verbs

- Study of nouns & pronouns just begins to dip into the rich complexity of grammar. Verbs start to reveal its many splendors.
- Verbs can assert an action or express a condition (or state of being).
- There are **Action verbs** and **Linking verbs**. The most common linking verb is the verb *to be*. (Amisare Waswere)

Verbs

Grammarians speak of principal parts of a Verb:

- the basic or root form
- the past tense form
- the present participle form
- the past participle form

fly (to fly); flew; flying; flown

(Find the past participle form by adding *have* before the verb form.)

Sometimes past and past participle forms differ; sometimes they remain the same.

Verbs

Principal parts of the verb *to row*

row – root & present tense form

rowed – past tense

rowing – present participle

rowed – past participle

It is important to understand that all verbs conjugate into standard forms.

Helping verbs join with these forms to create a range of tenses.



Verbs

- fling (to fling); flung; flinging; flung.
- forget (to forget); forgot; forgetting; forgotten
- catch (to catch); caught; catching; caught
- burst (to burst); burst; bursting; burst
- Is, am, are (to be); was, were; being; been

I fling; I flung; I am flinging; I have flung.

I burst; I burst; I am bursting; I have burst.

I am; I was; I am being; I have been.

A Definition

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.


adapted from *The One-Minute Grammarian*.



Verbs are classified as *transitive* or *intransitive*.

For Starters (it is more complicated than this):

- 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 an object to complete their meaning.




Some verbs can be transitive in one context & intransitive in another.

The bear *shot* the hunter. (trans.)

He *shot* across the ice rink with the puck on his stick. (intran. w/ three prep. phrases but no d.o.)

The goose *approached* the gander. (trans.)



[As the day of reckoning *approached*], we
worried about the state of our accounting.
(intrans. in the subordinate clause and intrans. in the
main clause)

Luke *mourned* Old Ben. (trans.)

Examining the empty food trough, the cat
herd *mourned*. (intrans.)



The relationship of Linking Verbs and Intransitive Verbs

It is easy enough to determine whether a verb is transitive or intransitive when the base verb describes an action. Does the verb interact with some recipient of the action? Then the verb is transitive.

The dog chewed slowly The cat bit the dog

But the distinction between transitive and intransitive only necessitates that a verb interact with an agent in some way. It does not have to be through an action.



The relationship of Linking Verbs and Intransitive Verbs

State of being verbs make statements about agents, the subjects of the sentence, but those statements do not include a direct physical action:

She is standing quietly; they were present; the tomato tastes bad

Viewed in this way, the fundamental requirement of an intransitive verb is *not* that it be an action verb with no direct object but that the verb not act upon a recipient of any sort.



The relationship of Linking Verbs and Intransitive Verbs

Since linking verbs do not act upon recipients (instead they facilitate commentary upon the subject), they are always considered intransitive.



turning to Turn


Take up your dictionary and look at the definition for the verb *turn*. A simple word; a complex history.

- Tom turned the knob. (trans.)
- I turned all night. (intrans.)
- Autumn turns the leaves. (trans.)
- The leaves have turned. (intrans.)
- Tom turned fifty-five. (linking verb; intrans.)



Back pocket knowledge

- Know what a modifier is and how it functions
- Know what sort of complements linking verbs take
- Know what sort of objects action verbs take

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- The dog is mad.
 - That dog is Rover.
 - The dog handed Suzanne the stick.
 - Whom gave Suzanne that dog?
 - The bird sat (on the table) (by the hutch)
(with the stalking cat) nearby.



The Linking Verb

These type of verbs—the most common and the most important is the verb *to be*—show a state of being (or existence) or a condition. The most common, after *to be*, are verbs of the senses: *look, taste, smell, feel*. There are other verbs (such as *turn*) that are linking verbs given the proper context.



The pickles smell good.

Thandy smells the pickles.

Oooh, that cheese tastes awful.

The Mouse tasted the sweet cheese.



Tenses

Tenses are more complicated than *present*, *past*, and *future*.

They need to be to convey meaning.

Tenses

Present

simple present

describes actions or situations that are now taking place and are habitually or generally true.

I skip to ELG every other day.

present progressive

describes activity in progress, something not finished, or something continuing.

Harold is swimming the Pacific.

present perfect

describes single or repeated actions that began in the past and lead up to and include the present.

Manny has lived indoors for several years.

present perfect progressive

indicates action that began in the past, continues to the present, and may continue into the future.

They have been scratching that couch for seven months.

Tenses

Past

simple past

describes completed actions or conditions in the past.

He *sat* in the puddle.

past progressive

indicates past action that took place over a period of time.

Abigail *was purring* as the snow fell.

past perfect

indicates an action or event that was completed before another event in the past.

No one *had thought* about the questions before the test began.

past perfect progressive

indicates an ongoing condition in the past that has ended.

I *had been thinking* about really difficult questions when Spuds ran by.

Tenses

Future

simple future

indicates actions or events in the future.

I *will skate* the canal.

future progressive

indicates future action that will continue for some time.

I *will be skating* for some time.

future perfect

indicates action that will be completed by or before a specified time in the future.

Next year Stockton *will have aged* forty-five years.

future perfect progressive

indicates ongoing actions or conditions until a specific time in the future.

By tomorrow, I *will have been laughing* for two days.



Tenses

Remember, *perfect* means the action of the verb has been completed; *progressive* means the action of the verb is somehow in progress.

to be is complicated

The verb *to be* is highly irregular.

Present tense

Singular

Plural

First person:

I am

we are

Second person:

you are

you are

Third person:

he, she, it is

they are

Past tense

First person:

I was

we were

Second person:

you were

you were

Third person:

he, she it was

they were

Auxiliary (helping) verbs

Look back over the previous *tense* slides. See how auxiliary verbs are added to the principal parts of verbs to create tense?

Forms of the verbs *to have* and *to be* are often auxiliaries. *To do* helps verbs to form negatives and questions.

I have chopped.

You had chopped.

She will have chopped.

I don't sleep well at school.

Does your prophet know?

I am clapping.

You were clapping.

She will be clapping.

She will have been clapping.

You had been clapping.

They will have been clapping.



Modal Auxiliary verbs

Modal auxiliaries combine with verb forms to help

Express Attitudes:

Can, could, may, might, must, ought, shall, should, will, would.

I can argue; so can you.

You may like it; I may not.

I should help you, but you could help some, too.

We must decide now or never.



Number


I hope this isn't a large problem.

Remember the *subject* and *predicate* of a clause need to agree in number.



Voice

- Voice tells whether the verb is *active* or *passive*. In the active voice, the subject performs the action of the verb. In the passive voice, the subject receives the action.
- The cat *scratched* the couch. (active)
- The couch was scratched by the cat. (passive)

- 
- Scott will have shoveled the snow. (active-6 words)
 - The snow will have been shoveled by Scott. (passive-8 words)

Voice applies only to verbs that can be transitive, since there needs to be an agent (performing the action) and a recipient (being acted upon).



Voice—The two part analysis

1) What is the action, who is doing it, and what is being acted upon?

2) Is the actor or thing acted upon the subject?

If the actor (the agent) is the subject, the voice is *active*.

If the thing acted upon (the recipient) is the subject, the voice is *passive*.



During unseasonable weather, the house was knocked about quite badly.

As we have all probably heard, it is a good rule to keep your sentence constructions active unless you have a good reason to move into the passive voice.

KEEP IT ACTIVE is an age-old rule that can be reasonably explained. The *active voice* usually makes your prose less wordy and more easily understood.

nevertheless. . .

Mood

- Verbs in English can be inflected in up to five moods: indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, and infinitive (some grammarians identify a sixth mood, participial). We shall only talk about three:
 - Indicative
 - Imperative
 - Subjunctive
- Daniels & Daniels (grammarians from CCC) describe mood as “the use of verbs to indicate a person’s attitude toward what he or she is saying or writing” (239).



Indicative Mood

The indicative mood asserts something as fact or inquires after a fact:

He is writing.

Is he writing?



The Imperative Mood

The imperative mood expresses a *command* or
an entreaty.

Read aloud.


Bless me.



The Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood expresses the fact as *conditional, desirable, or contingent*.

Most grammarians describe the subjunctive as expressing a condition contrary to fact, the form of the verb in an *if* clause, or the form of a verb that expresses a wish.

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- If it *rains*, I shall not go.
 - If it *were* Ken, he would try. (notice “were” not “was”)
 - If I *were* you, I’d quit right now.
 - She acts as if she *were* my mother.
 - I wish I *were* there.
 - If she *were* at home, she would answer the bell.

In the subjunctive mood, the past tense singular form of “to be” is *were* not *was*.



Hmmm

Most of the verbs, when conjugated for these various moods, look no different from mood to mood. This is increasingly becoming a neglected portion of grammar. Perhaps rightfully so. *What do you think?*



transitive & intransitive verbs (again)

In the active voice, transitive verbs are verbs that cannot complete their meaning without the help of a direct object. The verb is something that someone or something does to someone or something else:

We bounced the idea around the room.

He yanked her out of her socks.

She missed the last bus.



transitive & intransitive verbs (again)

In the passive voice, verbs are always transitive because they necessarily have a recipient of the action of the verb

The idea was bounced around the room by us.

She was yanked out of her socks by him.

The last bus was missed by her.



How does this relate to Voice?

When you have transitive verbs – verbs that convey their action to objects – you can use the active or passive voice. When the subject acts, the verb is active. When the subject is acted upon, the verb is passive.

The dog chewed the rug. (*active*)

The rug was chewed by the dog. (*passive*—“by the dog” is an adverbial prep. phrase modifying “was chewed”)



transitive & intransitive

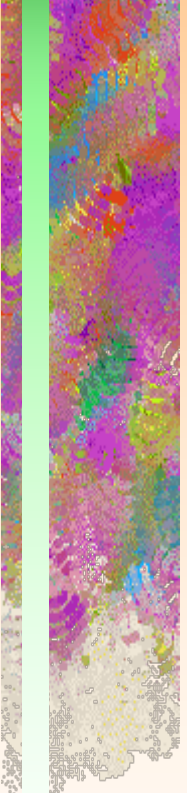
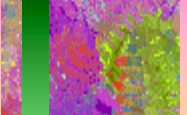
Intransitive verbs are verbs capable of expressing themselves without requiring a verb object to complete their meaning; they simply need an actor or agent.

The cloud thundered.

James blushed.

Teddy sulked.

She was proud.



enough on verbs