

Verbs

Action and Linking Verbs

Introduction to Verbs

These are the **words which describe an action, event or state of being in a sentence**. You can form a sentence without any of the other parts of speech, but you cannot make a sentence without a verb.

For example:

Run! Jump! Fight! Eat! Drink! Sing!

All these can be treated as sentences as they contain the most important part of a sentence—verb. However, the following don't:

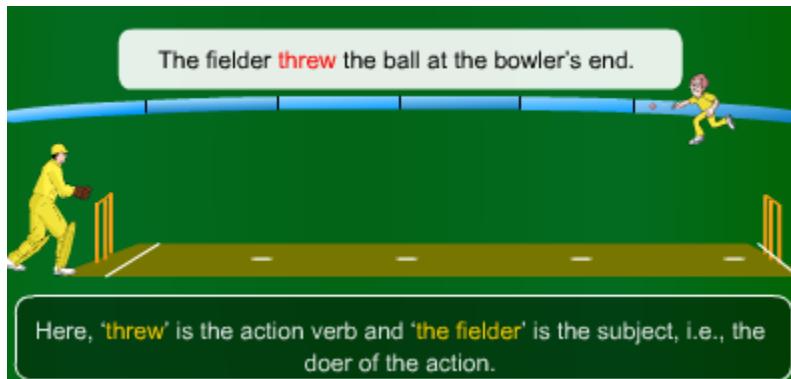
This not a sentence.

Why this not a sentence?

Action Verbs

An **action verb describes some action on the part of its subject**, (i.e., the doer of the action). In other words, what the subject of a sentence 'does' is described by an action verb. For example, words such as 'take', 'bring', 'cry', 'laugh', 'think', 'imagine' and 'worry' are all action verbs.

Among these words such as 'take', 'bring', 'cry' and 'laugh' are verbs that describe **physical actions**, while words such as 'think', 'imagine' and 'worry' describe **mental actions**.



Linking Verbs

A **linking verb** describes the condition or the state of being of its **subject** (i.e., the person, place, thing or idea described). It **does not describe any action** (either physical or mental). It **serves as the equal to ('=') sign in a sentence**.

The different forms of the verbs 'be' (e.g., 'am', 'is', 'are', 'was', 'were') and 'become' are used as linking verbs.

[I] = [the greatest fool]

↓

I **am** the greatest fool.

(Here, 'am' links the subject 'I' with the condition 'the greatest fool'.)

[Yuvika] = [a brave girl]

↓

Yuvika **is** a brave girl.

(Here, 'is' links the subject 'Yuvika' with the condition 'a brave girl'.)

[They] = [angry with him]

↓

They **are** angry with him.

(Here, 'are' links the subject 'they' with the condition 'angry with him'.)

[The teacher] = [extremely intelligent]

↓

The teacher **was** extremely intelligent.

(Here, 'was' links the subject 'the teacher' with the condition 'extremely intelligent'.)

[The batsmen] = [unhappy with the sightscreen]

↓

The batsmen **were** unhappy with the sightscreen.

(Here, 'were' links the subject 'the batsmen' with the condition 'unhappy with the sightscreen'.)

[He] = [famous after that song]

↓

He **became** famous after that song.

(Here, 'became' links the subject 'he' with the condition 'famous after that song'.)

Action Verbs as Linking Verbs

Sometimes action verbs can also perform the role of linking verbs. For example, words like 'look', 'feel', 'taste' and 'smell' are all classified as action verbs. However, in the following sentences, they act as linking verbs.

[The joker] = [crazy]

↓

The joker **looked** crazy.

(Here, 'looked' links the subject 'the joker' with the condition 'crazy'.)

As opposed to, say:

The thief **looked** through the window.

(Here, 'looked' is the specific action performed by the subject 'the thief'.)

[I] = [really happy]

↓

I **feel** really happy.

(Here, 'feel' links the subject 'I' with the condition 'really happy'.)

As opposed to, say:

The doctor **felt** my pulse.

(Here, 'felt' is the specific action performed by the subject 'the doctor'.)

[The food] = [good]

↓

The food **tastes** good.

(Here, 'tastes' links the subject 'the food' with the condition 'good'.)

As opposed to, say:

The chef **tasted** the soup made by the new recruit.

(Here, 'tasted' is the specific action performed by the subject 'the chef'.)

[The house] = [like a bakery]

↓

The house **smells** like a bakery.

(Here, 'smells' links the subject 'the house' with the condition 'like a bakery'.)

As opposed to, say:

Omkar **smelt** the kitchen to see if the gas was leaking.

(Here, 'smelt' is the specific action performed by the subject 'Omkar'.)

Note: When an action verb acts as a linking verb in a sentence it does not describe an action anymore. It does what a linking verb would do in its place, i.e., describe a state or condition.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs

The word 'transitive' means 'passing over to something else' or 'affecting something else', while the word 'intransitive' means 'not passing over to something else'.

When a verb is used transitively (i.e., in the transitive manner), **the verb requires a direct object**, (i.e., the noun or pronoun that receives the action, and answers the questions 'what?' or 'whom?'). In this case, **the action is passed on from the doer or subject to the receiver of the action or the direct object**.

For example:

Intransitive Verbs

When a verb is used intransitively (i.e., in the intransitive manner), the verb is not followed by an object. The **action stays with the subject**. It is **not passed on to any object**.

For example:

Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are an important part of the everyday English language— both spoken and written. They are also known as **multi-word verbs**. These are the verbs that contain a verb and another word(s). Very often, the meanings of these verbs are different from the meanings of the verbs with which they are made.

For example:

After long discussions, we finally **arrived at** a solution that pleased all.

(Here, the phrasal verb 'arrived at' is made up of the verb 'arrive' and the word 'at'. The phrasal verb means 'to reach an agreement'.)

My boss asked me to **do away with** my glasses as she said I look better without them.

(Here, the phrasal verb 'do away with' is made up of the verb 'do' and the words 'away' and 'with'. The phrasal verb means 'to get rid of something'.)

He **brought about** a great many changes during his tenure as the prime minister.

(Here, the phrasal verb 'brought about' is made up of the verb 'bring' and the word 'about'. The phrasal verb means 'to make something happen'.)

I **counted on** you and you did not disappoint me.

(Here, the phrasal verb 'counted on' is made up of the verb 'count' and the word 'on'. The phrasal verb means 'to rely on someone for help or support'.)