

Transitive, Intransitive and Linking Verbs

Depending on the type of complement, verbs may be transitive, intransitive, or linking.

Transitive verb: the bearing of a complement that is required without a preposition, as in *She finished the paper.*

INCOMPLETE:

Ex. The committee **acted**.

COMPLETE:

Ex. The committee **acted** *very quickly*.

INCOMPLETE:

Ex. The child **cried**.

COMPLETE:

Ex. The child **cried** *loudly*.

Intransitive verb: the bearing of a complement that cannot take a direct object.

Ex. The team **travels** *around the world*.

The intransitive verb "travel" takes a direct object, *around the world*, but cannot take a direct object as in *John travels around the world*.

* Many verbs can be either transitive or intransitive, depending on their context or the meaning. In the following pairs of sentences, the first sentence uses the verb transitively and the second sentence uses the verb intransitively.

Transitive:

Ex. The manager **dismissed** the employees. (The verb "dismiss" takes a direct object, *the employees*.)

In this example, the verb "dismiss" takes a direct object, *the employees* ("the employees").

Intransitive:

Ex. The crowd **dismissed** the speaker. (The verb "dismiss" does not take a direct object.)

In this example, the verb "dismiss" does not take a direct object.

Intransitive:

Ex. The employees **dismissed** the speaker as arrogant and the crowd **dismissed** the speaker as arrogant.

When the verb "dismiss" is used as an intransitive verb and takes a direct object.

Transitive:

Every spring, the committee **dismisses** all cases submitted to them as well as those that they **dismiss**. In the sentence "dismiss" is used as a transitive verb and takes a direct object, *all cases* ("all cases") and *those* ("those") as direct objects.