

Transitive, Intransitive and Linking Verbs

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

Transitive verbs: the bearing of a complement that is independent of the subject/verb, as in *She finished the project.*

INCOMPLETE:

Ex: The committee ~~acted~~.

COMPLETE:

Ex: The committee ~~acted~~ **promptly.**

INCOMPLETE:

Ex: The child ~~cried~~.

COMPLETE:

Ex: The child ~~cried~~ **loudly.**

Intransitive verb: the complement is either the subject itself or an adverbial.

Ex: The team ~~triumphed~~ **against the team last.**

The intransitive verb "triumph" takes the object "against the team last" and it is a phrase functioning as the complement.

* 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 intransitive.

Transitive:

Ex: Jerry ~~forgot~~ the instructions. **He read Jerry the chapter about how the French**

reacted.

In this example, the verb "read" takes a direct object, the noun phrase "the chapter".

Intransitive:

Ex: The crowd ~~got to their feet~~ **but without doing**

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

Intransitive:

Ex: The arbitrator ~~arrived~~ **in a hurry** and the clerk ~~got~~ **the parties** **to**

begin.

The verb "arrive" is used as an intransitive verb and takes an adverbial.

Transitive:

Every spring, Bill ~~receives~~ **all kinds of letters** from his friends and other

In this sentence "receives" is used as a transitive verb and takes the noun phrase "all kinds of letters" as a complement.