

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.**

The intransitive verb "triumph" takes the object "against the team" which is an adverbial that will still be correct without it: *The team triumphed.*

* 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: Jerry ~~forgot~~ the instructions. **He read Jerry the chapter** about how the "trunk" works.

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

Intransitive:

Ex: The model ~~was to stop~~ **working last month** clearly.

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

Intransitive:

Ex: The ~~architects~~ **with the building** ~~are struggling~~ **to finish the project** last September.

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

Transitive:

Every spring, Bill ~~remembers~~ all kinds of **fun** ~~to have~~ **with his friends** the other. In this sentence "remember" is used as a transitive verb with the adverbial "with his friends" which is an adverbial.