



Tikrit University

College of Education for women

English Department

Subject : Grammar

4th Year

Lecturer: Dr. Hanan Khattab Omar

hananeng@tu.edu.iq

((Transitive and Intransitive Verbs))

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Verbs can be broken into two types: transitive and intransitive. Transitive Verbs In Latin, *trans* means across. Therefore, the subject transfers the action to the object. Most verbs in English are transitive.

- I ◇ took ◇ my car to the shop.
- We ◇ played ◇ basketball yesterday.

In the above examples, the verbs *took* and *played* are followed by the direct objects *car* and *basketball*, respectively. Test for Transitive Verbs If a verb is transitive, you will always be able to ask a question beginning with what or whom. For example:

- To what shop did you take your car? or
- With whom did you play basketball?

By asking these questions, you are asking:

Who or what receives the action of the verb?

Intransitive Verbs In Latin, *intrans* means not across. Therefore, intransitive verbs do not take direct objects because there is no action to transfer.

- Pablo's writing improved.
- We walked carefully.

Neither of the above examples has a direct object. Test for Intransitive Verbs You can recognize a sentence with an intransitive verb because it cannot be rewritten into passive voice. For example, the sentence "Paul departed late last night" cannot be rewritten to say "Late last night was departed Paul."

Special Cases Verbs with Multiple Meanings

Some verbs can be either transitive or intransitive because they have multiple meanings. When used in the context of physical movement, *run* is intransitive:

- I ran every day when I was an athlete.
- I run every morning to stay in shape.

In the context of guiding or overseeing a company or other group of individuals, *run* is transitive.

- Joe runs his own restaurant.
- Martha ran her business efficiently.

Verbs in Different Contexts

Verbs can also be either transitive or intransitive depending on context. The verb *sing* is normally intransitive.

- I sing rather poorly.
- She sings quite beautifully.

Sing is only transitive if the sentence answers the question, “What did the subject sing?”

- I sang “Don’t Stop Believe in” rather poorly last night.
- She sang “I Will Always Love You” quite beautifully last week.

Activity

Activity: Determine if the italicized verb in each sentence is transitive or intransitive.

1. Ron Burgundy has been *gossiping* since early this morning.
2. Jack White *founded* The White Stripes.
3. I *lived* in Las Vegas for a very brief period.
4. I *make* an excellent shrimp stir-fry.
5. Michael Simon *gave* an outrageous speech yesterday.
6. Stephen Curry *slipped* on his way to the basket.
7. The prosecution *proved* the defendant's guilt.
8. George Lucas *rejected* the script under false pretenses.
9. I *worked* for ten hours yesterday.
10. The GOP *nominated* a questionable candidate.

Answer Key for Activity

1. intransitive
2. transitive
3. intransitive
4. transitive
5. transitive
6. intransitive
7. transitive
8. transitive

9. intransitive

10. transitive