



Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

There are three different kinds of verbs in the English language – transitive, intransitive and linking verbs. This handout will focus on both transitive and intransitive verbs.

What is a transitive verb?

A verb is a word that conveys action to the reader. A transitive verb is a verb that takes a *direct object* (the thing, or person, upon which the action is performed). Most verbs in English are transitive verbs. Here are some examples of transitive verbs (the verbs and their objects appear in *italics*).

She *has* a car.

Ying *washed* the dishes yesterday.

Heinrich will *photograph* his friend's wedding.

Ask yourself if the thing the verb is being done to is visible within the sentence. If it is, you probably have a transitive verb.

What is an intransitive verb?

An intransitive verb is the opposite of a transitive verb – it appears in the sentence without a direct object. The thing or person on which the verb acts is not visible within the sentence. Here are some examples:

Don't *go*.

The tornado *happened* at noon.

They *spoke* through the afternoon.

Shannon *danced* all night.