

Grammar – Verbs

Identify Transitive and Intransitive Verbs 2

All English verbs (main verbs) have transitive and / or intransitive uses. **Transitive verbs** must be followed by a **direct object** – e.g. 'I have a new car.' – while **intransitive verbs** cannot be. Most English verbs can be used either transitively or intransitively.

Transitive Verbs:	Intransitive Verbs:
The meaning is incomplete without a direct object: 'What did you do yesterday?' 'I learned .' [What?]	The meaning is complete without a direct object. 'What did you do yesterday?' 'I studied .'
The verb can be used in passive voice: 'My mum made it.' / 'It was made by my mum.' [object: it]	The verb cannot be used in passive voice: 'I slept for ten hours.' / ... [no object]
The verb cannot end a clause or sentence. 'Where did I put ?' [What?]	The verb can end a clause or sentence. 'Everybody laughed .'
The verb cannot be a one-word order (Imperative): 'Put!'	The verb can be a one-word order (Imperative): 'Sit!'
The verb is followed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noun: I like books. / gerund: I like running. • noun phrase: I like the new kettle. • determiner: I bought a plant. / I lost my phone. • pronoun: I met him. / quantifier: I had many ideas. 	The verb is followed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adverb: I ran quickly. • adverbial phrase: I went to the theatre. • preposition (e.g. first word in an adverbial) • no words (punctuation: e.g. full stop; semi-colon)
<i>Verbs that are always or typically* transitive:</i> bring, discuss, envy, find, give, guard, have, let, like, take	<i>Verbs that are always or typically* intransitive:</i> act, appear, arrive, be, chat, come, die, fall, giggle, go, happen, itch, jump, laugh, lie, live, look, mean, rise, seem, sit, sleep, smile, snore, use, wait, work

*This is the general rule, but in a living language like English we might find a few exceptions, as in some of the questions below. Check a good dictionary to discover which definitions of a particular verb are transitive and intransitive.

Mark the verbs in **bold T** for transitive or **I** for intransitive. Underline the object of each transitive verb, then match **16 pairs** of verbs. Say why the other **8 sentences** do not have a match. Discuss your answers with a partner:

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| 1. 'Woda' means 'water' in Polish. | 21. I worked hard all night. |
| 2. It's a stray dog – we're not keeping it. | 22. I began a new novel a few days ago. |
| 3. This flat is already let , but I have another. | 23. I have moved the bookcase over there. |
| 4. If you are ready, we can begin . | 24. It might help to talk to Clarice. |
| 5. I have twenty papers to mark before Friday. | 25. They live in Bolivia now. |
| 6. Did anybody call while I was out? | 26. The rancher works his horses hard. |
| 7. What time will your parents go home? | 27. Let me borrow your ruler. |
| 8. Her anger didn't show in her expression. | 28. My parents mean well, but... |
| 9. Paula can run 100m in 34 seconds. | 29. He called me a credit to his company. |
| 10. We were playing with the kittens for an hour. | 30. He gave her a kiss and left the room. |
| 11. I can't run very fast. | 31. We believe you – thousands wouldn't. |
| 12. I didn't know that Keith had died . | 32. Where is my watch? |
| 13. Have you played that new game yet? | 33. Keep going, Jennifer! |
| 14. You are living the dream, my friend! | 34. I've never tried hang-gliding. |
| 15. We are moving to LA for six months. | 35. Bob likes looking at old photos. |
| 16. I don't believe that Roger will change. | 36. The girl didn't even try to contact Zoe. |
| 17. Did you hear Philippa's funny story last night? | 37. Could you bring me a plate, please? |
| 18. It brought home the gravity of the situation. | 38. I showed Ellie your school book. |
| 19. Johanna is from the Netherlands. | 39. I'm finding this exercise really difficult. |
| 20. I helped Joe to fix his car. | 40. 'Bob's back, you know.' 'Yes, I heard .' |

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Answers:

16 matching pairs:

1. 'Woda' **means** 'water' in Polish. (T)
28. My parents **mean** well, but... (I)
2. It's a stray dog – we're not **keeping** it. (T)
33. **Keep** going, Jennifer! (I)
3. This flat is already **let**, but I have another. (I)
27. **Let** me borrow your ruler. (T)
4. If you are ready, we can **begin**. (I)
22. I **began** a new novel a few days ago. (T)
6. Did anybody **call** while I was out? (I)
29. He **called** me a credit to his company. (T)
8. Her anger didn't **show** in her expression. (I)
38. I **showed** Ellie your school book. (T)
9. Paula can **run** 100m in 34 seconds. (T)
11. I can't **run** very fast. (I)
10. We were **playing** with the kittens for an hour. (I)
13. Have you **played** that new game yet? (T)
14. You are **living** the dream, my friend! (T)
25. They **live** in Bolivia now. (I)
15. We are **moving** to LA for six months. (I)
23. I have **moved** the bookcase over there. (T)
16. I don't **believe** that Roger will change. (I)
31. We **believe** you – thousands wouldn't. (T)
17. Did you **hear** Philippa's funny story last night? (T)
40. 'Bob's back, you know.' 'Yes, I **heard**.' (I)
18. It **brought** home the gravity of the situation. (I)
37. Could you **bring** me a plate, please? (T)
20. I **helped** Joe to fix his car. (T)
24. It might **help** to talk to Clarice. (I)
21. I **worked** hard all night. (I)
26. The rancher **works** his horses hard. (T)
34. I've never **tried** hang-gliding. (T)
36. The girl didn't even **try** to contact Zoe. (I)

Without a match – because these verbs are always or typically transitive:*

5. I **have** twenty papers to mark before Friday. (T)
30. He **gave** her a kiss and left the room. (T)
35. Bob **likes** looking at old photos. (T)
39. I'm **finding** this exercise really difficult. (T)

Without a match – because these verbs are always or typically intransitive:*

7. What time will your parents **go** home? (I)
12. I didn't know that Keith had **died**. (I)
19. Johanna **is** from the Netherlands. (I)
32. Where **is** my watch? (I)

Reference: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>