

VERBS: TYPES AND TENSES

(English Syntax)

There are four **TYPES** of verbs: intransitive, transitive, linking, and passive. Intransitive and transitive verbs are in the active voice, while passive verbs are in the passive voice.

VERB TYPES—DEFINITIONS

Intransitive verbs are verbs that express action but that do not take an object. The subject and verb express a complete thought without an object. The verb can, however, be followed by an adverb or other modifier.

Examples: I ran.
I ran swiftly.
I ran in the race.

Transitive verbs are verbs that express action that terminates in, or is received by, an object. The object of a transitive verb can be a noun, pronoun, or a noun clause or phrase.

Examples: I threw the ball. (Noun as object)
We beat them. (Pronoun as object)
I think that you are correct. (Noun clause as object)

Notice that the subject and verb alone, "We beat," would not make sense without an object to receive the action.

Linking verbs are verbs of the senses like "feel," "look," "taste," "smell," or "taste," and a limited number of other verbs like "be," "seem," "become," or "remain" that link the subject of the sentence with a complement. Linking verbs are always followed by an adjective, noun, or noun phrase that acts as a complement.

Examples: He is a lawyer. (Noun as complement)
I feel tired. (Adjective as complement)
It seems that we will lose the game. (Noun clause as complement)

Passive-voice verbs are verbs that allow the subject to receive the action rather than to do the action. Passive-voice verbs are made by using some form of the verb "be" that is followed by a verb ending in -en or -ed (unless the past participle of the verb is irregular). Only transitive verbs can be turned into the passive form.

Examples: Our team was beaten at softball. ("By the opposing team" is implied.)
The building is destroyed by the wrecking crew.
The ball was thrown by me.

To help identify a passive verb, ask, "Is the subject sitting there *PASSIVELY* waiting for something to happen to it, or is the subject doing the *ACTION*?"

VERB TENSES—DEFINITIONS

Verb tenses are used to indicate time. There are six tenses.

Present tense is the stem of the infinitive—to SEE, to USE, to DRIVE, etc.