**Transitive and Intransitive Verbs**

**BASICS**

A verb can be described as transitive or intransitive based on whether it requires an object to express a complete thought or not. A transitive verb is one that only makes sense if it exerts its action on an object. An intransitive verb will make sense without one. Some verbs may be used both ways.

The word transitive often makes people think of transit, which leads to the mistaken assumption that the terms transitive and intransitive are just fancy ways of describing action and nonaction. But these terms have nothing to do with whether a verb is active or not. A better word to associate when you see transitive is transfer. A transitive verb needs to transfer its action to something or someone—an object. In essence, transitive means “to affect something else.”

**How to Identify a Transitive Verb**

Transitive verbs are not just verbs that can take an object; they demand objects. Without an object to affect, the sentence that a transitive verb inhabits will not seem complete.

**Eg. Please bring coffee.**

In this sentence, the verb bring is transitive; its object is coffee, the thing that is being brought. Without an object of some kind, this verb cannot function.

**For Example.** Please bring.

Bring what, or who? The question begs itself because the meaning of bring demands it.

Here are some more examples of transitive verbs and their objects.

1. The girls carry water to their village.

2. Juan threw the ball.

3. Could you phone the neighbors?

4. I caught a cold.

5. She loves rainbows.

6. Lila conveyed the message.

Each of the verbs in these sentences have objects that complete the verbs’ actions. If the objects were taken out, the results would be illogical and questions would be raised in the mind of the reader; for example, Lila conveyed. Conveyed what?

**How to Identify an Intransitive Verb**

An intransitive verb is the opposite of a transitive verb: it does not require an object to act upon.

1.They jumped.

2.The dog ran.

3.She sang.

4. A light was shining.

None of these verbs require an object for the sentence to make sense, and all of them can end a sentence. Some imperative forms of verbs can even make comprehensible one-word sentences.

1.Run!

2. Sing!

A number of English verbs can only be intransitive; that is, they will never make sense paired with an object. Two examples of intransitive-only verbs are arrive and die. You can’t arrive something, and you certainly can’t die something; it is impossible for an object to follow these verbs.

**Transitive or Intransitive? Some Verbs Can Be Both**

Many verbs can be classified as both transitive and intransitive depending on how they are used in a sentence.

1.Urged by the others, she sang.

2.She sang the national anthem at the hockey game.

3.After he cleaned up, he left.

4.He left the gift on the table.

To decide whether the verb is being used transitively or intransitively, all you need to do is determine whether the verb has an object. Does she sing something? Does he leave something? The verb is only transitive when the answer is yes.

When in doubt, look it up. In the dictionary, verbs will be listed as transitive, intransitive, or both right under the pronunciation key, and any possible differences in meaning between the two uses will be given as well.