



Sentence Patterns II: Locating Objects and Complements

All grammatically correct sentences have at least one subject and one verb. But few sentences are this simple; in most sentences, additional words follow the verb. These words are *objects* and *complements*.

Verbs

There are two types of verbs: action verbs and linking verbs.

Linking verbs connect subjects with their descriptions.

Example: The oak tree is mighty.

Action verbs show us what is happening in a sentence. There are two types of action verbs: **intransitive** and **transitive**.

Transitive verbs *do* require following words to complete their meaning.

Example: The leaves hit the ground.

Intransitive verbs *do not* require following words to complete their meaning.

Example: The leaves fell.

Recognizing Objects and Complements

So, what is it that comes after the verb? The answer to this question depends on the type of verb:

Linking Verbs

Linking verbs connect subjects with their following descriptions. The description that comes after a linking verb is called a **subject complement**, because it completes—or complements—the subject. A subject complement can be a noun or adjective, or it can be a phrase functioning as one of these parts of speech.

Example: Today is the first day of spring. The air is fragrant.
v sc v sc

Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs require following words, or **objects**, to complete their meanings. Objects can take three different patterns:

Direct Object

A **direct object** is a noun that identifies *who* or *what* receives the action of the verb.

Example: The puppy devoured the steak.
DO

Indirect Object + Direct Object

An **indirect object** is a noun that identifies *for whom* the action of the verb is performed or *to whom* the direct object goes.

Example: My mom sent me money.
IO DO

Direct Object + Object Complement

An **object complement** *renames* or *describes* the object. Like a subject complement, it can be a noun or an adjective.

Example: The reporters declared the election a windfall.
DO OC



Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs do not require following words to complete their meanings. However, they are often followed by words or phrases that give more information about the action taking place in the sentence.

Example: The leaves fell softly from the tree.

Exercise

Part One Read the following example sentences. Identify each verb as intransitive, transitive, or linking. Then identify each subject complement, direct object, indirect object, and object complement.

1. The runner drank a bottle of water to cool his parched throat.
2. I gave my love a cherry that had no stone.
3. The kite soared through the air.
4. Watching kids climb trees makes me nervous.
5. The children are very hungry; they are banging pots and pans in the kitchen.

Part Two Using verbs from the box, construct five sentences, each with a different sentence pattern.

gain	destroy	loan
be (is, am, are, etc.)	laugh	consider
discover	tremble	open
arrive	make	seem

1. (Subject + Linking Verb + Subject Complement)
2. (Subject + Transitive Verb + Direct Object)
3. (Subject + Transitive Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object)
4. (Subject + Transitive Verb + Direct Object + Object Complement)
5. (Subject + Intransitive Verb)

For more practice, choose a passage from a book, newspaper, or magazine you are reading. See if you can identify the types of sentence patterns that are used.