

Verbs - Linking

The linking verb is a special kind of verb that links the subject of a sentence with a word that **describes** the subject. This descriptive word is called a **complement** and is always a noun, pronoun, or adjective. The **complement** refers back to the subject and tells us something about it.

Here are some examples of linking verbs with their subjects and complements:

Subject	+	Linking Verb	+	Complement
Angela		<i>is</i>		my [sister].
Marvin		<i>looks</i>		[tired].
We		<i>are</i>		[friends].
Mary		<i>feels</i>		[sad].

Linking verbs are always **intransitive**. There is never an object after a linking verb. Linking verbs are not action verbs; they are **state of being** verbs.

The most common linking verbs are forms of the verb **to be**:

be	was	have been	would be
being	were	had been	can be
am	shall be	shall have been	could be
is	will be	will have been	should have been
are	has been	should be	would have been
			could have been

Other common linking verbs are:

seem	stay
feel	sound
become	look
taste	turn
appear	remain
smell	grow

In the following sentences identify the linking verbs and their subjects and complements. Underline the subject once, draw two lines under the linking verb, and put brackets around the complement.

e.g., A policeman's job is very [difficult]. (The word "is" would be double underlined.)

Exercise A

1. He was my best friend for many years.
2. The rain is cold in the winter.
3. The mountains look beautiful in the mist.
4. Dogs always feel frisky after a bath.
5. Howard will be happy in his new house.
6. This soup tastes very spicy.
7. Roy has been an engineer for five years.
8. The pizza on sale in the cafeteria today smelled delicious.
9. Everyone appeared relieved at the end of the semester.
10. Dennis will be glad to give you a ride to the dance this evening.
11. My brother seemed tired at the end of the soccer match.
12. The hamburgers will be ready in five minutes.

13. Evelyn should have been thrilled to win the lottery.
14. In the afternoon, the sky grew cloudy.
15. The weather has been cold for more than a month.

Exercise B

(Follow the directions for Exercise A)

1. The students felt confident about the final exam.
2. With practice, Carol could be the best player on the volleyball team.
3. The music coming from that outdoor cafe sounds loud.
4. The child became ill after eating so many green apples.
5. We were hot and tired after our hike in the mountains.
6. He should have been more careful with his new car.
7. Michael will be a dentist after one more year of study.
8. In Canada, women became voters in 1918.
9. Is the work important?
10. I would be happy to help you with your homework.
11. Your first day on the job will be a very important event.
12. Lemonade tastes refreshingly cool on a hot summer day.
13. These hiking boots look very uncomfortable.
14. He was confident about his ability to handle a crisis.
15. Has your mother been sick recently?
16. The house stayed warm throughout the severe winter.

Distinguishing Between Linking Verbs and Action Verbs

Remember that some linking verbs can also function as regular action verbs, depending on how they are used in the sentence.

Verbs such as sound, taste, smell, and feel can function as transitive verbs having objects.

e.g., He **sounded** his horn.

She **smelled** the flowers.

I **tasted** the steak.

He **felt** the bump on his head.

Similarly, verbs like look, appear, and remain can be used as intransitive verbs:

e.g., She **looked** at the cover of the book.

He **appeared** before the magistrate.

They **remained** in the room.

Exercise C

Underline the verbs in the following sentences. In the spaces provided, indicate whether they are linking verbs (LV) or action verbs (AV):

e.g., Fred looks tired today.

L.V.

Joan looked in her purse for the car keys.

A.V.

1. Bruce felt pleased with the results of his test. _____
2. The pitcher appeared nervous before the start of the game. _____
3. Elizabeth looked everywhere for his missing biology textbook. _____
4. In an emergency, stay calm. _____
5. Jake felt the sharp thorns of the rose bush. _____
6. The members of the school band will appear at our concert next week. _____
7. Our workload has become heavier in the past year. _____
8. Every fall, the leaves of the maple tree turn red. _____

9. Carefully, the little girl tasted the hot soup. _____
10. Pat looked suspiciously at the strange box on the shelf. _____
11. Chris felt the hot iron cautiously to avoid burning his hand. _____
12. All the members of the committee felt happy about the decision. _____
13. Sam looked green after eating the whole cake. _____
14. Has Nancy been a member of the music club for a long time? _____
15. The sweet peas along the back fence grew quickly this summer. _____
16. The weather remained cold for the entire month. _____
17. Do you feel comfortable in your new shoes? _____
18. The ship sounded its foghorn in the gloomy darkness. _____
19. Mr. Hughes remained in the Navy for ten years. _____
20. The service at this store has always been prompt. _____
21. A career in aerospace sounds exciting. _____
22. The team did not seem unhappy about its defeat. _____
23. The moon, riding high above the clouds, appeared ghostly. _____
24. Tom's dancing is becoming more graceful. _____

Answer Key

Exercise A (bold print indicates double underline)

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|---|--|
| 1. <u>He</u> was [friend] | 9. <u>Everyone</u> appeared [relieved] |
| 2. <u>rain</u> is [cold] | 10. <u>Dennis</u> will be [glad] |
| 3. <u>mountains</u> looked [beautiful] | 11. <u>brother</u> seemed [tired] |
| 4. <u>Dogs</u> feel [frisky] | 12. <u>hamburgers</u> will be [ready] |
| 5. <u>Howard</u> will be [happy] | 13. <u>Evelyn</u> should have been [thrilled] |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6. <u>soup</u> tastes [spicy] | 14. <u>sky</u> grew [cloudy] |
| 7. <u>Roy</u> has been [engineer] | 15. <u>weather</u> has been [cold] |
| 8. <u>pizza</u> smelled [delicious] | |

Exercise B (bold print indicates double underline)

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|--|--|
| 1. <u>students</u> felt [confident] | 9. <u>work</u> is [important] |
| 2. <u>Carol</u> could be [player] | 10. <u>I</u> would be [happy] |
| 3. <u>music</u> sounds [loud] | 11. <u>day</u> will be [event] |
| 4. <u>child</u> became [ill] | 12. <u>Lemonade</u> tastes [cool] |
| 5. <u>We</u> were [hot], [tired] | 13. <u>boots</u> look [uncomfortable] |
| 6. <u>He</u> should have been [careful] | 14. <u>He</u> was [confident] |
| 7. <u>Michael</u> will be [dentist] | 15. <u>mother</u> has been [sick] |
| 8. <u>women</u> became [voters] | 16. <u>house</u> stayed [warm] |

Exercise C

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|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <u>felt</u> , LV | 13. <u>looked</u> , LV |
| 2. <u>appeared</u> , AV | 14. <u>has been</u> , LV |
| 3. <u>looked</u> , AV | 15. <u>grew</u> , AV |
| 4. <u>stay</u> , LV | 16. <u>remained</u> , LV |
| 5. <u>felt</u> , AV | 17. <u>do feel</u> , LV |
| 6. <u>will appear</u> , AV | 18. <u>sounded</u> , AV |
| 7. <u>has become</u> , LV | 19. <u>remained</u> , AV |
| 8. <u>turn</u> , LV | 20. <u>has been</u> , LV |
| 9. <u>tasted</u> , AV | 21. <u>sounds</u> , LV |

10. looked, AV

11. felt, AV

12. felt, LV

22. did seem, LV

23. appeared, LV

24. is becoming, LV