



A PDF study
guide.

Transitive & Intransitive

Verbs

What's the
difference?



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Transitive and Intransitive verbs

A **Transitive verb** is a verb used with a *direct object*

“**Raise** *your hand* if you know the answer.” – *your hand* is the object of the transitive verb RAISE.

An **Intransitive verb** is a verb used without a direct object

“Smoke was **rising** from the chimney.” – the intransitive verb RISE has no object (*from the chimney* tells us where the smoke is coming from, it is not the object of the verb.)

Definitions

An **intransitive verb** is simply defined as a verb that does not take a *direct object*. There’s no word in the sentence that tells who or what received the action.

<https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/verbs/intransitive-verbs.html>

In contrast, a **transitive verb** does take a *direct object*. This means that the word that comes directly after the **verb** will be its *object*. The object will tell us who or what received the action.

What does *take a direct object* mean?

Let me explain with some helpful examples. We will look at the transitive verb **RAISE** and the intransitive verb **RISE** to show us what is meant by a *DIRECT OBJECT*.

RAISE

“Universities are **raising** *tuition*.”

•**Raise** is a transitive verb. It can take a *direct object*. In this sentence, the noun *tuition* is the object. It comes directly after the verb **raising**. We also know who is raising tuition, universities are raising tuition.

RISE

“The cost of university is **rising**.”

•**Rise** is an intransitive verb. ‘**Rising**’ is not followed by a noun, it does not have a *direct object*. We don’t know why the cost is rising or who did it.

Transitive

- raise
- love
- throw
- kick
- respect

Intransitive

- die
- arrive
- complain
- lie
- stay

Both (Verbs with 2 versions)



- stop
- start
- change



TRANSITIVE verb examples

“**Raise** *your hand* if you know the answer.” – *your hand* is the object of the transitive verb **RAISE**.

Here are 4 more transitive verbs that need an object.

- love
- throw
- kick
- respect

You can see by their definitions that **somebody/something** is used with these verbs. The **somebody/something** is the **object**.

LOVE – to have very strong feelings of liking and caring for somebody
to like or enjoy something very much

“I **love** living in Tokyo.”

“Harry **loves** Sally.”



THROW – to send something from your hand through the air by moving your hand or arm quickly

“Jason can **throw** a 150 km\hr fastball.”

“Can you **throw** me a towel.”

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/throw_1?q=throw

KICK – to hit somebody/something with your foot

“The boys were **kicking** a ball around in the yard.”

“Shelley **kicked** Kirk in the shin.”

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/kick_1?q=kick



RESPECT – to have a very good opinion of somebody/something; to admire somebody/something

“I **respect** politicians that keep their promises.”

“Mindy is very polite, she **respects** her elders.”

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/respect_2



***Be careful! These verbs can
also be nouns...**

Hi honey, give me some love! – the verb in this sentence is GIVE.

Nice throw Jason, your pitches are getting faster. – the adjective NICE comes before the noun form of throw.

She gave him a kick on the shin. – The noun kick comes after the article A.

Mindy always shows her elders respect.- the verb in this sentence is SHOWS.





Smoke was **rising** from *the chimney.*

Smoke **rises** automatically. No one is 'raising' the smoke. Intransitive verbs are often followed by prepositions but not by a *direct object*.



INTRANSITIVE verb examples

“Smoke was **rising** from the chimney.” – Smoke rises automatically. No one is ‘raising’ the smoke

“As the price of gas continues to **rise**, electric cars are becoming more popular.” – The price of gas is increasing for several reasons, but none of these reasons are mentioned. We know that the price is increasing but we don’t know why.

*Even though the noun phrase electric cars follows the intransitive verb rise, it is not the direct object. In this sentence electric cars is the subject of the second clause. – The second clause follows the comma. (,)

As the price of
gas continues to



rise, electric cars are
becoming more
popular.



RISE is one example of a verb that is only intransitive. **Here are 5 more common verb examples that only have an INTRANSITIVE form.**



- die
- arrive
- complain
- lie
- stay

These verbs can't take an object. *Note how many transitive verbs are followed by a preposition.

DIE – to stop existing; to disappear

“His secret **died** with him.” (= he never told anyone)

“The words **died** on my lips.” (= I stopped speaking)

ARRIVE – to get to a place, especially at the end of a journey

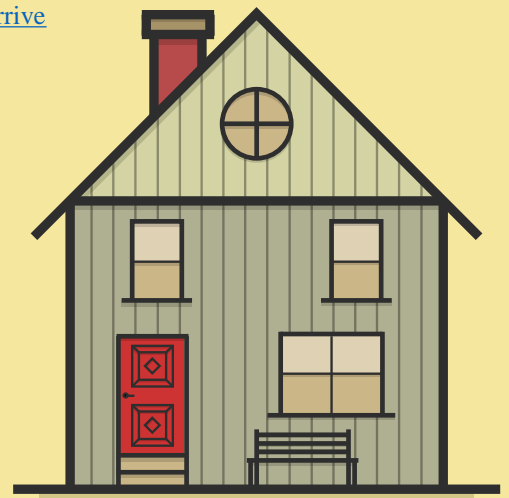
arrive in... “She’ll **arrive** in New York at noon.”

arrive at... “The train **arrived** at the station 20 minutes late.”

“I was pleased to hear you **arrived** home safely.” *The noun home is not the direct object of the sentence. Home is one of 3 places that we travel TO but don’t use the preposition TO.

Go ~~to~~ home is incorrect. **X**

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/arrive?q=arrive>



COMPLAIN – to say that you are annoyed, unhappy, or not satisfied with somebody/something

“Shoppers **complained** about the lack of bathrooms.”

“I’m going to **complain** to the manager about this.”

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/complain?q=COMPLAIN>

LIE – (of a person or an animal) to be or put yourself in a flat position so that you are not standing or sitting

“I’m going to **lie** down for a minute. I have a headache.”

“The dog was **lying** beside my bed when I woke up.”

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/lie1_1?q=LIE

STAY – to continue to be in a particular place for a period of time without moving away

“It’s too hot today! I just want to **stay** in bed.”

“This is a fun party, sorry I have to go. I wish I could **stay** longer.”

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/stay_1?q=stay

It’s too hot...



How to identify Transitive and Intransitive verbs

Many verbs have an **intransitive** form and a **transitive** form. Below I will list a few common examples of these verbs and explain how to identify them.

We can tell from the word that follows our verb if it is transitive or intransitive.

Transitive verbs will be followed by a noun (direct object). Intransitive verbs will be followed by a **preposition**, an **adverb**, or a **period** or *comma* to **end the sentence** or *finish the clause*.



Stop

Transitive

“If I want to go I will go. No one can **stop** me.”

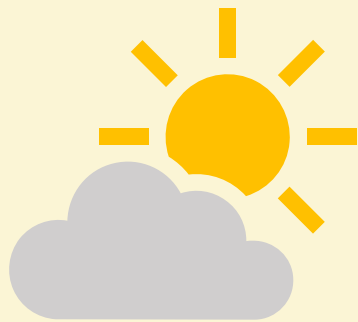
Transitive - **Stop** is followed by the noun “me.” This is the direct object.



Intransitive

“Suddenly the rain **stopped**.”

Intransitive - **Stopped** is the end of the sentence, nothing follows it.



Start

Transitive

“Olivia needs to relax. She is always **starting** fights with her coworkers.”

Transitive - We know who is **starting** (Olivia) and what is starting (fights). Fights are the direct object following the verb.

Intransitive

“Let’s go, the movie **starts** at 9:00.”

Intransitive - We don’t know who or what is **starting** the movie. Remember that a preposition (AT) can follow an intransitive verb but a noun cannot.

Change

WEB

“Heather
changed *her hair*.
It looks great!”



Transitive – **Changed** is followed by the noun phrase “*her hair*.” This is the direct object.



“My hometown has
really **changed** *since*
I was last there.”

Intransitive – **Changed** is followed by the adverb *since* in this sentence, not a direct object.

Conclusion

We learned from this post that an **intransitive verb** does not take a direct object, it is not followed by a noun.

A **transitive verb** will be followed by a direct object telling us who or what is affected by the verb.

Keep studying, you're doing great! After more English practice and listening to native English speakers you will naturally understand which verbs are transitive or intransitive. Listening practice will help your grammar.

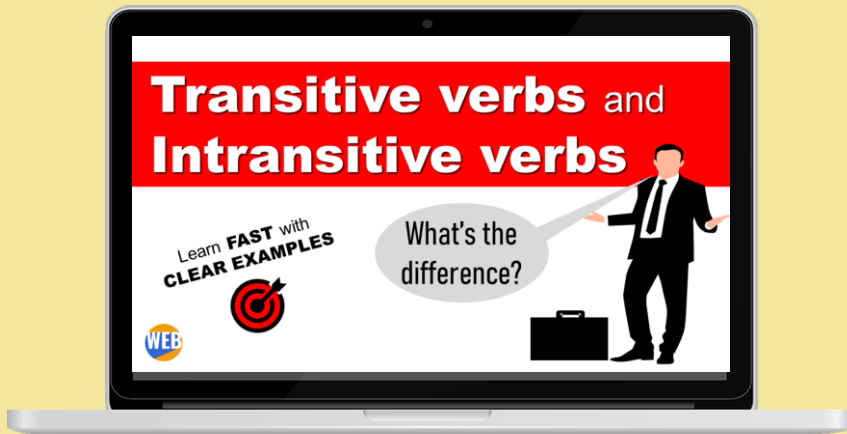


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Video link on the next page.

For **listening practice** please watch the video. Listen to the pronunciation with natural sentences spoken by a native speaker.



[VIDEO](#)

Review the grammar while you **improve** your English listening skills.

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