



## Notes – Complements and Verbs

- I. Introduction
  - a. Want to focus on the verb itself and its objects (not the subject)
  - b. Complements
    - i. Obligatory constituents
    - ii. Usually NPs or AdjPs
    - iii. If you think some non-NP / non-AdjP is a complement, try substituting a NP and see if it still makes sense.
- II. Classification of Verbs by Complement
  - a. Intransitive
    - i. Takes no object.
    - ii. "She smiled" (easy!)
    - iii. Figure out if what follows the verb is really a complement ("She smiled shyly")
    - iv. May have cognate object (expressions)
      1. Seems like it should be intransitive, but there's something acting like an object.
      2. "He died a good death."
      3. "She slept a sound sleep"
      4. NB: Cannot form a passive with an intransitive verb (turn the object into the subject) "A sound sleep was slept by her." Clearly doesn't make sense.
    - v. Particles
      1. Verb + Particle = Compound Verb: "The plane *took off*."
      2. Could just underline the whole thing as the verb.
  - b. Monotransitives
    - i. Sometimes called just "transitives"
    - ii. These take exactly one object (direct object)
    - iii. With few exceptions, these can be made into passives
      1. Can often drop the "by" phrase and say something like "mistakes were made"
      2. These are called agentless passives
    - iv. Pseudo-transitives
      1. These are exceptions that can't be made into passives
      2. "Ten chapters were contained by the book."
      3. "Her sister was resembled by Joan"
      4. "Ten cookies are had by Herman."
    - v. Understood objects
      1. The typical activity/object associated with the verb that can be omitted.
      2. "The students were drinking."
        - a. The default subject is "alcohol."
        - b. If something else is intended, say it explicitly: "The students were drinking coffee."
      3. "Megan was reading" (a book).
    - vi. Direct Object
      1. Usually answers the question "What?"
      2. To identify the direct object, convert from passive to active first.
    - vii. Using marked infinitives as the complement
      1. Two analyses: "Expect to go home" (passives weird but okay)
      2. "Expects to go home" (no passives)
      3. "Try to make it" (easiest way)
      4. "She remembered to take her medicine"
    - viii. Participles as Complements

1. Present participle
  2. "Try doing the homework" (participial phrase)
- ix. Finite Clauses
1. (Marked for tense – not infinitive)
  2. "I think", "I believe", "I said"
  3. "I said, 'We're not having a quiz today.'" (Direct object underlined)
  4. Could also have "I said *that* ..."
  5. "She knows where they keep the keys."
  6. "She knows if they are having a party"
  7. It's finite because there's a finite verb.
- x. Non-Finite Clauses
1. "I expect him to win the election"
  2. "expect" is the main (present tense) verb.
  3. "to win" is an infinitive in the direct object.
- c. Ditransitive
- i. Takes both an indirect and direct object.
  - ii. Indirect object is usually a goal or benefactive.
  - iii. Sometimes the indirect object is omitted. "He left (her) a lot of money."
  - iv. Sometimes either may be omitted.
    1. She told me a story.
    2. She told a story.
    3. She told me.
  - v. You can usually change the order, but may need to add 'to', 'of', or 'for'
  - vi. Passives
    1. Can be made from ditransitive verbs – sometimes can even make two.
    2. "The girl told me a story." (active)
    3. "The girl told a story to me." (active)
    4. "A story was told to me by the girl" (passive)
    5. "I was told a story by the girl" (passive)
  - vii. The direct object (second object) may be a clause
    1. I asked [him] [who had left]
    2. "who had left" is the direct object, and is a finite clause.
    3. "him" is the indirect object
  - viii. Identifying ditransitive verbs
    1. If you can change the order or remove a clause, it's ditransitive.
    2. If there are two *active* orders for the sentence, it's surely ditransitive.
- d. Linking Verbs
- i. Their function is to link the subject with the complement
  - ii. Subject-complement is usually a Noun Phrase or Adjective Phrase
    1. They are excellent students ("predicate nominative")
    2. Our students are excellent ("predicate adjective")
    3. In either case, "subject complement" describes it fine.
  - iii. Sometimes other things work (besides noun phrases and adjective phrases)
    1. "The girls are on the team" (PrepP)
    2. "It tastes bad" (Adv)
  - iv. Examples: seems, tastes, smells, acts, looks
  - v. A verb is *linking* OR *monotransitive* OR *ditransitive*. It cannot be in more than one classification!
- e. Object-Complement Verbs
- i. A verb with two objects could be either a ditransitive or an object-complement verb.
  - ii. Here you have an object and an object complement.
  - iii. Usually the object complement is a noun phrase or an adjective phrase.
  - iv. It provides more information about the object (the indirect object for a ditransitive verb doesn't do that)

- v. You can sometimes insert “to be” between the object and object complement
- vi. “The robot designated the dentist his partner.”
  - 1. The dentist IS his partner.
  - 2. “The robot” == Subject
  - 3. “designated” == verb
  - 4. “the dentist” == Direct Object
  - 5. “his partner” == object complement
- vii. “All this friction makes her hands rough”
  - 1. Her hands ARE rough.
  - 2. “All this friction makes rough to her hands” doesn’t make any sense, so it can’t be a ditransitive verb.
- viii. The two complements are equal by the end, so it must be an object-complement verb.

### III. Phrasal Verbs vs. Prepositional Verbs

#### a. Phrasal

- i. Have a particle with them -- look just like prepositions.
- ii. The particle really doesn’t mean much.
- iii. Tests:
  - 1. The particle may follow the object (usually): “Turn the light on”
  - 2. If the object is a pronoun, the particle MUST follow the object (“turn it on”)
  - 3. “Turn on the light” is okay. “Turn off it” is not okay.
  - 4. Cannot insert an adverb between the particle and verb. “Turn quickly off the light” doesn’t work.
  - 5. These can be made passive.
  - 6. The particle is often stressed in speech. Contrast:
    - a. “He turned the car off the road”
    - b. “He turned the car off”
- iv. Examples
  - 1. “do away with”, “get along with”
  - 2. “stand up for”
  - 3. et cetera

#### b. Prepositional Verbs

- i. Verb + PrepP
- ii. Preposition is determined by the verb.
- iii. These are usually intransitive
- iv. Tests
  - 1. The preposition may NOT follow the object (“We won’t laugh the puppy at”)
  - 2. Possible to insert an adverb between the verb and preposition (“They laughed loudly at the puppy”)
  - 3. Can *sometimes* make a passive
  - 4. We usually don’t stress prepositions in speech (see earlier example)

- c. Verbs fit into some classification (monotransitive, ditransitive, etc) and may ALSO be phrasal or prepositional (if a preposition-like word is also in the sentence).