

Linking Verbs

We have spent quite a bit of time talking about sentences that feature action verbs. Action verbs are easy to identify because they describe an action.

Some tell about an action that you can see.

- The boy **kicked** the ball.
- The girl **flew** a kite.
- The dog **ate** her dinner.

Some tell about a mental action that you can't see.

- They **wanted** to win the lottery.
- The fans **hoped** for a victory.
- The children **wished** for a snow day.

But there is a whole different class of verbs that do NOT show action. They are called “linking” or “state of being” verbs. Linking verbs tell us about the state of someone or something right now, the state that person is in. They can be hard to spot if you are used to dealing only with action verbs!

Linking verbs - These do not show action. They “link” a subject with a NOUN or an ADJECTIVE in the predicate. They RENAME the subject with another noun or they DESCRIBE the state that a person or a thing is in.

HELPFUL TIP: When you think of the word “link,” you should also be thinking of a **chain**. Chains hold one thing to another. **A linking verb is the chain between the subject and a word in the predicate.**

The most common linking verbs are:

am is are was
were be being been

- I **am** thrilled. (The word “I” is linked to the word “thrilled.” The LV “am” is the chain.)
- The actress **was** a star. (The word “actress” is linked to the word “star.” The LV “was” is the chain.)
- The bear **is** angry. (The word “bear” is linked to the word “angry.” The LV “is” is the chain.)
- The team **was** sad that they lost. (The word “team” is linked to the word “sad.” The LV “was” is the chain.)
- Marvin's parents **were** proud of him. (The word “parents” is linked to the word “proud.” The LV “were” is the chain.)

Other common linking verbs:

look appear become taste
seem feel sound remain smell

BE CAREFUL! Several of the verbs above can be linking verbs OR action verbs! Context clues will tell you if the verb is an action or linking verb! Look at the sentence and ask yourself if there is an action being done OR if the verb is *describing* something.

- Jeremy **tasted** the sandwich. (action - Jeremy is actually doing something. He is tasting the sandwich.)
- The sandwich **tasted** funny. (linking - There is no action. The sandwich is being *described*.)
- Doris **smelled** the flower. (action - Doris is using her nose to smell the flower.)
- The flower **smelled** lovely. (linking - There is no action. The flower is being *described*.)
- The bride **looked** at her handsome fiancé. (action - The bride is doing something.)
- The bride **looked** beautiful. (linking - There is no action. The bride is being *described*.)

As stated earlier, linking verbs connect the subject to a NOUN or an ADJECTIVE in the predicate. Those NOUNS and ADJECTIVES have special names.

Predicate Nominatives are NOUNS that follow a linking verb and **RENAME** the subject.

- Percy **was** the best **player** on the field. (Percy is the SS. Was is the LV. Player is the PN.)
- That red **bird is** a **cardinal**. (Bird is the SS. "Is" is the LV. Cardinal is the PN.)
- I **am** a Columbus Blue Jackets **fan**. (I is the SS. Am is the LV. Fan is the PN.)
- The **chocolates were** a **gift** for her grandma. (Chocolates are the SS. Were is the LV. Gift is the PN.)
- Miranda's **grades** have **been** a **problem**. (Grades is the SS. Been is the LV. Problem is the PN.)

Predicate Adjectives are ADJECTIVES that follow a linking verb and **DESCRIBE** the subject.

- The **children were** **charming**. (Children is the SS. Were is the LV. Charming is the PA.)
- The **sky is** **clear** this evening. (Sky is the SS. "Is" is the LV. Clear is the PA.)
- **Haunted houses** can **be** **terrifying** to some. (HH are the SS. Be is the LV. Terrifying is the PA.)
- **Students** in the class quickly **became** **bored**. (Students are the SS. Became is the LV. Bored is the PA.)
- The dolphin's **skin felt** **rubbery**. (Skin is the SS. Felt is the LV. Rubbery is the PA.)