10.1 Action Verbs

You may have heard of the movie director's call for "lights, camera, *action!*" The actions in movies and plays can be named by verbs. If a word expresses action and tells what a subject does, it is an action verb.

ACTION VERB

- An **action verb** is a word that names an action. An action verb may contain more than one word.

Notice the action verbs in the following sentences.

The director **shouts** at the members of the cast.
The lights **are flashing** above the stage.
The audience **arrives** in time for the performance.
Several singers **have memorized** the lyrics of a song.

Action verbs can express physical actions, such as *shout* and *arrive.* They can also express mental activities, such as *memorize* and *forget.*

Action Verbs	
Physical	shout, flash, arrive, own, talk, hit, applaud, praise
Mental	remember, memorize, forget, appreciate

Have, has, and *had* are action verbs too when they name what the subject owns or holds.

The actors in this play already **have** their uniforms.
The director **has** a script in her back pocket.

She **acted** as if . . .

10.2 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

In some sentences, the predicate consists of only a verb.

The actor **remembered.**

Usually sentences provide more information. The predicate often names who or what received the action of the verb.

The actor remembered **lines** from the play.

DIRECT OBJECT

In the sentence above, *lines* tells what was remembered. It is the direct object.

- A **direct object** receives the action of a verb. It answers the question *whom?* or *what?* after an action verb.

Some sentences have a compound direct object. That is, a sentence may have more than one direct object.

We saw **Maurice** and **Inez** in the audience.

When an action verb transfers action to a direct object, it is transitive. When an action verb has no direct object, it is intransitive.

- A **transitive verb** has a direct object.
- An **intransitive verb** does not have a direct object.

Many action verbs can be transitive or intransitive. Such verbs can be labeled transitive or intransitive only by examining their use in a particular sentence.

The audience **applauds** the actors. [transitive]

The audience **applauds** loudly. [intransitive]

Exercise 3 Identifying Transitive Verbs

For each sentence, write the action verb. If the verb is transitive, write the direct object.

1. Japanese kabuki theaters present popular scenes from dramas and dances.
2. Kabuki performers often wear very elaborate costumes.
3. Male actors perform all the female roles.
4. Characters make entrances and exits along the "flower way" aisle.
5. Instrumentalists behind a screen on stage provide the music.

Exercise 4 Distinguishing Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

For each sentence, write the action verb. If the verb has a direct object, write *T*. If it does not, write *I*.

1. The director remembered this fine old theater from past performances.
2. He loved its air of history and elegance.
3. Day after day, week after week, the cast rehearsed.
4. Finally, the day of the first performance arrived.
5. The director inspected the scenery, costumes, and lights.
6. Many people bought tickets to the new play.
7. The almost-silent audience watched.
8. Nearly all the people liked the music and the drama.
9. At the end of the play, everyone clapped wildly.
10. Some enthusiastic spectators even cheered.
11. The majority of the critics enjoyed the performance.
12. They wrote favorable reviews.
13. The musical show succeeded.
14. In fact, the director won an award for it from a theater guild.
15. At the awards ceremony, the director spoke.
16. The cast and their guests listened carefully.
17. The director thanked the producers.
18. A newspaper reporter asked some questions.
19. The director complimented the stage crew for the scenery.
20. He praised the actors for their performances.

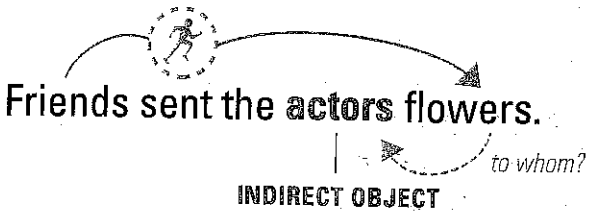
10.3 Verbs with Indirect Objects

Words that answer the question *whom?* or *what?* after an action verb are called direct objects.

Amalia wears a **costume.**

Sometimes both a direct object and an indirect object follow an action verb.

- An **indirect object** answers the question *to whom?* or *for whom?* an action is done.



The direct object in the sentence above is *flowers.* The indirect object is *actors. Actors* answers the question *to whom?* after the action verb *sent.*

Some sentences have a compound indirect object.

The audience gave the **cast** and the **orchestra** an ovation.

An indirect object appears only in a sentence that has a direct object. Two easy clues can help you recognize an indirect object. First, an indirect object always comes before a direct object. Second, you can add the preposition *to* or *for* before the indirect object and change its position. The sentence will still make sense, although there will no longer be an indirect object.

Friends sent the **actors flowers.**
[*Actors* is an indirect object.]

Friends sent flowers **to the actors.**
[*Actors* is not an indirect object.]

You know that in the first sentence *actors* is the indirect object because it comes before the direct object and because it can be placed after the preposition *to,* as in the second sentence.

Exercise 5 Distinguishing Direct and Indirect Objects

For each sentence, write the direct object. If the sentence contains an indirect object, write it and underline it.

1. None of the musicians know the composition.
2. The orchestra leader brings the musicians the music.
3. For several days, the orchestra leader teaches the orchestra a song.
4. The sopranos learn their part first.
5. The audience loves the musical comedy.
6. That famous director frequently gives performers drama lessons.
7. She also gives children lessons in the afternoon.
8. She wrote plays and operas for many years.
9. Now she shows her students her special techniques.
10. The theater offers young people many opportunities.
11. Students ask actors and directors questions about different roles.
12. The expert director and producers bring the show success.
13. The director offers her students advice about their careers.
14. The actors memorize scripts.
15. One young writer sold a producer and a director his screenplay.
16. The theater club offers subscribers a discount.
17. The theater also sends subscribers performance information.
18. Subscribers often buy extra tickets for their friends.
19. Generous patrons give the theater large donations.
20. The theater usually gives generous patrons free tickets.

Exercise 6 Using Indirect Objects

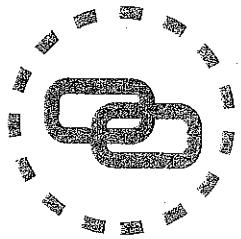
Rewrite each sentence, changing each prepositional phrase into an indirect object.

SAMPLE The cast members gave interviews to the press.
ANSWER The cast members gave the press interviews.

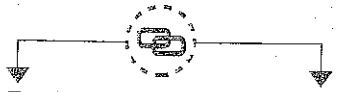
1. The playwright gave a special tribute to her mother.
2. The youngest cast member handed a dozen roses to the star.
3. Cast members made a comical top hat for the director.
4. The audience offered thunderous applause to the entire cast.
5. The play's producer sent fifteen photographs of the event to the local newspaper.

10.4 Linking Verbs and Predicate Words

- A **linking verb** connects the subject of a sentence with a noun or adjective in the predicate.



LINKING VERB



Bess Powell **was** the director.

LINKING VERB

The verb *was* is a form of the verb *be.* It links the word *director* to the subject, telling what the subject is.

- A **predicate noun** is a noun that follows a linking verb. It defines the subject by telling what it is.
- A **predicate adjective** is an adjective that follows a linking verb. It describes the subject by telling what it is like.

A sentence may contain a compound predicate noun or a compound predicate adjective.

The set designer was a **carpenter** and **electrician.** [compound predicate noun]

He is **stern** but **kind.** [compound predicate adjective]

Some of the more common linking verbs are listed below.

Common Linking Verbs			
be	appear	turn	smell
become	look	taste	sound
seem	grow	feel	

Many of these verbs can be used as action verbs also.

The director grew angry. [linking verb]

The director grew a beard. [action verb]

Exercise 7 Identifying Action and Linking Verbs

Write each verb. Then write whether it is an *action* verb or a *linking* verb.

1. Lorraine Hansberry became the first African American woman with a play on Broadway.
2. *A Raisin in the Sun* is the title of that play.
3. Hansberry used a line from a Langston Hughes poem for the title.
4. The play tells the story of an African American Chicago family and the dreams of the different family members.
5. In the course of the play, the family grows stronger and closer.

Exercise 8 Identifying Linking Verbs and Predicate Nouns and Adjectives

Write each verb and label it *action* or *linking*. If it is a linking verb, write the predicate word or words and add the label *predicate noun* or *predicate adjective*.

1. William Shakespeare was a great playwright and poet.
2. In fact, he is a giant in world literature.
3. Characters in Shakespeare's plays seem universal.
4. Some of the characters were actually historical figures.
5. Some costumes in Shakespeare's plays look odd.
6. The styles of earlier times appear strange today.
7. Shakespeare's language puzzles some modern listeners.
8. In time, however, that language becomes very clear and understandable.
9. Many of Shakespeare's plots sound exaggerated.
10. His stories thrill audiences all over the world with their power, beauty, and truth.
11. Some of the characters are more popular than others.
12. In *Romeo and Juliet* a character drinks poison.
13. In *Othello* the main character grows jealous.
14. In *The Merchant of Venice* a clever young woman teaches other characters about justice and mercy.
15. Some members of Shakespeare's original casts were children.
16. The children played women's roles.
17. Films of Shakespeare's plays are plentiful and popular.
18. Great actors and actresses perform complex roles.
19. Laurence Olivier and John Barrymore were great Hamlets.
20. More recently Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh have played Hamlet.

10.5 Present and Past Tenses

The verb in a sentence tells what action takes place. It also tells when the action takes place. The form of a verb that shows the time of the action is called the **tense** of the verb.

- The **present tense** of a verb names an action that is occurring now or that occurs regularly. It can also express a general truth.

  A great actor **wins** awards.

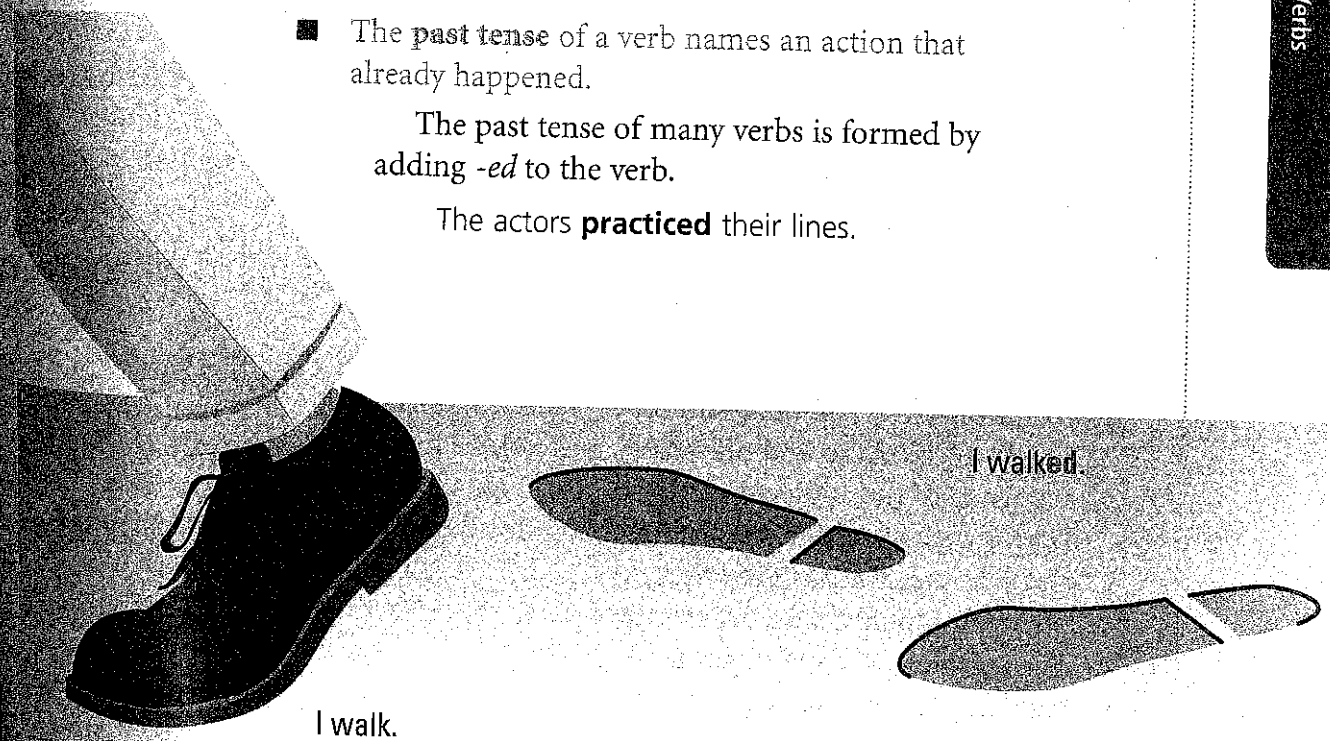
In the present tense, the base form of a verb is used with all subjects except singular nouns and the words *he, she,* and *it.* When the subject is a singular noun or *he, she,* or *it, -s* is usually added to the verb. Remember that a verb in a sentence must agree in number with its subject.

Present Tense Forms	
Singular	**Plural**
I **walk.**	We **walk.**
You **walk.**	You **walk.**
He, she, *or* it **walks.**	They **walk.**

- The **past tense** of a verb names an action that already happened.

  The past tense of many verbs is formed by adding *-ed* to the verb.

  The actors **practiced** their lines.



Exercise 9 Distinguishing Present and Past

Write the correct form of the verb that is in parentheses. Then write whether it is in the *present tense* or *past tense.*

1. A month ago, our music teacher (introduce) my sister and me to opera.
2. Opera is a form that (combine) music and drama into one production.
3. That combination (suit) my sister and me perfectly.
4. Last week we (attend) a light opera by Gilbert and Sullivan.
5. Every day that week, the show (start) precisely on time.
6. However, we (arrive) late because of bus delays.
7. After the show, we always (purchase) tickets for tomorrow's opera.
8. Yesterday a reviewer (compare) the lead performer with Caruso.
9. Enrico Caruso (live) at the beginning of the twentieth century.
10. In his lifetime, he (appear) in many operas throughout the world.
11. Caruso (arrive) in America in 1903.
12. Sometimes he (pass) out free tickets to poor people.
13. Caruso (earn) more money than any other singer at the time.
14. He always (maintain) a warm affection for his many fans.
15. Caruso often (play) tricks on his fellow performers.
16. He (possess) a dynamic personality.
17. Today singers still (talk) about his wonderful voice.
18. Now some people (listen) to his original recordings.
19. Some modern singers (copy) the great singer's style and technique.
20. That great Italian tenor (inspire) singers even today.

Exercise 10 Using Past Tense

For each sentence, write the present tense verb. Then write its past tense form.

1. People in the audience chat with one another before the performance.
2. Several classes of students almost fill the second balcony.
3. The lights blink on and off—once, twice, three times.
4. Members of the audience settle into their seats.
5. Darkness descends on the theater except for the glow of safety lights.
6. Not a sound disturbs the silence.
7. Then a spotlight focuses on the heavy red curtain across the stage.
8. The curtains part and reveal a city street.
9. Suddenly actors and actresses appear on the stage.
10. The magic of theater captivates the audience.