

Linking Verbs

My sister is a doctor.

The verb in this sentence, **is**, is different from the other two that we've just looked at. Like the transitive verbs, this verb has a noun, doctor, after it. But the noun (doctor) after it isn't receiving the action of **is** because **is** doesn't have an action, right?

In fact, the noun doctor and the noun sister are actually the same thing. So, we say that the verb in the middle is serving to link the subject and the noun that comes after the verb. In this case, doctor is the noun that comes after the verb, and we call this noun a complement (which essentially means complete) because it adds information to the subject.

So, **is** is what we call a linking verb. You should also know that grammarians consider linking verbs intransitive verbs; i.e., if you look up **be** in the dictionary, the dictionary will probably say that **be** is *vi*, or intransitive.

Actually, any word or phrase that comes after a linking verb can be a complement of the subject:

My sister is happy.

My sister is at home.

Notice that **happy** and **at home** modify, or give more information about, **sister**.

There are many linking verbs in English, but by far the most common ones are the ones that are all the forms of **to be** -- **is**, **are**, **was**, **were**, **have been**, **may have been**, **will have been**, etc. We call all of these words **be-verbs**. Check out the [TestMagic Glossary](#) for more information about this and other grammatical terms.

Some linking verbs include all of the words relating to the five (or six??) senses:

look, sound, feel, taste, smell

A few more examples:

grow, remain, prove, become, etc.

A good test to figure out whether a verb is a linking verb is to see whether it fits into the following sentence:

I _____ happy.

If a verb fits in that blank (and makes sense, of course!), it's probably a linking verb.

Here are some more examples of linking verbs with their complements:

I am a teacher.

I feel happy today.

Try to remain calm.

My little brother acts crazy sometimes.

The test proved more difficult than we had imagined.

We should notice two things -- that in each case, the complement modifies the subject and that verb serves to link the subject and the complement.