

## TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

One of the keys to understanding transitive and intransitive verbs is to understand the meaning of the grammatical phrase “direct object.” A direct object is the person, thing or event affected by an action verb. To further determine whether a sentence has a direct object, identify the subject of the sentence. Is the subject performing an action? If so, consider the person, thing or event that the subject is directing (or *trans*ferring) action to. This is the transitive verb.

**TRANSITIVE** verbs require a direct object to complete the meaning of the sentence.

**Example:** TO LAY – The verb is *lay*. The object is the *book*.

*I lay the book down on the table each day.*

*I laid the book down on the table yesterday.*

*I have lain the book down on the table every time I have come in the door.*

**Example:** TO RAISE – The verb is *raise*. The object is the *blinds*.

*I always raise the blinds as soon as I get there.*

*I raised the blinds at 8:00 yesterday.*

*I have raised the blinds at 8:00 every morning this week.*

**Example:** TO SET – The verb is *set*. The object is the *vase*.

*I always set the vase down very carefully.*

*I set it down very carefully last time.*

*You must not have set it down carefully enough.*

**INTRANSITIVE** verbs do not require a direct object to complete the meaning of the sentence.

**Example:** TO LIE – The verb is *lie*.

*Each day at 3:00 I lie down to take a nap.*

*Yesterday, however, I lay down at 3:00.*

*I would have lain down earlier if I had gotten home earlier.*

**Example:** TO RISE – The verb is *rise*.

*The sun rises later in the winter.*

*The sun rose at 4:47 yesterday.*

*The sun has risen later each day since the summer solstice.*

*She rises from her chair with grace.*

*She rose from her chair.*

**Example:** TO SIT – The verb is *sit*.

*I sit in the same seat each day.*

*I sat here last term, too.*

*I would have sat here before if someone had not gotten my seat.*

Some verbs may be transitive or intransitive, depending upon the sentence.

**Example:** TO STUDY – The verb is *study*.

*I studied the book.* – transitive

*I studied all night.* – intransitive