

What Are Linking Verbs?

Unlike an action verb a **Linking Verb** *connects* or *joins* the subject with another word that further identifies the subject (Predicate Noun) or describes the subject (Predicate Adjective). The most used and best-known linking verbs are the *to be* verb forms—am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being. But, these are not all of the linking verbs. Other verbs that also express condition are—appear, look, prove, feel, smell, taste, sound—and there are many more.

Examples:

The evil wizard **remained** silent about his plans.

Darth Vader **is** the father of Luke Skywalker.

The stories of dragons **appear** to be fiction.

In each of the examples above, the marked verb is a linking verb. Many students find it difficult to determine whether a verb is linking or action. The trick is not in recognizing the verb, but recognizing those words that “work” with verbs. There is a simple test to determine whether or not a verb is linking, but it is only simple if you understood Transitive and Intransitive verbs. Let’s review this test using the above example sentences.

Test: Subject + (replace “known” verb with *is* or *are*) + Transitive or Intransitive answer

- Now combine the three words
- If the three words make a complete thought, the original verb is linking—if not it is action

Examples:

wizard + ~~remained~~ is + silent
wizard is silent = This sentence is complete so “remained” is linking.

Darth Vader + ~~is~~ is + father
Darth Vader is father = The verb is already the test so it is pointless to try it.

stories + ~~appear~~ is + fiction
stories is fiction = The sentence is NOT complete. Try the second verb test.

stories + ~~appear~~ are + fiction
stories are fiction = The sentence is complete so “appear” is linking.

Now let’s do the test on a sentence that has an action verb so you can see what happens when the test doesn’t work.

Roberto refunded Rayna the cost of the unused ticket.

Roberto + ~~refunded~~ is + cost = This is NOT a complete thought

Roberto + ~~refunded~~ are + cost = This is NOT a complete thought

Since neither of the two test options worked to make a complete thought, the result is that the original verb “refunded” is action NOT linking. If the test had worked as it did in the first three

examples, then the original verb would have been linking.

Simple, right? The key is to practice the concept. Verbs are one of the most difficult aspects of the English language—or any language for that matter. The more you practice, the easier it will be to see the patterns of the language, and the easier it will become.

Now it is your turn:

Directions: Determine if each of the following verbs are linking or action.

1. The delicious dessert **was** cherry cobbler.

Test: dessert + _____ + cobbler

“was” is linking “was” is action

2. The exterior of the new auditorium **appears** stately.

Test: exterior + _____ + stately

“appears” is linking “appears” is action

3. The jeweler **sold** two lovely rings.

Test: _____ + _____ + rings

“sold” is linking “sold” is action

4. The smell of burning leaves **brought** memories of the past.

Test: _____ + _____ + _____

“brought” is linking “brought” is action

5. The music from the CD **sounded** pretty good for a used one.

Test: _____ + _____ + _____

“sounded” is linking “sounded” is action

6. The country church bells **sounded** across the meadow.

Test: _____ + _____ + _____

“sounded” is linking “sounded” is action

The answers are below.

FROM *WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS* BY WILSON RAWLS

That evening, a little after sundown, I opened the back gate. He walked out, stopped, turned around, and looked at me. He thanked me by wagging his tail.

With tears in my eyes, I said, "You're more than welcome, old fellow. In fact, you could've stayed here as long as you wanted to."

He whined and licked my hand.

I was wondering which way he would go. With one final whimper he turned and headed east. I couldn't help smiling as I watched him trot down the alley. I noticed the way his hind quarters shifted over to the right, never in line with the front, yet always in perfect rhythm. His long ears flopped up and down, keeping time with the jogging motion of his body.

Yes, they were all there, the unmistakable marks of a hunting hound.



Bloodhound—dogpedia.net

Where the alley emptied into the street, he stopped and looked back. I waved my hand.

As I watched him disappear in the twilight shadows, I whispered these words: "Good-bye, old fellow. Good luck, and good hunting!"

I didn't have to let him go. I could have kept him in my back yard, but to pen up a dog like that is a sin. It would have broken his heart. The will to live would have slowly left his body.

I had no idea where he had come from or where he was going. Perhaps it wasn't too far, or maybe it was a long, long way. I tried to make myself believe that his home was in the Ozark Mountains somewhere in Missouri, or Oklahoma. It wasn't impossible even though it was a long way from the Snake River Valley in Idaho.

I figured something drastic must have happened in his life, as it is very unusual for a hound to be traveling all alone. Perhaps he had been stolen, or maybe he had been sold for some much-needed money. Whatever it was that had interrupted his life, he was trying to straighten it out. He was going home to the master he loved, and with the help of God, he would make it.

Answers: 1. Linking, 2. Linking, 3. Action, 4. Action, 5. Linking, 6. Action