### The Linking Verb

**Recognize a linking verb when you find one.**

Linking verbs do not express action. Instead, they connect the *subject* of the *verb* to additional information about that subject.

Read these examples:

- **Keila is a shopaholic.**
  
  *Is* isn’t something that Keila can *do*. *Is* connects the subject, *Keila*, to additional information about her, that she will soon have a huge credit card bill to pay.

- **During the afternoon, my cats are content to nap on the couch.**
  
  *Are* isn’t something that cats can *do*. *Are* connects the subject, *cats*, to something said about them, that they enjoy sleeping on the furniture.

- **After drinking the old milk, Vladimir turned green.**
  
  *Turned* connects the subject, *Vladimir*, to something said about him, that he needed to find a bathroom quickly.

- **A five-item quiz seems impossibly long after a night of no studying.**
  
  *Seems* connects the subject, *a five-item quiz*, to something said about it, that its difficulty depends on preparation, not length.

- **Irene always feels sleepy after pigging out on pizza from Antonio’s.**
  
  *Feels* connects the subject, *Irene*, to her state of being, sleepiness.

**Depending on use, some verbs are both linking and action.**

The following verbs are *true* linking verbs: any form of the verb *be* (*am, is, are, was, were, has been, are being, might have been*, etc.), *become*, and *seem*. These true linking verbs are *always* linking verbs.
Then you have a list of verbs with split personalities: *appear, feel, grow, look, prove, remain, smell, sound, taste,* and *turn.* Sometimes these verbs are linking verbs; sometimes they are *action verbs.*

How do you determine the difference?

If you can substitute *am, is,* or *are* and the sentence still sounds logical, you have a *linking* verb on your hands.

If, after the substitution, the sentence makes no sense, then you are dealing with an *action* verb instead.

Here are examples:

*Sylvia tasted* the spicy squid eyeball stew.

*Sylvia is* the stew? I do not think so! *Tasted,* therefore, is an action verb in this sentence, something that Sylvia is *doing.*

The squid eyeball stew *tasted* good.

The stew *is* good? You bet. Try a bowl!

*I smell* the delicious aroma of a mushroom and papaya pizza baking in the oven.

*I am* the aroma? No way! *Smell,* in this sentence, is an action verb, something that I am *doing.*

The mushroom and papaya pizza *smells* heavenly.

The pizza *is* heavenly? Definitely! Come smell for yourself!

When my dog Oreo *felt* the wet grass beneath her paws, she bolted up the stairs and curled up on the couch.

Oreo *is* the wet grass? Of course not! Here, then, *felt* is an action verb, something that Oreo is *doing.*

My dog Oreo *feels* depressed after seven straight days of rain.

Oreo *is* depressed? Without a doubt! Oreo hates the wet.
This substitution will not work for *appear*. With this verb, you must analyze its function in the sentence.

Compare these two examples:

As soon as the cat falls asleep, blue jays *appear* at the bird feeder.

Notice that *are* sounds good: Blue jays *are* at the bird feeder. But here *appear* is what the blue jays are *doing*, making this *appear* an action verb.

The blue jays *appear* happy to discover a bird feeder full of seed.

Here, *appear* is connecting the subject, *blue jays*, to their state of mind, happiness, making this second *appear* a linking verb.