**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.

*Ising* 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.

*Areing* 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.