The Transitive Verb

Recognize a transitive verb when you see one.

A transitive verb has two characteristics. First, it is an action verb, expressing a doable activity like kick, want, paint, write, eat, clean, etc. Second, it must have a direct object, something or someone who receives the action of the verb.

Here are some examples of transitive verbs:

Sylvia kicked Juan under the table.

*Kicked* = transitive verb; *Juan* = direct object.

Joshua wants a smile from Leodine, his beautiful but serious lab partner.

*Wants* = transitive verb; *smile* = direct object.

Cornelius painted the canvas in Jackson Pollock fashion, dribbling bright colors from a heavily soaked brush.

*Painted* = transitive verb; *canvas* = direct object.

Alicia wrote a love poem on a restaurant napkin.

*Wrote* = transitive verb; *poem* = direct object.

Antonio eats lima beans drenched in brown gravy.

*Eats* = transitive verb; *lima beans* = direct object.

Pinky the poodle cleans the dirty supper dishes with his tongue before Grandma loads the "prewashed" items into dishwasher.

*Cleans, loads* = transitive verbs; *dishes, items* = direct objects.

Important note: When no direct object follows an action verb, the verb is *intransitive*. 