

Complements of the Verb

Some verbs require other elements to appear with them inside the Verb Phrase. These constituents are termed **complements**. Verbs can be sub-categorized according to the kinds of complements they take.

Monotransitive Vgrps: take *one NP* complement, functioning as its *Direct Object*

[Sam]	[inspected [the property]]
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Predicate</i>

Transitive verbs

The relationship between the Verb Group and the Direct Object is one of **complementation** (two way dependency).

The head (inspected) cannot occur without a sister NP and the complement (the property) requires a preceding verb – it cannot occur alone in a Verb Phrase.

***Sam inspected**
***Sam the property**

Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs do not require any sister constituents to be inside the VP

[Sam]	[sneezed]
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Predicate</i>

Sneezed is an intransitive verb and does not take a Noun Phrase complement:

***Sam sneezed the property**
***Sam sneezed the cake**

TASK

1. What do you notice about the following verbs?
2. Are they transitive or intransitive?
 - PLAY
 - SMOKE

Ditransitive Verbs

Ditransitive verbs require *two NP* complements, functioning as the *Indirect Object (IO)* and the *Direct Object (DO)*

[Sam] **[is giving Susan a book]**
Subject *Predicate*

Susan is the *Indirect Object* and a book is the *Direct Object*.

The Indirect Object NP always comes before the Direct Object, so we get the pattern:

Subject--Verb--Indirect Object--Direct Object

Ditransitive Verbs

These Verb Phrases (involving two NP complements) are systematically related to VPs in which the Indirect Object NP corresponds to a Prepositional Phrase (PP):

[Sam] **[is giving a book to Susan]**
Subject *Predicate*

A book is the *Direct Object* and to Susan is a *Prepositional Phrase*.

The Prepositional Phrase that corresponds to the Indirect Object occurs in a position following the Direct Object.

The corresponding PP is a complement of the Verb and so occurs as a sister to the verb group within the verb phrase.

TASK

1. Is the verb *tell* monotransitive or ditransitive?

Intensive Verbs

Intensive verbs require *one complement*, which can be a *Noun Phrase*, an *Adjective Phrase* or a *Prepositional Phrase*:

- John **is** a doctor (NP)
- John **is** unreliable (AP)
- John should **be** in the emergency room (PP)

Other intensive verbs include: *become, seem, appear, turn, look and feel*

TASK

Problem:

Both transitive and intensive verb groups can take a single Noun Phrase complement.

What is the difference and how can we tell them apart?

- (a) John is a doctor (*intensive*)
- (b) John spotted a doctor (*transitive*)

The complement of an intensive verb group functions as a *Subject Predicative* while the complement of a transitive verb group is its *Direct Object*.

Solution:

In (b) the direct object a doctor identifies an individual distinct from John. Sentences with transitive verbs express a relation between two individuals.

In (a) only one individual is mentioned (John). The rest of the sentence is used to characterize the subject. Subject predicatives are used to attribute properties to the subject.

Complex Transitives

Complex transitive verbs take *two complements*: a *Direct Object (NP)* and an *Object Predicative (AP, NP, PP)*

- Sam found **Diane's diary** extremely amusing (AP)
- They are making **Sam** their leader (NP)
- Sam is putting **his car** in the garage (PP)

Object predicatives differ from subject predicatives because they attribute a property to the direct object rather than to the subject.

The semantic relationship between the direct object and the object predicative is the same as that between the subject and the subject predicative. The predicatives attribute a property.

Intensive examples:

- Diane's diary is extremely amusing
 - Sam is their leader
 - His car is in the garage
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Prepositional Verbs

Prepositional verbs require a Prepositional Phrase complement: Sam glanced at the computer screen

At the computer screen is a Prepositional Phrase consisting of a Preposition (at) and a Noun Phrase (*the computer screen*).

As a complement of the verb, the Prepositional Phrase is a sister to the verb group and occurs within the Verb Phrase. Prepositional verb groups require a prepositional complement: **Sam glanced*

How can we distinguish a prepositional verb from an intensive verb?

If we can replace the preposition with an Adjective Phrase or a Noun Phrase, we know that we are dealing with an intensive verb. Prepositional verb groups can only take prepositional complements.

Sam glanced at the computer screen (*Prepositional*)
**Sam glanced unreliable*

Sam is in the emergency room (*Intensive*)
Sam is unreliable

Complementation Patterns

Intransitive	Subject--Verb Group
Monotransitive	Subject--Verb Group--Direct Object
Ditransitive	Subject--Verb Group--Indirect Object--Direct Object
Intensive	Subject--Verb Group--Subject Predicative
Complex Transitive	Subject--Verb Group--Direct Object--Object Predicative
Prepositional	Subject--Verb Group--Prepositional Complement

Complements: A Summary

Some verbs (*or verb groups*) require additional elements to appear with them inside the Verb Phrase. These constituents are termed **complements**.

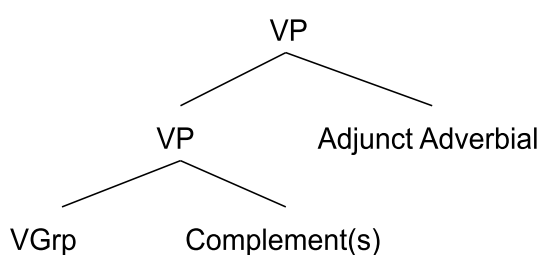
Complements are required by certain verb groups to complete their meaning and to make a full and grammatical Verb Phrase.

Adjunct Adverbials in the VP

While complements are obligatory (or required) constituents in the Verb Phrase, adjuncts (or modifiers) are not required or obligatory. They provide additional information, but are not essential to complete the meaning of the verb.

- *Sam snoozed under a tree*

Snoozed is an intransitive verb and does not require additional complementation. The Prepositional Phrase *under a tree* is an adjunct adverbial.



Adjunct adverbials modify (and are sisters of) complete Verb Phrases. (see Burton-Roberts 1997, p.104)