

Action Verbs & Linking Verbs



THE WRITING CENTER

JUDITH G. GARDNER CENTER FOR WRITING EXCELLENCE

Generally, verbs can be separated into two types:

- Action verb, where the actor is **performing an action**
- Linking verb, which functions as a grammatical placeholder to **connect** the actor of the sentence to some other information

• Let's look at two examples: •

Example #1 Action Verbs

"My son spat out his half-chewed cracker and spread it all over the floor."

This sentence has two verbs, actions performed by the actor **my son**: he **spat out** a cracker and **spread** it.

These are clear-cut **action verbs**, where the actor is actually **doing** something. The actor is performing concrete, physical actions that can be visualized.

Example #2 Linking Verbs

"My father's office building is on the corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Villa Street."

Here, the actor is **my father's office building**, which isn't performing any action. All it's doing is **being on a street corner**.

The important information contained in this sentence is **the location of the building**, which doesn't have anything to do with any action being actively performed.

The action is **being** – the verb "is"—but the important thing is the description that follows the verb. The leads to the information that we need to know.

This makes the verb "is" a **linking verb**, which is essentially a placeholder.

It grammatically must be there to create a complete sentence, but all it does is connect the actor of the sentence to the information **about** it that actually matters.