The preceding chapter provided an introduction to the basic labels. Now that we know what the various parts are called, we can move on to examine how they function in the sentence. A noun or a noun phrase, for instance, may function in sentences as the subject, as the direct object, as the indirect object, as the subject complement, or as the object complement (and, perhaps, as something else that I have missed mentioning).

In this section, the basic functions will be introduced, particularly subjects and predicates, direct and indirect objects, subject and object complements, and adverbials.

**Transitive, intransitive, and “copular” verbs**

In this section, we will be distinguishing between three different types of verbs. Each type of verb has its own requirements. Intransitive verbs require one noun phrase. Thus, die is an intransitive verb because it requires one noun phrase, in our examples, a subject.

Intransitive: Sebastapol died.

\[
\text{NP} \quad \text{Vi}
\]

Transitive verbs are action verbs that require at least two noun phrases, in our examples, a subject and a direct object.

Transitive: Mastriani killed Sebastapol.

\[
\text{NP} \quad \text{Vtr} \quad \text{NP}
\]

"Copular" or "linking" verbs are verbs that show a state or condition rather than a dynamic action. "Stative" verbs require a noun phrase (a subject, in our examples) and a sub-
ject complement, which is either another noun phrase, an adjective, or a prepositional phrase, usually showing a location.

Copular or "linking":  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP</th>
<th>Vc</th>
<th>NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sebastapol</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>a criminal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastapol</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastapol</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>in jail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examine the verbs in the three sentences. The sentences have already been divided into the subject and the predicate. In each case, the subject is the first noun phrase—roughly, what is being talked about. The predicate is the verb and whatever else that was not included in the subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive (Vi): The woman</td>
<td>worked (verb) (adverb) (quickly).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive (Vtr): The man</td>
<td>killed (verb) + the bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copular (Vi): The dog</td>
<td>seemed (verb) + tired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intransitive versus transitive (and copular):** Clauses with intransitive verbs only require one noun phrase. They have neither direct objects nor subject complements. However, something else — something other than a direct object or a subject complement — may follow the verb, as in *The woman worked quickly.* Notice that *quickly* is not required because the verb *worked* has been used. However, in the sentence with the transitive verb, *the bottle* (or some noun phrase) is required because of the verb *killed.* Similarly, in the sentence with the copular verb, *tired* (or something else) is required by the verb *seemed.*
EXERCISE 2.1: INTRANSITIVE VERSUS TRANSITIVE

Determine which verbs are intransitive and which are transitive. Answers to this exercise are found at the end of the chapter.

Note: In this exercise all the verbs are followed by some element or another. The examples in which all the following elements are adverbial are intransitive; in this exercise, the examples in which one element is a noun phrase are transitive.

1. The little dog slept quietly.
2. Sam quickly built the table.
3. The fielder caught the baseball.
4. The rat ate the grain.
5. The bartender fainted almost immediately.
6. The old fisherman walked slowly.

EXERCISE 2.2: INTRANSITIVE VERSUS TRANSITIVE

Determine which verbs are intransitive and which are transitive.

1. Bill slept quite soundly.
2. Sam quickly and skillfully carved a wooden figure.
3. That man caught a robber in the act last week.
4. The rat crawled slowly down the pipe.
5. The bartender hit the drunk with a bottle.
6. The old fisherman never even caught a cold.

**Transitive versus copular:** Unlike intransitive verbs, transitive and copular verbs need to be followed by an additional element. For transitive verbs, this additional element is a *direct object*, while for copular verbs this additional element is a *subject complement*. With transitive verbs, the "action" goes from the subject to the direct object; further, the subject and the object are usually different entities.

**Direct objects and subject complements.**

If you have already learned how to distinguish between an intransitive, a transitive verb, and a copular verb, you have also learned how to distinguish between a direct object and a subject complement. Ignoring the subjects, the noun phrase required by a transitive verb is the direct object. Again, ignoring the subjects, the element required by a copular verb (the noun phrase, adjective, or location element) is a subject complement.

That is, if there is a transitive verb, there is also a direct object. If there is a copular verb, there is also a subject complement. And, if there is an intransitive verb, there is neither.

**Direct objects versus subject complements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>verb</th>
<th>DO or SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitive:</td>
<td>The man</td>
<td>killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The preacher</td>
<td>became</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copular:</td>
<td>The dog</td>
<td>seemed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Except with reflexive sentences like *The lemming killed itself* where both the subject and the direct object are identical. If the subject and the object of a transitive verb are identical, the object is marked with *-self.*
The meeting was in the garden. (PP)
verb + subject complement (=SC)

With transitive verbs, the subject and the direct object usually refer to different entities. With copular verbs, the subject and the subject complement are identical, with the subject complement either describing the subject or further classifying the subject.

1. The painter is tired.
2. The painter is in the doorway.
3. The painter seemed tired.
4. The painter became tired.
5. The woman is a painter.
6. The woman became a painter.
7. The woman seemed a painter.

Copular verbs are also called that because copular verbs tend to join the subject with a characteristic or classification of the subject or its location.

**Exercise 2.3: Transitive versus Copular**

Determine which verbs are transitive and which are copular. Also which elements are direct objects and which are subject complements. Answers to this exercise are found at the end of the chapter.

Note: In this exercise all the verbs are followed by a required element. The problem is in determining whether the verb is transitive (and thus followed by a direct object) or if the verb is copular (and thus followed by a subject complement).

1. The couple was in the garden.
2. He stabbed the food with his knife.
3. The fall broke the egg.
4. The egg became an omelet.
5. He accidentally hurt his pet bird.
6. Shirley appeared extremely sleepy.

**Exercise 2.4: Transitive, Intransitive, and Copular**

Determine which verbs are transitive, which are intransitive, and which are copular. Also which elements are direct objects and which are subject complements. Notice that the sentences are in pairs, with one sentence containing a transitive verb and its direct object and the other containing a copular verb and its subject complement or an intransitive verb. Answers to this exercise are found at the end of the chapter.

1. For years, Martha ran the office.
2. Every other morning, Shirley runs for about forty minutes.
3. That chef always tastes the food before serving it.
4. The Malaysian curry tasted absolutely delicious.
5. The doctor felt her arm for broken bones.
6. The cloth on the jacket felt too rough.

**Exercise 2.5: Transitive, Intransitive, and Copular.**

Indicate which verbs are intransitive (IT), transitive (T), or copular (C) by writing the correct letter after the whole sentence. Answers to this exercise are found at the end of the chapter.
Chapter 2: Direct objects and subject complements.

Note: These sentences can also be used to practice labeling sentence elements or for labeling parts of speech.

1. The Egyptian saw the accident from his window.
2. The frightened dog ran quickly down the street.
3. The mouse scared the cowardly elephant rather badly.
4. The artisan carefully carved the hard wood into a graceful shape.
5. The surprised girl turned slightly pale.
6. The thief may have hidden the jewels anywhere.
7. The young woman found an interesting answer to the question.
8. The glass in the telescope must be perfectly clear.
9. Turtles run very, very slowly.
10. Gandhi fasted frequently.

2.6: Transitive, Intransitive, and Copular.

Indicate which verbs are intransitive (IT), transitive (T), or copular (L) by writing the correct letter after the whole sentence. Note: These sentences can also be used to practice labeling sentence elements or for labeling parts of speech.

1. That rude, young man with the Mercedes appears reasonably rich.
2. The soft-hearted hunter injected the sick aardvark with penicilllin.
3. Irving bought Susan the book.
4. The small child fainted at the sight of the needle.
5. My curry tastes absolutely delicious.
7. The books on that shelf are dictionaries.
8. Without an answer, the problem seems quite difficult.
9. The trusting buyers did not notice the unethical substitution.
10. The owner built a new fence around her property.

**EXERCISE 2.7: TRANSITIVE, INTRANSITIVE, AND COPULAR.**

Indicate which verbs are intransitive (Vi), transitive (Vt), or copular (Vc) by writing the correct letters after the whole sentence.

1. The very old man ate dinner from his bed.
2. The terrified man ran from the room.
3. The little ant carried a huge piece of food easily.
4. The artist slowly molded the flexible clay into a beautiful fawn.
5. The shocked man appeared stunned by the sight.
6. Old burglars must have stolen my furniture.
7. They left two canes near the fireplace.
8. The food in the oven must be ready now.
9. Fast turtles are not very typical.

10. The youngest child coughed loudly.

**EXERCISE 2.8: TRANSITIVE, INTRANSITIVE, AND COPULAR**

Indicate which verbs are intransitive (Vi), transitive (Vt), or copular (Vc) by writing the correct letter after the whole sentence.

1. That fast, strong runner should win the upcoming race.

2. The sick aardvark got better.

3. Samantha felt extremely unhappy.

4. The young woman tripped on the protruding root.

5. I love the taste of curry.


7. The students in the back row seem tired and sleepy.

8. That article appeared quite badly written.

9. Those people are quite hard-working.

10. The workman built a new set of cabinets.

**Summary.** In this section, three basic verbs types were distinguished. Because these three basic verbs types are intimately connected with direct objects, subject complements, and adverbial elements, we also distinguished these. That is, if the verb is transitive, it has a direct object; conversely, if it has a direct object, then the verb is transitive. Similarly, if the verb is copular, then it has a subject complement; conversely, if it has a subject complement,
then the verb is copular. Recognizing which elements co-occur with which other elements is useful, because once one of the elements is identified, the other element is also identified.

**Indirect objects and object complements**

The only basic functions left to discuss are indirect objects and object complements. Neither occur unless the sentence already contains a direct object. In fact, as a rule of thumb, if you think that the sentence contains two objects, your real problem is first to figure out which of the objects is the direct object and then to figure out whether the other is an indirect object or an object complement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect object</th>
<th>Direct object</th>
<th>Object complement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament elected</td>
<td>Mrs. Thatcher</td>
<td>Prime Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The farmer painted</td>
<td>the red barn</td>
<td>yellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extra work made</td>
<td>the ugly table</td>
<td>beautiful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Object complements, as seen in the three examples, immediately follow direct objects. The direct object seems to be the condition "before the verb takes place" and the object complement seems to be the condition "after the verb takes place". Notice that the object complement may be a noun (*Prime Minister*) or an adjective (*yellow, beautiful*).

As in the example sentences, direct objects are the direct recipients of the action, and, as the name implies, indirect objects are indirect recipients of the action. In the first example, the athlete tosses the baseball not the first baseman. In the second example, Susan gives a kiss, not Bill. And, in the third example, the con man sells the Brooklyn Bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect object</th>
<th>Direct object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The athlete tossed</td>
<td>the first baseman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan gave</td>
<td>Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The con man sold</td>
<td>Jim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
=direct object (to) indirect object

The athlete tossed the baseball to the first baseman.
Susan gave a kiss to Bill.
The con man sold the Brooklyn Bridge to Jim.

Another identifying characteristic of indirect objects that distinguishes them from direct objects is that indirect objects can often be moved to the end of the sentence, picking up a preposition in the process. Thus, in the second set of examples the indirect objects have been moved to the end of the sentence, adding in this case the preposition to.

**Exercise 2.9: Indirect Objects and Object Complements.**

Attempt to label the functions by writing the appropriate symbols under them: subject (S), verb (V), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), subject complement (SC), object complement (OC), and adverbial (Adv).¹

1. The skilled carpenter sanded the table smooth.
   S V DO OC

2. The old lawyer handed the judge a sticky legal problem.

3. The little colonel proclaimed himself president.

4. The sly old man left his greedy grandchildren nothing.

5. The shocked man termed the decision a travesty.

¹. Strictly speaking, adverbial is not a function, but nonetheless mark the adverbial units in the exercises.
6. The actress blew the crowd kisses.

7. Susan reluctantly gave Herman a second chance.

8. The man slipped the corrupt judge a fifty-dollar bill.

9. The thief sold the undercover agent stolen merchandise.

10. The referee declared the Nigerian boxer the winner.

EXERCISE 2.10: INDIRECT OBJECTS AND OBJECT COMPLEMENTS.

Attempt to label the functions by writing the appropriate symbols under them: subject (S), verb (V), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), subject complement (SC), object complement (OC), and adverbial (Adv).

1. The little girl colored the horse in the picture blue.

2. The judge read the jury their instructions.

3. Everyone thought him quite mad.

4. Old Aunt Mabel left her cat her entire fortune.

5. The players consider that umpire completely incompetent.
6. The handlers threw the lion raw meat.

7. Jill wouldn't give James the time of day.

8. The company shipped the wrong customers the parcels.

9. The jury found the defendant guilty.

10. I send my girlfriend a letter every week.

Exercises for identifying functions. Now that you have taken a partial step toward learning how to identify the various functions, deepen your understanding by working the following exercise. When you have difficulty, look back at the example sentences and try to match them to the sentences in the exercise.

**EXERCISE 2.11: FUNCTIONS.**

Attempt to label the functions by writing the appropriate symbols under them: subject (S), verb (V), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), subject complement (SC), object complement (OC), and adverbial (Adv).

1. The waitress was pouring him a cup of coffee.
   
   S   V   IO   DO

2. The meeting unanimously elected her president.

3. The weather unexpectedly turned bitter cold.

4. The clown was hiccuping uncontrollably.

5. Members of the team must wear bright red blazers.
**VERB TYPE EXERCISE 2.12:**

For these five sentences, indicate which verbs are intransitive (Vi), transitive (Vt), or copular (Vc) by writing the correct letter above the verb in the sentence.

**EXERCISE 2.13: FUNCTIONS**

Attempt to label the functions by underlining them and then writing the appropriate symbols next to what you have underlined: subject (S), verb (V), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), subject complement (SC), object complement (OC), conjunction (C) and adverbial (Adv).

1. The player skillfully hit the ball between the shortstop and the third baseman.
2. The court rendered the law null and void.
3. We can't ignore our companion any longer.
4. I would call that a mean trick.
5. The policeman directed the traffic quite efficiently.

**VERB TYPE EXERCISE 2.14:**

For the five sentences above, indicate which verbs are intransitive (Vi), transitive (Vt), or copular (Vc) by writing the correct letter(s) above the verb in the sentence.

**EXERCISE 2.15: SENTENCE FUNCTIONS**

Attempt to label the functions by underlining the element and then writing the appropriate symbols next to what you have italicized: subject (S), verb (V), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), subject complement (SC), object complement (OC), and adverbial (Adv).

1. The old man has been sitting quietly in the shade.
2. His friends had often called him a stupid idiot.

3. The Ethiopian food seemed rather hot.

4. The clown was throwing the children in the audience money.

5. The first car would have hit the second car extremely hard.

Terms

To check yourself, see if you can briefly describe each of the following terms and illustrate it in a phrase or sentence (underlining the relevant part).

the basic functions

three basic verb types:

subject transitive:

direct object
direct object

indirect object
indirect object

subject complement
intransitive:

object complement
copular or “linking” verb:

subject complement

the parts of speech vs. the basic functions

prescriptive versus descriptive

Answers to Exercise 2.1:

1. intransitive.  
   *Quietly* is an adverb.

2. transitive.  
   *The table* is a direct object.

3. transitive.  
   *The baseball* is a direct object.

4. transitive.  
   *The grain* is a direct object.

5. intransitive.  
   *Almost immediately* is an adverb.

6. intransitive.  
   *Slowly* is an adverb.

Answers to Exercise 2.2:

1. intransitive.  
   *Quite soundly* is an adverbial phrase.
2. transitive. *A wooden figure* is a direct object.
3. transitive. *A robber* is a direct object.
4. intransitive. *Slowly* is an adverb and *down the pipe* is an adverbial prepositional phrase.
5. transitive. *The drunk* is a direct object.
6. transitive. *A cold* is a direct object.

Answers to Exercise 2.3:

1. copular. *In the garden* is a subject complement which tells where *the couple* is.
2. transitive. *The food* is a direct object.
3. transitive. *The egg* is a direct object.
4. copular. *An omelet* is a subject complement which classifies *the egg*.
5. transitive. *His pet bird* is a direct object.
6. copular. *Extremely sleepy* is a subject complement.

Answers to Exercise 2.4:

1. transitive. *The office* is a direct object.
2. intransitive. *For about forty minutes* is an adverbial prepositional phrase.
3. transitive. *The food* is a direct object.
4. copular. *Absolutely delicious* is a subject complement modifying *The Malaysian curry*.
5. transitive. *Her arm* is a direct object.
6. copular. *Too rough* is a subject complement modifying *the cloth*.

Answers to Exercise 2.5:


Answers to Exercise 2.6:

1. copular. *Reasonably rich* is a subject complement.
2. transitive. *The sick aardvark* is a direct object.
3. transitive. *Susan* is an indirect object, while *the book* is a direct object.
4. intransitive. *At the sight of the needle* is an adverbial prepositional phrase.
5. copular. *Absolutely delicious* is a subject complement.
6. transitive. *The book* is a direct object.
7. copular. *Dictionaries* is a subject complement.
8. copular. *Quite difficult* is a subject complement.
9. transitive. The unethical substitution is a direct object.
10. transitive. *A new fence* is a direct object.

Answers to Exercise 2.7:

1. transitive. *Dinner* is a direct object.
2. intransitive. *From the room* is an adverbial prepositional phrase.
3. transitive. *A huge piece of candy* is a direct object.
4. transitive. *The flexible clay* is a direct object.
5. copular. *Stunned by the sight* is a subject complement.
6. transitive. *My furniture* is a direct object.
7. transitive. *Two canes* is a direct object.
8. copular. *Ready* is a subject complement.
9. copular. *Very typical* is a subject complement.
10. intransitive. *Loudly* is an adverb.

Answers to Exercise 2.8:

1. transitive. *The upcoming race* is a direct object.
2. copular. *Better* is a subject complement.
3. copular. *Extremely unhappy* is a subject complement.
4. intransitive. *On the protruding root* is an adverbial prepositional phrase.
5. transitive. *The taste* is a direct object.
6. intransitive. *Unexpectedly* is an adverb.
7. copular. *Tired and sleepy* is a subject complement.
8. copular. *Quite badly written* is a subject complement.
9. copular. *Quite hard-working* is a subject complement.
10. transitive. *A new set of cabinets* is a direct object.

Answers to Exercise 2.9:

1. S V DO OC
2. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
3. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
4. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
5. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
6. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
7. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$ \quad \text{Note:} \textit{reluctantly} \text{ is an adverb.}$
8. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
9. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
10. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$

Answers to Exercise 2.10:

1. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
2. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
3. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
4. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
5. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
6. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
7. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
8. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
9. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$
10. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$ \quad \text{Note:} \textit{every week} \text{ is adverbial.}$

Answers to Exercise 2.11:

1. $S\ V\ IO\ DO$
2. $S\ V\ DO\ OC$ \quad \text{Note:} \textit{unanimously} \text{ is an adverb.}$
3. $S\ V\ SC$ \quad \text{Note:} \textit{unexpectedly} \text{ is an adverb.}$
4. $S\ V$ \quad \text{Note:} \textit{uncontrollably} \text{ is an adverb.}$
5. $S\ V\ DO$

Answers to Exercise 2.12:

1. transitive.
2. transitive.
3. copular.
4. intransitive.
5. transitive.
Answers to Exercise 2.13:

1. S V DO
   Note: skillfully is an adverb and between the shortstop and the third baseman is an adverbial prepositional phrase.

2. S V DO OC
3. S V DO
   Note: any longer is adverbial.

4. S V DO OC
   Note: quite efficiently is adverbial.

Answers to Exercise 2.14:

1. transitive.
2. transitive.
3. transitive.
4. transitive.
5. transitive.

Answers to Exercise 2.15:

1. S V
   Note: both quietly and in the shade are adverbial.

2. S V DO OC
   Note: often is an adverb.

3. S V SC
4. S V IO DO
5. S V DO
   Note: extremely hard is adverbial.