

# Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive and intransitive verbs often cause confusion. Let's begin with a simple definition:

## Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs take direct objects. The vast majority of verbs in English are transitive.

### Examples:

*I took my books to class.*  
*We played chess last night.*

Notice that transitive verbs always take objects. You will always be able to ask a question beginning with 'What' or 'Whom'.

### Examples:

*I paid the bill last week. - What did you pay?*  
*She studies Russian. - What does she study?*

## Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs do not take direct objects.

### Examples:

Peter's situation improved.  
They slept peacefully.

You can recognize that a verb is intransitive because it does not have a passive form.

### Examples:

*Jack sits in the corner when he reads. NOT The corner is sat when Jack reads.*  
*Peter arrived early. NOT Early was arrived Peter.*

## Transitive AND Intransitive

Some verbs with multiple meanings are transitive or intransitive depending on their usage. The verb 'run' is a good example. When used in the sense of physical exercise, 'run' is intransitive.

*Helen ran every weekend when she was at college.*

## BUT

'Run' used in the sense of managing a company is transitive.

*George runs his company very efficiently*