

Yuba
College Writing & Language Development Center

Linking Verbs & Complements

A linking verb connects a subject and a complement—a word that describes the subject. It can connect a subject to an adjective that describes it or to a noun that renames it. Either way, the linking verb acts almost as an equal sign (=) connecting the two. One very common linking verb is *be*:

This...	...means approximately this.
I <i>am</i> busy.	I = busy
You <i>are</i> his friend, right?	you = friend
He <i>is</i> a student this semester.	he = student
We <i>are</i> anxious about the test.	we = anxious
They <i>are</i> not classmates this semester.	they ≠ classmates

Other common linking verbs are those related to the five senses, such as *look, sound, smell, feel, taste*. Yet another group of linking verbs are related to a state of being, for instance *appear, seem, prove, remain*.

This...	...means approximately this.
The flowers <i>look</i> fresh.	flowers = fresh
You <i>sound</i> tired today.	you = tired
The coffee <i>smells</i> wonderful!	coffee = wonderful
My hands <i>feel</i> cold.	hands = cold
The soup <i>tastes</i> too salty.	soup = salty
She <i>appears</i> to be ready now.	she = ready
The days <i>seem</i> so long in summer.	days = long
The task <i>will prove</i> difficult to finish.	task = difficult
Don <i>remained</i> unconvinced.	Don = unconvinced

Other linking verbs describe a change in state, for example *turn, become, grow*.

This...	...means approximately this.
The milk <i>has turned</i> sour.	milk = sour
Her expression <i>became</i> alarmed.	expression = alarmed
The sky <i>grew</i> dark.	sky = dark

These linking verbs connect the subject to a noun, creating *noun complements*.

This...	...means approximately this.
My roommate <i>was</i> an athlete.	roommate = athlete
Nathan <i>became</i> a photographer.	Nathan = photographer
His favorite movie <i>is</i> <i>The Matrix</i> .	movie = <i>The Matrix</i>
They <i>are</i> not friends any more.	they ≠ friends

Contributed by Rosemary McKeever

