

# 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.

### The linking verb *to be*

*Be* may be the commonest linking verb. It is an irregular verb, so it appears in many forms: *am*, *are*, *is*, and *been*.

I <i>am</i> busy tonight.	[I = busy]
You <i>are</i> his friend, right?	[you = friend]
He <i>is</i> a student at Sac State.	[he = student]
We <i>are</i> anxious about the test.	[we = anxious]
They <i>are</i> not classmates this semester.	[they ≠ classmates]

### The five senses and state-of-being verbs

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*.

The flowers <i>look</i> fresh.	[flowers = fresh]
You <i>sound</i> tired.	[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]

### The change-in-state verbs

These linking verbs show that something has changed or transformed.

The milk <i>has turned</i> sour.	[milk = sour]
Her expression <i>grew</i> alarmed.	[expression = alarmed]
The sky <i>became</i> dark.	[sky = dark]

### Linking verbs and noun complements

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

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> ]
We <i>are</i> not friends any more.	[we ≠ friends]

Contributed by Rosemary McKeever

