

prefix	meaning of prefix	examples
<i>re-</i>	again	<i>reabsorb, rearm, rebuild, redefine, refinance</i>
<i>dis-</i>	opposite, apart	<i>disallow, disarm, disconnect, discontinue, dislike</i>
<i>over-</i>	too much, across, beyond	<i>overbook, overcome, overeat, overhear, overreach</i>
<i>un-</i>	opposite, in reverse	<i>unbend, uncouple, unfold, unload, unpack</i>
<i>mis-</i>	wrong, poorly	<i>misbehave, mishandle, misinform, mispronounce</i>
<i>out-</i>	beyond, further	<i>outbid, outdo, outgrow, outperform, outweigh</i>

The prefix *re-* is used most often in formal written registers, like academic prose and news. Many verbs formed with *re-* have been in use for a considerable time, but *re-* is also frequently used to create new words in technical discourse: e.g. *redeploy, redimension, retransmit*.

There are only a few derivational suffixes used for verb formation, although some of the suffixes combine with many different words. The suffixes are listed below in order of frequency of occurrence:

suffix	meaning of suffix	examples
<i>-ize/-ise</i>	to (cause to) become	<i>computerize, energize, itemize, stabilize</i>
<i>-en</i>	to (cause to) become	<i>awaken, flatten, lengthen, moisten</i>
<i>-ate</i>	to (cause to) become	<i>activate, liquidate, regulate, pollinate</i>
<i>-(i)fy</i>	to (cause to) become	<i>beautify, codify, exemplify, notify</i>

Notice that all four of the most frequent derivational suffixes have a basic meaning of 'become' or 'cause to be'. However, when different suffixes are added to the same base, separate meanings can result. For example, *liquidize* is usually used with an agent making a substance 'liquid', but *liquify* is often used without an agent, and *liquidate* is used in a financial context, when assets are 'made liquid'.

The suffix *-ize* is often spelled *-ise* in BrE.

## 5.7 Valency patterns

The main verb in a clause determines the other elements that are required in that clause. The pattern of the clause elements is called the **valency pattern** for the verb. The patterns are differentiated by the required clause elements that follow the verb within the clause (e.g. direct object, indirect object, subject predicative). All valency patterns include a subject, and optional adverbials can always be added.

There are five major valency patterns:

### A Intransitive

Pattern: subject + verb (S + V). Intransitive verbs occur with no obligatory element following the verb:

subject	verb
<i>More people</i>	<i>came.</i> (FICT)

**B Monotransitive**

Pattern: subject + verb + direct object (S + V + DO). Monotransitive verbs occur with a single direct object:

subject	verb	direct object
<i>She</i>	<i>carried</i>	<i>a long whippy willow twig.</i> (FICT†)

**C Ditransitive**

Pattern: subject + verb + indirect object + direct object (S + V + IO + DO). Ditransitive verbs occur with two object phrases—an indirect object and a direct object:

subject	verb	indirect object	direct object
<i>Fred Unsworth</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>a huge vote of confidence.</i> (NEWS†)

**D Complex transitive**

Patterns: subject + verb + direct object + object predicative (S + V + DO + OP) or subject + verb + direct object + obligatory adverbial (S + V + DO + A). Complex transitive verbs occur with a direct object (a noun phrase) which is followed by either (1) an object predicative (a noun phrase or adjective), or (2) an obligatory adverbial:

	subject	verb	direct object	object predicative
1	<i>people</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>Johnny.</i> (NEWS†)

	subject	verb	direct object	obligatory adverbial
2	<i>He</i>	<i>put</i>	<i>his hand</i>	<i>on the child's shoulder.</i> (FICT†)

**E Copular**

Patterns: subject + verb + subject predicative (S + V + SP) or subject + verb + obligatory adverbial (S + V + A). Copular verbs are followed by (1) a subject predicative (a noun, adjective, adverb or prepositional phrase) or (2) by an obligatory adverbial. (Copular verbs are further discussed in Grammar Bite E.)

	subject	(copular) verb	subject predicative
1	<i>Carrie</i>	<i>felt</i>	<i>a little less bold.</i> (FICT†)

	subject	(copular) verb	obligatory adverbial
2	<i>I</i>	<i>'ll keep</i>	<i>in touch with you.</i> (CONV†)

**F Variations on transitive patterns**

The monotransitive, ditransitive, and complex transitive patterns are the **transitive** patterns; they all require some type of object. As in the above

examples, the most common structure for the objects is a noun phrase. However, in some cases other structures can function as objects. For example:

- monotransitive pattern with a complement clause for the direct object:

subject	verb	direct object
<i>He</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>he was going to make a copy.</i> (CONV†)

- ditransitive pattern with a prepositional phrase expressing the indirect object:

subject	verb	direct object	indirect object
<i>He</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>all that info</i>	<i>to the FBI.</i> (NEWS†)

<note that the indirect object prepositional phrase could also be analyzed as an adverbial>

- ditransitive pattern with a noun phrase for the indirect object and a complement clause for the direct object:

subject	verb	indirect object	direct object
<i>Staff in the information office</i>	<i>told</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>that the train had been delayed until 18.15.</i> (NEWS)

Verbs in all patterns can occur with optional adverbials. For example:

- intransitive with optional adverbial (S + V + (A)):

	subject	verb	optional adverbial
	<i>He</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>to the corner shop.</i> (FICT)
[Then]	<i>they</i>	<i>fell</i>	<i>in the sea.</i> (FICT)

- transitive with optional adverbial (S + V + O + (A)):

	subject	verb	object	optional adverbial
	<i>He</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>nearly all those chips</i>	<i>tonight.</i> (CONV)
	<i>He</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>in the bushes.</i> (FICT†)

### 5.7.1 Verbs with multiple valency patterns

Grammarians sometimes identify a verb as ‘an intransitive verb’ or ‘a transitive verb’, as if one verb normally takes just one pattern. However, the reality is different from this. Most common verbs allow more than one valency pattern, and some allow a wide range. For example,  *speak* and  *help* can occur with intransitive or monotransitive patterns:

intransitive	monotransitive
<i>Simon spoke first.</i> (FICT)	<i>The stewards all spoke French.</i> (NEWS)
<i>Money helped, too.</i> (NEWS)	<i>As Australia’s forward coach, Evans did great-work when he helped Alan Jones.</i> (NEWS)

Similarly,  *find* and  *make* can occur in the monotransitive or complex transitive patterns:

monotransitive	complex transitive
<i>We might <b>find</b> a body.</i> (NEWS†)	<i>You might <b>find</b> these notes useful.</i> (ACAD)
<i>Malcolm <b>made</b> no sound.</i> (FICT)	<i>The sheer intensity of the thing <b>made</b> me nervous.</i> (FICT)

Further, verbs that have the same possible valency patterns often use them with different meanings and very different frequencies. We illustrate this point below with a brief case study of three verbs.

## 5.7.2 Intransitive and monotransitive patterns

Many verbs can take both intransitive and monotransitive patterns, but these verbs differ in their preference for one pattern over another. For example, *stand*, *change*, and *meet* are possible with both valency patterns. However, *stand* usually occurs as an intransitive verb, while *change* and *meet* most commonly occur in the monotransitive pattern.

### A *Stand*

The most common pattern is intransitive with an optional adverbial (S + V + (A)):

subject	adverbial	verb	optional adverbial
<i>I</i>	<i>just</i>	<i>stood</i>	<i>there.</i> (CONV)

Monotransitive *stand* is rare and found primarily in conversation and news in idiomatic expressions, such as *to stand a chance* or *can't stand someone or something*:

subject	verb	direct object
<i>You don't</i>	<i>stand</i>	<i>a chance.</i> (CONV†)

subject	adverbial	verb	direct object
<i>I</i>	<i>really</i>	<i>couldn't stand</i>	<i>him.</i> (CONV)

Monotransitive *stand* with a complement clause as the direct object is rare and found primarily in fiction:

	subject	verb	direct object (complement clause)
[Could]	<i>you</i>	<i>stand</i>	<i>being alone with me for five or six days?</i> (FICT)

### B *Change and meet*

With these verbs, monotransitive (S + V + DO) is the most common pattern:

subject	verb	direct object
<i>I</i>	<i>[want to] change</i>	<i>my clothes.</i> (CONV)
<i>... you</i>	<i>[will never] change</i>	<i>the world.</i> (FICT†)
<i>She</i>	<i>met</i>	<i>several leading actors and musicians.</i> (NEWS†)

Intransitive (S + V) is the second most common pattern, especially for *change*:

subject	verb	
<i>People's circumstances</i>	<b>change</b>	<i>[and er ... they vote differently]. (CONV)</i>

Intransitive with optional adverbials (S + V + (A)) is also found:

subject	verb	optional adverbial
<i>We could</i>	<b>meet</b>	<i>in Tucson (CONV†)</i>
<i>The work</i>	<b>had changed</b>	<i>in the post-war period. (ACAD†)</i>

## Review

Major points of **GRAMMAR BITE C: Lexical verbs: structures and patterns**

- ▶ Two areas are important in the structure of lexical verbs:
  - ▶ their inflectional morphology, which marks person, tense, aspect, and voice.
  - ▶ their derivational morphology, which shows how verbs have been created.
- ▶ In their inflectional morphology, most verbs occur with regular suffixes.
  - ▶ Many of the most common verbs have irregular morphology.
  - ▶ Some verbs allow both regular and irregular morphology.
- ▶ New verbs can be formed with derivational morphology.
  - ▶ The prefix *re-* is frequently used for forming new words.
  - ▶ The suffix *-ize* is also frequently used for forming new words.
  - ▶ Four derivational suffixes are all common and are used with similar meanings: *-ize*, *-ate*, *-(i)fy*, and *-en*.
- ▶ The main verb determines the other elements that are necessary for the clause—i.e. the valency pattern.
  - ▶ There are five major valency patterns: intransitive, monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive, and copular.
  - ▶ Many verbs can occur with more than one valency pattern, and they often have different meanings with each pattern. Further, each verb occurs with very different frequencies for the different patterns.

## GRAMMAR BITE

# D Multi-word lexical verbs

## 5.8 Multi-word verbs: structure and meaning

Many multi-word units function like a single verb. These combinations usually have **idiomatic** meanings. That is, their meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of each individual word.

These multi-word verbs fall into four classes:

- **phrasal verbs**
- **prepositional verbs**
- **phrasal-prepositional verbs**
- **other multi-word verb constructions.**