

Five Basic Types of the English Verb

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How to use the English verb correctly and what elements should be used after a verb are very important for English language learners when they study English. In this article the writer used “those English language learners” to refer to as those whose native languages are not English. It is the verb that forms the frame of an English sentence. Just like the engine in a car, the verb is the most important part of English grammar. Generally speaking, there may be not many problems for native English language learners when they speak or write English, but there are always big problems for those English language learners who are influenced by the formation of construction from their native languages. Hence, they may speak or write broken English. An intransitive verb cannot be used as a transitive verb. Verbs may be divided into **intransitive verbs** (*vi.*), **linking verbs**, and **transitive verbs** (*vt.*) so far as their constructions with other sentence elements are concerned. **Transitive verbs** are further divided into **mono-transitive** (having one object), **di-transitive** (having two objects) and **complex-transitive** (having an object and a complement). Those English learners often find it difficult how to use the English verb correctly. There are five basic types of construction of English verbs (as indicated above): **intransitive verbs**, **linking verbs**, **mono-transitive** (having one object), **di-transitive** (having two objects) and **complex-transitive** (having an object and a complement). An English verb may belong to one or more of the five types. But where it belongs is entirely a matter of usage, not of will. This is what is especially important to those English learners. In studying a verb, great attention should be paid to how to learn to use it in its proper type or types, i.e. construction or constructions - a point too important not to be emphasized. But many books on grammar do not help very much in this regard, because the types have been described briefly, examples shown here and there, and a little reference has been made to usage. Having taught English as a second language for seventeen (17) years, the writer tried to summarize and illustrate the five basic types

of the English verb, on the basis of his teaching experience and extensive review of various literatures from different English grammar books, reference books, and the consultation of English dictionaries, in order for those English learners to further understand how to use the verb correctly.

The present illustration of various sentences is intended to present the usage of the five basic types of the English verb in a way that is to be logical, instructive, and comprehensible. It will be introduced in the order given above.

I. The Intransitive Type

The intransitive verb (*vi.*) is one which makes a complete sense by itself and does not require any word or words to be added to it for this purpose. That is, the intransitive verb **does not take an object**. The sentence structure should be subject-verb (**SV**) form, as in

1. Rivers flow. (*Rivers* is the subject and *flow* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
2. Winds blow. (*Winds* is the subject and *blow* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
3. Birds fly. (*Birds* is the subject and *fly* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
4. All animals sleep. (*All animals* is the subject and *sleep* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
5. Men walk. (*Men* is the subject and *walk* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
6. Fish swim. (*Fish*, a collective noun, is the subject and *swim* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
7. Storms arise. (*Storms* is the subject and *arise* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
8. All animals die. (*All animals* is the subject and *die* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
9. The sun rises. (*The sun* is the subject and *rises* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)
10. The ship sank. (*The ship* is the subject and *sank* is an intransitive verb. It is **SV**.)

All the verbs given in the sentences above can stand by themselves, that is, no other elements are followed, so they are the intransitive type. An intransitive verb (*vi.*) is not followed by an object as seen above, but an intransitive verb can be followed, most of the time, by a prepositional phrase [14, 15] or an adverbial [11, 12, 13, 14]. It falls into the subject-verb-adverbial (**SVA**) pattern besides **SV**, as in

11. He walks *every morning*. (*He* is the subject, *walks* is the intransitive verb, and *every morning* is the adverbial of time. It is **SVA**.)

12. The old man sleeps *downstairs every day*. (*The old man* is the subject, *sleeps* is the intransitive verb, *downstairs* is the adverbial of place, and *every day* is the adverbial of time. It is **SVAA**.)
13. He works *hard*. (*He* is the subject, *works* is an intransitive verb, and *hard* is an adverb, which is used as the adverbial of manner. It is **SVA**.)
14. *The Titanic* sank *after hitting an iceberg*. (*The Titanic* is the subject, *sank* is the intransitive verb, and *after hitting an iceberg* is the prepositional phrase, which is used as the adverbial of time. It is **SVA**.)
15. These planes can fly *at incredibly high speeds*. (*These planes* is the subject, *fly* is a intransitive verb, and *at incredibly high speeds* is the prepositional phrase, which is used as the adverbial of manner. It is **SVA**.)
16. These shirts wash *well*. (**SVA**)
17. The meat cuts *easily*. (**SVA**)
18. Oranges are selling *cheaply today*. (**SVAA**)
19. The door doesn't open *in wet weather*. (**SVA**)

Note that many verbs can be used in a passive sense in such sentences [from 16 to 19] as shown above, for example. Palmer (1978) called these sentences “pseudo-passive”. Of course, there are hundreds of intransitive verbs, in fact, too numerous to enumerate. And as has been pointed out, a verb may fall into one or more types. For instance, the verb *blow*, *fly*, or even *die* may be used as a mono-transitive in subject-verb-object (**SVO**) pattern or subject-verb-object-adverbial pattern (**SVOA**). They are transitive verbs (*vt.*), as in

20. He blew the candle out. (**SVOA**)
21. We fly a kite once a week. (**SVOA**)
22. Some people die an early death. (**SVO**)

In fact, many English verbs have a transitive and an intransitive use. Each construction has to be learned by heart. *Death* in Sentence 22 above is called “cognate object.” (Also see **Cognate Objects** in **SVO** construction below in **A. The Mono-transitive Type**.)

II. The Linking Verb Type

A linking verb is a verb which is followed by a predicative to introduce what the subject is or is like. It falls into the subject +verb + complement (**SVC**) sentence structure. Some grammarians

called it **subject complement**. The verb *be* is a typical linking verb which is usually followed by a noun [1, 23] or noun phrases [2, 9], pronouns [4, 5], a gerund or gerundial phrase [3], an infinitive or infinitive phrase [10, 11], participles (present participle or past participle used as adjectives) [6, 7, 8], adjectives [20, 22], a numeral [12,13], an adverb (usually denoting “place”) [15, 16, 17], prepositional phrases [14, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, etc.], and noun clauses [18, 19]. Its **SVC** structure may resemble a mono-transitive (**SVO**) in form, when the predicative is a noun [1, 47]. The following are some of the examples of **SVC**:

1. He *is a teacher*. (*Is* is a linking verb followed by a noun, *a teacher*. It is **SVC**.)
2. It was *a clever excuse* but it didn't really ring true. (*A clever excuse* is a noun phrase used as complement. It is **SVC**.)
3. My hobby *is collecting stamps*.
(*Collecting stamps* is a gerundial phrase used as complement. It is **SVC**.)
4. It was *they* that did it. (*They* is a pronoun used as complement. This is an emphatical sentence - also called a cleft sentence. It is **SVC**.)
5. That's *something* we should keep in mind. (*Something* is a pronoun. It is **SVC**.)
6. He is *amazing*. (*Amazing* is a present participle used as adjective. It is **SVC**.)
7. Time is *pressing*. (*Pressing* is a present participle used as adjective. It is **SVC**.)
8. They are *married*. (*Married* is a past participle used as adjective. It is **SVC**.)
9. She was *all smiles* when I came in.

Note that *all* used with countable nouns after the verb, *be*, can also be the subject complement as seen [9] above. More examples: *They were all eyes when I opened the present. Tell me your plan, and I am all ears*.

10. To see *is to believe*. (*To believe* is the infinitive with *to* used as complement. *To see* is used as subject. It is **SVC**.)
11. My job *is to help you today*.
(*To help you* is the infinitive phrase used as complement. It is **SVC**.)
12. It *is three*. (*Three* is a numeral used as complement. It is **SVC**.)
13. She was *the first* to arrive and *the last* to leave. (*The first and the last* are numerals. It is **SVC**.)
14. They *are in the cafeteria*. (The prepositional phrase, *in the cafeteria*, is used as complement. It is **SVC**.)

15. He *is here* (there, in, out, away, off, downstairs, etc., these adverbs denote “place.”)

16. The storm *is over* now. (*Over* is an adverb.)

17. The price of iPhone 6 *is down*. (*Down* is an adverb.)

18. The reason is *that we are behind others in industry*.

(*That we are behind others in industry* is a noun clause used as complement/predicative. It is **SVC**.)

19. That is *where he died*. (*Where he died* is a noun clause used as complement/predicative.

It is **SVC**.)

20. She *is healthy/interesting*. (*Healthy and interesting* are adjectives.)

21. The girl *was born blind and deaf*. (*Blind and deaf* are used as subject complement.

It is **SVC**.)

22. He *was very intelligent*. (In informal speech, when the speaker wishes to emphasize the complement, the complement can be moved before the subject, as in “Very intelligent he was.” Also see sentences below from 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42.

23. They *are doctors from Las Vegas*. (*Doctors* is a noun. It is **SVC**.)

24. He *has a teacher*. (a mono-transitive. It is **SVO**.)

We can also say, “She is happy.” “Happy” is an adjective, and an adjective is typical of the predicative. So we call “is” a linking verb. But we cannot say, “She has happy”, which makes no sense grammatically. As stated above, most of the time, the linking verb, *be*, is usually followed by an adjective. When a prepositional phrase is used as predicative/complement, it denotes *quality, place, company, resemblance, time, cause, purpose, opposition or favor*, as in

25. This *is of importance*. (The prepositional phrase, *of importance* = important, denoting quality)

26. He *is in the room*. (place)

27. She *is not with us* now. (company)

28. He *is like his father*. (resemblance)

29. Supper *is at six*. (time)

30. This book *is for reading at leisure*. (purpose)

(*For reading at leisure* is a prepositional phrase. *Reading* is a gerund used after the preposition, *for*.)

31. I *am for your proposal*. (favor)

32. She was *against your proposal*. (opposition)

33. His failure *is due to laziness*. (reason or cause)

34. The tool *is of great use*. (quality)

Note that sometimes the subject complement (the predicative) is transposed before the subject in order to give emphasis to the complement in exclamatory sentences introduced by *how* or *what* and in the adverbial clauses of concession or reason, as in

35. I wish her success, and *successful*, I knew, he *would be*. (It is still SVC.)

36. *How nice* he *is!* (Exclamatory sentence; it is still SVC.)

37. *What a pretty girl* she *is!* (Exclamatory sentence; it is still SVC.)

38. *Strong man that he is*, he has been severely put to test during the past few weeks.

(Adverbial clause of reason = Because/As he is a strong man, he has been....)

Note that there is no indefinite article *a* used before *strong man*. Therefore, it's incorrect to say, "A strong man that he is, he has been severely put to test")

39. *Child as he is*, he knows math better than I. (Adverbial clause of concession - Although he is a child, he knows math better than I.)

Note that there is no indefinite article *a* used before *child* when it is placed before the subject in such a case. It is incorrect to say, "A child as he is, he knows")

40. *Hot as the day was*, they still worked in the garden. (Adverbial clause of concession)

41. *Situated as it was* at the foot of the mountain, the house was very quiet. (Adverbial clause of reason.)

42. *Rich as he is*, (yes) I don't envy him. (Adverbial clause of concession)

= I don't envy him, even though he is rich.

Besides *be*, there are a few linking verbs in English (also usually followed by adjectives). They are: *appear, come, become, come, continue, fall, feel, get, go, grow, keep, look, prove, remain, rest, ring, run, seem, smell, sound, stand, stay, taste, turn, etc.* The following are illustrations of some of the above linking verbs that are followed by an adjective [43, 44, 45, 46, etc.], a noun [47], as in

43. They *looked* angry (happy, upset, pleased, etc.).

44. Everything *will come right in the end*.

45. They *look married*. (*Married* is a past participle used as adjective.)

46. She *became famous* (interested, etc.).
47. Mr. Marlowe *became a lawyer*, but Mr. Roser *remained a judge*.
(It's **SVC**. *A lawyer* and *a judge* are nouns used as complement to their subjects.)
48. The little girl *got hungry* (angry, happy, excited, strong, etc.).
49. She was *growing old* (thin and pale, agitated, upset, etc.).
50. He *appeared quite well* (strong, healthy, etc.).
51. My hair *is turning grey* (white, etc.).
52. The pieces of cloth *feels coarse* (smooth, soft, etc.)
We also say, "She feels ill." "She doesn't feel well."
53. The weather *is turning colder* (warmer, milder, etc.).
54. It *seems quite happy* (all right, etc.).
We also say, "He seems nice." "He seems a nice boy."
55. The food *tastes delicious* (good, yummy, sour, etc.).
56. The flower *smells good* (sweet, fragrant, etc.)
57. Your argument *sounds reasonable* (good, plausible, etc.)
58. Something *has gone wrong* with my iphone 6.
59. His dreams *have at last come true*.
60. The city *has grown twice as large as* it was before.
61. The weather *continued fine* for several days.
62. She *falls asleep* (ill, silent, pregnant, etc.).
63. We must *keep calm* under all circumstances.
64. I'm *keeping quite well*. (*Well* is an adjective.)
65. It was a clever excuse but it didn't really *ring true*. (*True* is an adjective. It is **SVC**.)
66. You can *rest assured* that I will do my best to help you.
(*Assured* is a past participle used as adjective.)
67. She *stayed single* all her life. (*Single* is an adjective used as complement. It is **SVC**.)
68. The temperature *has stayed hot* in Las Vegas this week.
69. My bags still *stay packed*. (*Packed* is a past participle used as adjective.)
70. This method *proved quite efficient*.
71. The case *remains unsettled*. (*Unsettled* is a past participle used as an adjective.)
72. Nothing *stands still* in the computer industry. (*Still* is an adjective. It is **SVC**.)

73. Would the audience please *remain seated*? (*Seated* is a past participle used as adjective.)

74. We *are running* low on fuel again.

75. An oil tanker *has run aground* near the Bay area. (Also see sentences from 98 to 101.)

(*Aground* is an adjective. It is SVC.)

76. I'm *running short* of cash – do you think you could lend me some?

Note that there are such verbs as *blush, break, flash, flush, lie, ring, wear, etc.*, which are also followed usually by adjectives. Some grammarians still regard them as the compound predicate, as in

77. She *flushed crimson* with anger. (“Crimson” is an adjective.)

78. The girl *blushed crimson* as she thought of herself acting like that.

79. The cloth *is wearing thin*. (“Thin” is an adjective.)

80. That area *has lain waste* for so many years. (“Waste” is an adjective.)

81. Many a prisoner *broke free* from the well-guarded prison. (“Free” is an adjective.)

82. It *didn't ring true*. (“True” is an adjective.)

Sometimes **an intransitive verb** is followed by an adjective, a noun or noun phrases with the subject, denoting *the state or characterization*, acting as if it is a predicative. Some grammarians regard this type of structure as a double predicate. Examples:

83. All the time she *sat silent* in the corner. (“Silent” is an adjective.)

84. She arrived *hot and miserable*. (“Hot” and “miserable” are adjectives.)

85. The day *dawned misty and overcast*. (= The day dawned. It was misty and overcast. “Misty” and “overcast” are adjectives.)

86. She *left a child* and *came back a mother of three children*.

(Meaning “When she left, she was a child, and when she came back, she was a mother of three children.”)

87. They *parted the best of friends*. (Meaning “When they separated from each other, they were the best of friends.”)

Note that the sentences [83, 84, 85, 86, and 87] have the verbs which are not linking verbs. They are intransitive verbs, yet the adjectives or noun phrases are used after the predicate. These adjectives or noun phrases are the complement to their subjects. The “like” prepositional phrase is also used after such linking verbs as *look, taste, smell, sound, feel*, as in

88. It looks *like* rain. (“Like” here is used as a preposition.)
89. It tastes *like* water. (“Like” here is used as a preposition.)
90. It smells *like* garlic. (“Like” here is used as a preposition.)
91. It feels *like* glass. (“Like” here is used as a preposition.)

After the linking verb *be*, *look*, *feel*, or *sound*, the predicative can sometimes be an *as if*-clause, e.g.

92. It *looks as if* it’s going to rain. (It’s going to rain by the look of it.)
93. It *isn’t as if* he were ill. (If he were ill, the case would be different.)
94. I *feel as if* I had been back only yesterday. (How fast time flies!)
95. It *sounds as if* a tap is running somewhere.

Note that in *as if* clause, a subjunctive mood is usually used when something unreal happens [93, 94]. Another example: *I feel as if my leg were going to burst. My leg were going to burst* is a subjunctive mood, which is contrary to the present fact – *my leg is not going to burst*.

The linking verbs *seem*, *appear*, can often take a *that*-clause as the predicative, as in

96. It seems (appears) *that something is wrong*. (It is **SVC**.)

An adverb should not be made a predicative, except (1) in the case of an adverb of place [15], (2) increase or decrease in value or quantity [17], and (3) after the emphatic expression of the pattern [97], *It is ... or It was ... that/who ...*, e.g.

97. It was *very carefully* that he handled the case. (Here, *very carefully* is the focus of emphasis in the sentence of *He handled the case very carefully*.)

Adjectives prefixed with *a* are normally used predicatively [98, 99] or used as complement [100]. These adjectives are: *afraid, asleep, afar, alive, alone, ajar, ablaze, afoot, afraid, adrift, afloat, aflame, afire, aground, ahead, akin, alight, alike, alive, aloof, amiss, apart, ashamed, aslant, astir, awake, awash, awry, etc.*, as in

98. They are *asleep* now. (predicative adjective. It is **SVC**.)
99. She was *alone* in the room. (predicative adjective; it’s **SVC**.)
100. Please keep the door *ajar*. (*Ajar* is the adjective used as object complement. It is **SVOC**.)
101. Within minutes the whole house was *ablaze*.

(The noun phrase, *the whole house*, is a subject, *ablaze* is a complement.)

Note that the *a*-adjectives are not usually used to pre-modify a noun (not used attributively). These adjectives are only used as predicative [98, 99, 101] or as complement [101]. We do not say “That *ajar door* is broken”. “The *alone girl* was murdered last night”, and “She is *an afraid girl*”, etc. In the following sentence, the predicative should never be an adverb except for what is described above, but an adjective:

102. He is *very careful*. (*Careful* is an adjective.)

103. *He is *very carefully*. (*Carefully* is an adverb, which does not make sense here and this is an incorrect sentence.)

III. Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs (*vt.*) are further divided into **mono-transitive** (having one object - **SVO**), **di-transitive** (having two objects - **SVOO**) and **complex-transitive** (having an object and a complement - **SVOC**). Those English learners often find it difficult to use them correctly. They should learn by heart how to use the verbs correctly.

A. The Mono-transitive Type

Generally speaking, the mono-transitive verbs must be transitive verbs and take only one object; it falls into the pattern of **SVO** (subject + verb + object), which may or may not necessarily be followed by one or more adverbials (**SVOA** or **SVOAA...**) or complement (**SVOC**). An object (**O**) can be a noun (personal or impersonal) [1, 2, 3, 4, 10], a pronoun [5, 8], an infinitive [6], gerund [7], a noun clause [9], as in

1. We are studying English.

(*We* is the subject, *are studying* is the verb (in continuous tense), and *English* is the object. It is **SVO**.)

2. He smokes cigarettes every day. (*He* is a pronoun used as the subject. *Smokes* is a transitive verb and its object is *cigarettes*. *Every day* is an adverbial of time. It is **SVOA**.)

3. She speaks French very fluently every day. (*She* is the subject, *speaks* is a transitive verb and *French* is an object. *Very fluently* are adverbs, which is used an adverbial of manner. *Every day* is used as adverbial of time. It is **SVOAA**.)

4. He pushed the door ajar. (*He* is the subject, *pushed* is a transitive verb, and its object is *the door*. *Ajar* is an adjective used as the object complement. It is **SVOC**.)

5. They have elected him president. (*They* is the subject, *have elected* (present perfect tense) is a transitive verb, its object is *him*, and *president* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
6. I want to go now. (*I* is the subject, *want* is a transitive verb, and its object is the infinitive *to go*, and *now* is an adverb used as adverbial of time. It is **SVOA**)
7. We'll consider going to Las Vegas. (*We* is the subject, *consider* is a transitive verb, and its object is *going*, which is a gerund, and *to Las Vegas* is used as adverbial of place. (It is **SVOA**.)

Note that there are some transitive verbs that need to be followed by a gerund or gerundial phrase used as an object like the verb *consider* in [7]. These verbs are: *acknowledge, avoid, consider, contemplate, defer, delay, dislike, escape, excuse, evade, facilitate, fancy, favor, finish, give up, cannot help, imagine, include, keep (on), don't mind, miss, postpone, practice, put off, resent, resist, risk, cannot sand, suggest, couldn't help, etc.*

8. Mr. Marlowe hit me. (*Mr. Marlowe* is the subject, *hit* is the transitive verb, and its object is *me*, which is a personal pronoun. It is **SVO**.)
9. I know where she has gone. (*I* is the subject, *know* is a transitive verb, and its object is *where she has gone*, which is a noun clause introduced by the relative adverb, *where*.)
10. I can't take your suitcase. (*I* is the subject, *take* is *vt.*, and its object is *your suitcase*.)

In informal speech, when the speaker sometimes wishes to emphasize the object, it is moved before the subject, we can rewrite [10] into *Heavy suitcase I can't take*. More examples:

Talent, Mr. R has; capital, Ms. R has not.

What a funny and ugly hat he is wearing!

In **SVO** sentence structures, an adverbial phrase is sometimes inserted between **VO**, then it looks like **SVAO**, but it still belongs to **SVO**, as in

11. She took *out of her pocket* a knife. (Cf. She took a knife *out of her pocket*.)
12. We noticed *playing on the playground* a group of children from Mr. R's class.

(Cf. We noticed a group of children from Mr. R's class *playing on the playground*.)

Also in phrasal verbs, the object can be placed before or after the particles (*in, on, off, etc*), e.g.

13. *Turn off* the light (Cf. *Turn* the light *off*.)
14. I *packed up* everything. (Cf. I *packed* everything *up*.)
15. I put on the radio in a minute. (Cf. I'll *put* the radio *on* in a minute.)

But if the object is a pronoun, we only put the pronoun before the particle (An asterisk * means “incorrect” for the sentence.), e.g.

16. Put it on.

*Put on it.

17. Take them off

*Take off them.

18. Bring it up.

*Bring up it.

When the object is longer, it may be moved after the particle, as in

19. She *tried on half a dozen pairs of shoes* before she decided to buy one.

20. *Bring up* this box of books. (Cf. *Bring the box up*.)

21. We *gave up all hope of finding the missing girl*. (Cf. We gave all hopes of finding the missing girl *up*. This is not a very good sentence.)

In linking verbs, we talk about some verbs such as *taste, smell, etc*, which are followed by adjectives (SVC), but when these verbs are used as notional verbs, they are transitive verbs followed by objects that belong to SVO or SVOA constructions, as in

22. She is smelling the flower now. (It is SVO, not SVC, because *the flower* is the object of the verb, *smell*.)

23. The flower smells fragrant. (It is SVC, because *fragrant* is an adjective used as complement.)

24. He tasted the soup. (It is SVO, because *the soup* is the object of the verb, *tasted*.)

25. The soup tasted sour. (It is SVC, because *sour* is an adjective used as complement.)

Cognate Objects

In SVO construction, the verbs (some grammarians regard these verbs as intransitive verbs) are followed by a noun as if it were an object. Actually it is a cognate object, the function of which is adverbial. The object repeats the meaning of the verb. In such a case, the object is called “Cognate Object,” as in

1. She *slept* a peaceful *sleep* last night.

2. Ms. R *smiled* a big *smile* and *bowed* a great *bow*.

3. He *lived* a long *life* before he died.

More examples:

4. He *died* a heroic *death*. (= He died heroically.) Cf. He died a martyr. (It is **SVC**.)
5. He *shouted* his loudest (*shout*).
6. She *breathed* his last (*breath*).
7. He *lived* a happy *life*. (= He lived happily.)
8. The lady *laughed* a merry *laugh*. (= The lady laughed merrily.)
9. The boy *sighed* a deep *sigh*. (= The boy sighed deeply.)
10. She *dreamed* a good *dream* last night. (= She had a good dream last night.)

B. The Di-transitive Type

A certain class of **transitive verbs** (which falls into the pattern of subject + verb + indirect object + direct object – **SVO_i O_d**) can have two objects - *a direct object* (O_d), usually a thing or something, and *an indirect object* (O_i), usually a person or something, the receiver of the said thing. The indirect object almost always precedes the direct object. The following verbs are usually followed by two objects (**O_i O_d**): *accord, allow, assign, award, bring, call, cause, deal, deny, do, fetch, give, grant, hand, leave, lend, offer, owe, pass, pay, post, promise, read, recommend, refuse, render, return, sell, send, show, sing, take, telephone, teach, tell, throw, wish, write, etc.* Some of them can be converted into the mono-transitive type (**SVO**) with the aid of the preposition *to* or *for*. Some, however, are not so easily convertible. Examples are given below by grouping together those convertible with the preposition *to*, those convertible with the preposition *for*, and those practically not convertible.

- (a) Di-transitive convertible into the mono-transitive type with the aid of the preposition *to*,** denoting the act or action to whom the subject wants to do.

Examples:

1. Has he paid you the money? (*He* is the subject, *Has ...paid* (present perfect tense) is the verb, *you* is the indirect object and *the money* is the direct object. It is **SVO_iO_d**.)
2. Has he paid the money *to* you? (*He* is the subject, *Has ...paid* is the verb, *the money* is the object and *to you* is not the indirect object any more, but it becomes the adverbial which is formed by a prepositional phrase *to you*. It is **SVO_dA**.)
3. Will you lend me your iPhone? (**SVO_iO_d**)
4. Please hand her the letter. (**SVO_iO_d**)
5. Can you pass me the salt? (**SVO_iO_d**)

6. I will send her the money she wants. (SVO_iO_d. *Her* is the indirect object and *the money* is direct object followed by the attributive clause, (*that/which*) *she wants*.)
7. He told me a funny story. (SVO_iO_d)
8. It will cause you a lot of trouble. (SVO_iO_d)
9. I wish you a pleasant journey. (SVO_iO_d)
10. Can't you give me some advice? (SVO_iO_d)
11. His father denies his son nothing. (SVO_iO_d)
12. Show me your passport. (SVO_iO_d)
13. Let me read you the letter. (SVO_iO_d)
14. I must write Ms. Roden a letter. (SVO_iO_d)
15. You had better give the matter a second thought. (SVOO)

(b) **Di-transitive convertible into the mono-transitive type with the aid of the preposition *for***, denoting the act or action for whom the subject does.

Examples:

1. His father has chosen him a very good book. (*His father* is the subject, *has chosen* is the verb form with present perfect tense, *him* is the indirect object, and the whole noun phrase, *a very good book*, is the direct object. It is SVO_i O_d .)
2. His father has chosen a very good book *for him*. (*His father* is the subject, *has chosen* is the verb form with present perfect tense, *a very good book* is the object and *for him* is no longer the indirect object. It becomes the adverbial formed by the prepositional phrase *for him*. It is SVOA.)
3. Will you buy me some?
4. Please fetch me a mop. (Cf. Please fetch a mop *for me*.)
5. Did you leave him any?
6. She made herself a new dress. (*Herself* is a reflexive pronoun used as indirect object and *a new dress* is a noun phrase used as the direct object.)
7. Have we ordered ourselves some provisions? (*Ourselves* is a reflexive pronoun used as indirect object, and *some provisions* is direct object.)
8. Can you get me some stamps?
9. Will you do me some favor?

10. Will you reach me my hat?
11. They left that money *to/for* Mary.
12. Can you spare me a few minutes of your valuable time?
13. They called him a taxi. (Cf. They called a taxi *for* him.)
14. I gave you five dollars. (But when in informal speech the speaker sometimes wishes to stress the object, it is moved before the subject, as in “Five dollars I gave you.”)

(c) Di-transitive verbs that are not very well converted into the mono-transitive type.

Examples:

1. I asked him several questions. (*I* is the subject, *asked* is the verb, *him* is the indirect object and *several questions* is the direct object. It is **SVO_i O_d**.)
2. I struck the door a heavy blow. (**SVOO**)
3. She gave the car a wash. (**SVOO**) (= She washed the car.)

Note that in Sentence 3, the indirect object, the *car*, is not a person but something impersonal.

Usually we have such a pattern as “*give something a kick, a look, a polish, a pull, a push, a rub, a shake, a wash,*” etc., as in

I gave the door a kick. = I kicked the door.

She gave the spoon a polish. = She polished the spoon.

4. That will save me a lot of trouble. (**SVOO**)

The conversion of Sentences 1 and 2 above into the mono-transitive type in the following manner would not be quite idiomatic:

5. I asked several questions *of* him. (**SVOA**)
6. I struck a heavy blow *at/against* the door. (**SVOA**)

More examples:

7. They presented the prize *to* John.
They presented John *with* the prize.
8. We bear him no grudge.
We bear no grudge *against* him.
9. She played me a trick.

She played a trick *on me*. (When the verb *play* is in reference to “performance”, *for* is sometimes is used, e.g. “Won’t you play us some fold songs?” → “Won’t you play some fold songs *for us*?”)

Some of them can be converted into the mono-transitive type with the aid of the preposition *to* or *for* as described above, but some are not so easily convertible. Therefore, some are not convertible and keep the sentence in **SVOO** form. Those English learners should always pay attention to their use when studying English. For example, “She kissed the child a goodbye,” “We gave the house a thorough cleaning”, which means “We cleaned the house thoroughly.” “That saved me a lot of trouble” *etc.*, are usually not converted. Just leave them alone. Attention should be also paid to the following use, in which case, *to* or *for* is used in **SVOA** better than the indirect object in **SVOO**:

- 1) When emphasis is laid on the indirect object, a prepositional phrase is used, as in
I’ll hand this letter *to the secretary* and not *to the director*. (**SVOA** from **SVOO**.)
Bring the paper *to me*, not *to Ms. R*.
- 2) When the direct object is a pronoun, a prepositional phrase is used for the indirect object, as in
We sent it *to the police station*. (**SVOA**)
I bought it *for you*, not *for myself*.
I own all this *to you*.
I ordered it *for you*.
You’d better hand it directly *to the principal*.
- 3) When the indirect object is longer than the direct object, a prepositional phrase is used, as in
He showed the picture *to those people sitting around him*.
- 4) When the indirect object is transposed before the subject of the sentence, a prepositional phrase is used, as in
To him I told the story, not *to his brother*.
- 5) When the indirect object and direct object are both pronouns, a prepositional phrase is used, as in
He gave it *to me*.
I’ll lend them *to you*.

6) When the indirect object used in *wh*-words or the indirect object emphasized, as in
Who/whom did you sent it *to*?

Is this the person (whom) you returned the iPhone *to*?

In spoken English, sometimes the speaker did not use the preposition even if it is required in formal English. For example, the following sentences are acceptable:

He gave it me/He gave me it. (Cf. He gave it *to* me.)

I'll lend them you/I'll lend you them. (Cf. I lend them *to* you.)

Some verbs do not belong to **SVO_iO_d** patterns. Usually the preposition *to* is used in reference to whom the subject wants to act. The verbs usually are: *announce, ascribe, communicate, dedicate, demonstrate, describe, dictate, disclose, explain, express, introduce, mention, mutter, point out, put, relate, repeat, submit, say, shout, suggest, and whisper, etc.*, e.g.

Ms. Roden explained *to us* the details of her biology lesson yesterday.

She expressed *to her teacher* her answers were correct.

Mr. Marlowe put a question *to us*.

We attributed *to him* all the success of our work.

John presented the gift *to me*.

She disclosed *to us* the secret of her divorce.

The teacher related *to us* his horrible travel to Las Vegas.

C. The Complex Transitive Type

The complex transitive verb has a complement to its object. It falls into the pattern of **SVOC** (subject + verb + object + complement). The complement is something added to the object to complete the predication of the verb. It may be also followed by one or more adverbials (of time, place, manner, etc.). It will become **SVOCA** pattern. The object stands in relation to its complement in the combination just as a subject would in relation to its predicate. That is why the combination is sometimes referred to as a complex object. The term “complement” is a general one. There are several variants according to the parts of speech that can be used for the complement. But the parts of speech of complement proper to a particular finite verb are fixed. We will see what common verbs can have a complement of a noun or noun equivalent; what, a complement of an adjective or an adjective equivalent; what, a complement of a past participle;

what, a complement of an infinitive; and what, a complement of a present participle. They are dealt with in separate groups as follows:

(a) Verbs with a noun or noun equivalent complement. The *italics* in each sentence below is the complement of each object. Examples:

1. They appointed him *to be manager*. (SVOC)
2. They appointed Mr. Roser *as manager of the bank*. (SVOC)

In the above sentences, *They* is the subject, *appointed* is the verb, *him* or *Mr. Roser* is the object, and *to be manager* or *as manager* is the complement where *manager* is a noun. The definite or indefinite article is often omitted before the noun in such a case.

More examples:

3. Can you call this *-serving the people?* (*Serving the people* is a gerundial phrase used as complement.)
4. You may call it *what you will*. (*What you will* is a noun clause.)
5. They chose (elected) him (*as, for, to be*) *chairman*. (Also see ***as-phrase*** and ***for-phrase*** used as object complement in **(d)** below.)
6. We found John (*to be*) *a reliable assistant*.
7. They found Jenny/her (*to be*) *a bright student*.
8. We made him *our leader* (an officer, (the) manager of the bank).
9. They named the ship *Bush*.
10. We nominated her *a member of the council*.
11. We must keep it *a secret*.

In Sentences **6** and **7** above, the presence of *to be* suggests that what the subject **we** and **they** actually thought, and probably said, was *John is a reliable assistant* and *Jenny is a bright student*.

This variant of the complex transitive appears to be the same in form as the di-transitive type (SVOO). Those English learners are found difficult to distinguish the difference between SVOO and SVOC because they look alike when the complement in SVOC is a noun. To distinguish the one from the other, we must bear it in mind that with the complex transitive (SVOC) the object stands in relation to its complement much the same as subject would in relation to its predicate. With the di-transitive type, such as a relation is found wanting. The relation becomes quite

obvious in Sentence 5 above, where some such words as *for*, *as* or *to be* can be inserted before the complement *chairman* as indicated. Bearing this in mind, we can easily discriminate between sentences of apparent symmetry such as the following pairs:

12. We found her *a good principal*. (*A good principal* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

= We found (that) she was a good principal.

13. We found him *a temporary job*. (*A temporary job* is the direct object. It is **SVOO**.)

It is incorrect to say: *We found (that) he was a temporary job.

14. Do you think her a good teacher? (**SVOC**)

= Do you think she is a good teacher?

15. They chose him *chairman*. (*Chairman* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

Note that the object and the complement “him chairman” in “They chose him chairman” above corresponds to the sentence as follows:

He is the chairman. (**SVC**)

They chose him *a good present*. (*A good present* is the direct object. It is **SVOO**.)

The verbs used in such a case are: *appoint, call, consider, christen, count, crown, elect, find, leave, make, name, nominate, think, etc.*

(b) Verbs with an adjective or adjective-equivalent complement

(1) Object Complement to show result

Examples:

1. I cannot push the door *open*. (*Open* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

2. We'll have to break the door *open*. (*Open* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

The adjective *open* can combine with a verb expressing physical action, like *break*, to be placed before the object. Thus: The thieves broke *open* the safe. (=The thieves broke the safe *open*).

3. We set the prisoners *free*. (*Free* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

4. We hammered/beat it *flat*. (*Flat* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

5. The cold weather is turning the leaves *yellow*.

(*Yellow* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

6. She boiled the egg *hard*. (*Hard* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

7. The pain drove me *almost mad*. (*Mad* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

8. Don't always make your shoes *dirty*. (*Dirty* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
9. The sun keeps us *warm*. (*Warm* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
10. She polished it *smooth*. (*Smooth* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
11. Open your mouth *wide*. (*Wide* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
12. The machine can cut meat *thin*. (*Thin* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
13. Raise your head *higher*. (*Higher* is an adjective with the form of comparative degree and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
14. She shouted herself *hoarse*. (*Hoarse* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
15. Leave it *alone*. Don't break it. (*Alone* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
16. Cut *short* your talk (= Cut your talk *short*). Don't beat about the bush. (*Short* is an adjective and the complement. This is a case in which the adjective may precede the object.)
17. I called her *a fool*. (*A fool* is a noun used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
18. The judge declared Ms. R *not guilty*. (*Guilty* is an adjective and the complement. **SVOC**.)
19. We judged her an experienced teacher. (*An experienced teacher* is a noun phrase and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

The verbs used in such cases are: *beat (black and blue), believe, boil (hard), consider, cut (short), drive (mad), dye, find, get (ready), hold, imagine, leave, like, (responsible), keep, make, paint, prove, see, set (free), shout (hoarse), suppose, think, turn, want, wish, etc.*

Note that if the object is long, it can be placed after the complement, as in

20. She has proved *them* wrong. (It is **SVOC**.)

Cf. She has proved wrong *the forecasts made by the country's leading economic experts*.

21. He condemned *them* to death.

Cf. He condemned to death *most of the peasants who had taken part in the rebellion*.

(2) Object Complement to show state

Examples:

1. I found the room *vacant*. (*Vacant* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
2. I like my coffee *strong*. (*Strong* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
3. I want everything *ready* this evening. (*Ready* is an adjective and *ready this evening* is the complement. It is still **SVOC**.)

4. I found her rather charming. (*Charming* is an adjective pre-modified by the adverb, *rather*, and they are the complement. It is **SVOC**. But in informal speech, the speaker wishes to stress the complement, it can be moved before the subject, as in “Rather charming I found her.”)

Note that some grammarians say that sentences like No. 3 above falls into the pattern of **SVOCA** because *this evening* is an adverbial of time, but we can think that *ready this evening* is the whole complement, which is made up of the adjective, *ready* (**C**) and the noun phrase, *this evening* (**A**).

5. I hope I will see you *well*. (*Well* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
6. I should hold you *responsible*. (*Responsible* is an adjective and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
7. He wished himself *dead*. (*Dead* is an adjective and *himself* is a reflexive pronoun used as object and *dead* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
8. I wish the voyage *at an end*. I am so sick. (*At an end* is a prepositional phrase and used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
9. I wish myself *out of the affair*. It’s such a vexed affair.
(*Out of the affair* is a prepositional phrase again and used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

In sentences 1, 2, and 3 above, the infinitive *to be* may be inserted before the adjective. Then they become another variant. See (6) in (c) below.

(3) A prepositional phrase (formed with a noun and a preposition) or adverb used as object complement

1. He considered himself *above others*. (*Above others* is a prepositional phrase used as complement. It is **SVOC**.)
2. We found everything there *in good order*. (*In good order* is a prepositional phrase and used as complement. It is **SVOC**.)
3. Did you find her *in*? (*In* is an adverb used as complement. It is **SVOC**.)

(4) Object Complement which is a past participle to show a passive meaning. A past participle can be used as an adjective.

Examples:

1. He couldn't make his voice *heard*. (*Heard* is a past participle and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
2. We eat our meal *cooked*. (*Cooked* is a past participle and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
3. I heard my name *called*. (*Called* is a past participle and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
4. We find the house *deserted*. (*Deserted* is a past participle and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
5. We haven't for long heard this opera *sung*. (*Sung* is a past participle and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
6. She wanted the work *finished quickly*. (*Finished* is a past participle and the complement, which is made up of *finished quickly*, in which *quickly* an adverb is used as an adverbial. It is **SVOCA**.)
7. We have seen bicycles *knocked down by trucks*. (*Knocked* is a past participle and its complement is made up of *knocked down by trucks*. *By trucks* is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial. It is **SVOCA**.)
8. I'll get my hair *cut this afternoon*. (*Cut* is a past participle. The whole complement is made up of *cut this afternoon*. *This afternoon* is used as adverbial of time. It is **SVOCA**.)
9. I'll have it *sent back to you tomorrow*. (*Sent* is a past participle and the complement is made up of *sent back to you tomorrow*. *To you* is a prepositional phrase pre-modified by the adverb *back*, which is used as an adverbial, and *tomorrow* is used as an adverbial of time. It is **SVOCAA**.)

(c) Verbs with a verbal complement to indicate action

(1) the infinitive with *to* used as object complement

Examples:

1. I do not want anybody *to know*. (*To know* is the infinitive with *to* and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
2. Do you wish her *to stay*? (*To stay* is the infinitive with *to* and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
3. Will you help me (*to*) *carry this box upstairs*? (*To carry* is the infinitive with *to* or without *to*, and the complement is (*to*) *carry this box upstairs*, in which *upstairs* is an adverb used as an adverbial of place. It is **SVOCA**.)

4. I like my children *to study hard*. (*To study* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is *to study hard*, in which *hard* is an adverb used as an adverbial of manner. It is **SVOCA**.)
5. My wife won't allow our children *to be idle*. (*To be idle* is the infinitive with *to* and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
6. Please ask him *to teach us English*. (*To teach* is the infinitive with *to* and the whole complement is made up of *to teach us English*. The infinitive *to teach* is followed by the indirect object, *us*, and direct object, *English*, but it still belongs to **SVOC**.)
7. Don't tell him *to come on Sunday*. (*To come* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is *to come on Sunday*, in which *on Sunday* is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial of time. It is **SVOCA**.)
8. He teaches us *to talk and write in English*. (*To talk and write* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is *talk and write in English*, in which the prepositional phrase *in English* is used as an adverbial. It is **SVOCA**.)
9. I don't mean it *to be known*. (*To be known* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
10. I should prefer them *to come on Monday*. (*To come* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is made up of *to come on Monday*, in which *on Monday* is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial of time. It is **SVOCA**.)
11. This led me *to suspect her*. (*To suspect* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is *to suspect her*, in which *her* is the object of the infinitive *to suspect*. It still belongs to **SVOC**.)
12. I warned her not *to be late*. (*To be late* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is made up of *not to be late*, in which *not* is used to negate the infinitive, *to be late*. It still belongs to **SVOC**.)
13. The heavy rain caused the river *to overflow*. (*To overflow* is the infinitive with *to* and is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
14. I should advise you *to accept the offer*. (*To accept* is the infinitive with *to* and its complement is made up of *to accept the offer*, in which *the offer* is used the object of the infinitive *to accept*. It still belongs to **SVOC**.)
15. Please get the ship chandler *to send us some provisions*. (*To send* is the infinitive with *to* and its complement is made up of *to send us some provisions*, in which the infinitive *to send* is

followed by the indirect object, *us*, and direct object, *some provisions*. It still belongs to **SVOC**.)

16. The government called on the people *to get prepared against foreign aggression*. (*Called on* is a phrasal verb. *The people* is the object of the phrasal verb, *called on*. *To get* is the infinitive with *to* and its complement is made up of *to get prepared against foreign aggression*, in which *against foreign aggression* is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial. It is **SVOCA**.)
17. We rely on the means *to promote production*. (*Rely on* is a phrasal verb. *To promote* is the infinitive with *to* and the complement is made up of *to promote production*, in which *production* is the object of *to promote*. *The means* is the object of the phrasal verb, *rely on*. It is still **SVOC**.)

(2) The infinitive without *to*

Some grammarians use the term **the bare infinitive** which is the same as **the infinitive without *to***.

Examples:

1. He made her *laugh*. (*Laugh* is the infinitive without *to*, *her* is the object of *made* and the complement is *laugh*. It is **SVOC**.)
2. Let me *see*. (*See* is the infinitive without *to*, *me* is the object of *the verb, let*, and the complement is *see*. It is **SVOC**.)
3. He made his children *leave the sitting room*. (*Leave* is the infinitive without *to* and *the sitting room* is the object of *leave* and the whole complement is made up of *leave the sitting room*. It is **SVOC**.)
4. Have you ever known him *not come*? (When *know* is used in perfect tense with negation, the bare infinitive is used. It is **SVOC**. Another example: *We have/had never known him lose his temper before*.)

(3) The present participle

Examples:

1. I can smell something *burning*. (*Smell* is a verb. *Something* is the object and *burning* is the present participle used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

2. You mustn't keep me *waiting*. (*Waiting* is the present participle used as its complement to the object, *me*. It is **SVOC**.)
 3. Let's keep the ball *rolling*. (*Rolling* is the present participle used as the complement to the object, *the ball*. *Keep the ball rolling* is also used as complement to the object 's (= us). It is still **SVOC**.)
 4. This set me *thinking*. (*Thinking* is the present participle used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
 5. We have caught him *sleeping over his desk*. (*Sleeping over his desk* is the complement to the object, *him*. The complement is made up of the present participle, *sleeping*, and the adverbial of place, *over his desk*. It is **SVOCA**.)
 6. Please start the clock *going* and the engine *running*. (*Going* and *running* are both the present participles used as the complement to the objects, *clock* and *the engine*, respectively. It is **SVOC**.)
 7. We must get things *going*. (*Going* is the present participle used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
- (4) Either the present participles or the bare infinitive with only some slight difference in meaning**

Examples:

1. I saw the thief *running /run away*. (*Running / run away* is the complement to the object, *the thief*. *Running* is the present participle and *run* is a bare infinitive. It is **SVOC**.)
2. We watched the ship *steaming /steam past*. (*Steaming /steam past* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
3. I heard him *giving /give orders*. (*Giving/give orders* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
4. Did you notice anyone *standing /stand there?* (*Standing/stand there* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
5. We listened to the band *playing /play in the park*. (*Playing/play in the park* is the complement, which is made up of the present participle, *playing* or the bare infinitive, *play* and the adverbial of place, *in the park*. It is **SVOC**.)
6. We looked at the rain *coming /come down*. (*Coming/come down* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
7. I watched her *playing /play football*. (*Playing/play football* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

8. She can feel her heart *beating /beat quickly*. (*Beating/beat quickly* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
9. I saw the drunkard *cross the road*. (*Cross* is the bare infinitive. *Cross the road* is the complement, which is made up of the bare infinitive, *cross* and its object, *the road*. It is **SVOC**.)

There is no practical difference in meaning between the bare infinitive and the present participle, except that in general the former suggests a completed activity and the latter an activity in progress. To make the point clear, a pair of sentences is presented below for comparison:

I saw the drunkard *cross* the road. (= I saw the whole journey from one side to the other. *Cross* is the bare infinitive. It is **SVOC**.)

Note that when the sentence is converted into a passive voice with the bare infinitive, the infinitive with *to* should be used, e.g. “The drunkard was seen *to cross* the road.”

I saw the drunkard *crossing* the road. (= I saw the drunkard at a moment when he was in the middle of crossing the road).

Crossing is the present participle and the complement is *crossing the road*. It is **SVOC**.

(5) Either the present participle or the infinitive, but with marked distinction of meaning

As examples, the verbs *have*, *leave*, and *find* may be cited, as in the following sets of sentences:

1. Would you *have* me believe that? (Here, “Would /will have” means “want” or “wish” or “like”. It is **SVOC**.)
2. We like to *have* (meaning “let”) our friends come to stay with us. (It is **SVOC**.)
3. We cannot *have* you wasting (meaning “allow you to waste”) time. (It is **SVOC**.)
4. We shall soon *have* the fog rising.
(The sentence means “The fog will soon be rising.” It is **SVOC**.)
5. The news *left* me wondering (meaning “caused me to wonder”) what would happen next.
(It is **SVOC**.)
6. I will *leave* (meaning “trust”) you to settle all the business. (It is **SVOC**.)
7. I found the box *to contain* odds and ends. (It is **SVOC**.)
8. I found him *lying* in bed. (It is **SVOC**.)

Here it seems that all depends whether the verb forming the verbal complement can or cannot have the progressive form. If it can, the present participle should be used; if it cannot, the

infinitive. “Contain” has no progressive or *-ing* form, here the infinitive [7]; “lie” can have its progressive form, hence the participle [8]. In fact, the infinitive “to be” may be inserted before “lying” in the sentence.

(6) The infinitive *to be*

Examples:

1. Most people supposed him (*to be*) innocent. (It is **SVOC**.)
2. They prove him (*to be*) right.
3. Do you think him (*to be*) a good teacher?
4. I consider that (*to be*) unimportant.
5. I have always found Mr. Marlowe (*to be*) honest.
6. I don't believe such a step (*to be*) worthwhile.
7. His teacher reported him (*to be*) diligent.
8. I consider what Ms. R said (*to be*) irrelevant.
9. We should declare the contract (*to be*) null and void.
10. I should guess you *to be* about forty.
11. We all saw (felt) the plan *to be* unwise (*Saw* here denotes mental action).
12. I believe this *to have been* a mistake.
13. You should not deny this *to be* true.
14. I know him *to be* an engineer.
15. I judge him *to be* about forty.

Great attention should be paid to the following:

- a. All the object-complement in **SVOC** constructions of the above sentences can be converted into a noun clause introduced by *that*. For example, Sentence 1 can be written as:

Most of people supposed (*that*) *he was innocent*.

- b. In most cases, the infinitive *to be* can be omitted as indicated by the parentheses. If so, the complement becomes another variant (**see (a) in C.** above). Verbs such as *see* (meaning *feel*), *know*, *guess*, *judge*, and *deny* do not admit of omission.
- c. As is the case with Sentence 12, a perfect infinitive is used where the time denoted by it precedes that denoted by the finite verb of the sentence.

d. As is the case with Sentence 8, the object may be a noun clause introduced by *what*.

(7) Sometimes, the object may itself be a *that*-clause, an infinitive, or a gerund, in which case preparatory with *to be* omitted and the object placed after the preparatory *it*, but the complement is placed before the object. It is still SVOC pattern. This is to be dealt with in the following.

Examples:

a. *It* representing a *that*-clause structure

1. I think *it* a pity *that you didn't try harder*. (It is SVOC.)

(It is still SVOC pattern, but the real object is *that you didn't try harder* which is introduced by a *that*-clause; its complement is a noun, *a pity*. *It* is used to act as an anticipating object to represent the real object after *a pity*, the complement. They are a few verbs that can be followed by *it* like this. Some grammarians call *it* the anticipatory *it*.)

2. We thought *it* wrong *that the products should be wasted*. (The clause, *that the products should be wasted*, is the real object of the verb, *thought*, and *wrong* is an adjective used its complement. It is SVOC.)

3. We have made *it* clear *that we'll let you go if you'd like to*.

4. I wish *it* to be understood *that what he did has nothing to do with me*. (The clause, *that what he did has nothing to do with me*, is the real object of the verb, *wish*, and *to be understood* is the infinitive phrases used as the complement. It is SVOC.)

5. We often heard *it* said *that the world is becoming more enlightened*. (The clause, *that the world is becoming more enlightened*, is the real object of the verb, *heard*, and *said* is a past participle used the complement. It is SVOC.)

6. We think *it* highly probable *that he will come tomorrow*.

7. I took *it* for granted *that he would fulfill the task*.

8. I consider *it* true *that he is a foreigner*.

In SVOC construction, *it* is used as an anticipatory object as seen in the above sentences to represent the real object introduced by *that*-clause, which is the real object of the sentence. For some verbs, however, *that*-clause cannot be used as object directly after the verb in SVOC construction. In such a case, *it* is used as an anticipatory object to present *that*-clause which is a real object. We don't say "*He can't swallow that you dislike him*", but we can use *it* as an

anticipatory object followed by *that*-clause. We can say “*He can’t swallow it that you dislike him.*” More examples:

9. He hid *it* that he was involved in the matter.
10. I resent *it* that you take that attitude.
11. I just love *it* that you are moving in with us.
12. I take *it* that you wanted something else.
13. Rumor has *it* that he is going to be fired.
14. He spilled *it* that John was their ringleader.
15. I’ll see to *it* that we are back before 7.
16. He owes *it* to the doctor’s good care that he is well again.

The anticipatory *it* above cannot be omitted that is used as an anticipatory object – *that*-clause. Note that in **SVOC** pattern, if *wh*-clause is used as an object, then *it* does not need to be used.

Compare:

We consider *what he said* very important. (**SVOC**)

*We consider that he should be present at the next meeting very important.

The second sentence above is incorrect grammatically.

b. *It* representing an infinitive structure

1. We think *it* our duty *to study and work hard for our country*. (The infinitive phrase, *to study and work hard for our country*, is the real object of the verb, *think*, and *our duty* is a noun phrase used as the complement. It is **SVOC**.)
2. I count *it* one of the sweetest privileges of my life *to have known and conversed with many men of genius*. (The perfect infinitive phrase, *to have known and conversed with many men of genius*, is a real object of the verb, *count*, and the noun phrase, *one of the sweetest privileges of my life*, is used as the complement. (It is **SVOC**.)
3. Do you think *it* proper *to treat her so badly*?
4. I think *it* prudent *to wait and see*.
5. We count *it* an honor *to serve you*. (*An honor* is a noun used as complement. It is **SVOC**.)
6. I consider *it* a favor for you *to call on me on that account*.
7. I should consider *it* unwise *to swop horses in mid-stream*.
8. Do you consider *it* proper *to treat him so badly*?

9. We don't *think fit* to adopt his suggestion.

10. You know the situation best. Do whatever you *see fit*.

Note that *Think fit* or *see fit* (to do something) is a fixed phrase, in which the preparatory (anticipatory) *it* is always omitted before *fit* as seen in Sentences 9 and 10 above.

c. *it* representing a gerund structure

1. We thought *it* no good *telling him about that*. (*Telling him about that* is a gerundial phrase used as object. *No good* is used as the complement. *It* is an anticipatory object.)

2. We found *it* useless *trying to persuade him to go with us*.

3. Don't you think *it* wise *our climbing the mountain without a guide*?

(The real object is a gerund structure, *our climbing the mountain without a guide* ; its complement is *wise*. The *it* is used as a preparatory *it* or anticipating object. *Our* is a possessive pronoun used as a formal logical subject of the gerund, *climbing*.)

4. I don't think *it* worthwhile *taking such trouble*.

(d) *As*-phrase and *for*-phrase used object complement

In **SVOC** construction, certain verbs need to be followed by *as*-phrase or *for*-phrase to be their object complement. These verbs are: *acknowledge, define, declare, denounce, depict, describe, elect, employ, express, choose, interpret, look upon, name, recognize, refer to, regard, represent, treat, use, etc.*, as in

1. I regard her as my best friend. (*As my best friend* is a prepositional phrase used as the complement to the object, *her*. It is **SVOC**.)

2. We took him for a fool. (*For a fool* is a prepositional phrase and used as the complement to the object, *him*. It is **SVOC**.)

3. They chose him (for) their boss.

4. They chose her for their boss.

5. They declared the election as illegal.

6. We denounced him as a traitor.

7. We named him as temporary leader.

8. She expressed herself as satisfied.

9. We referred to her as the principal of the school.

10. We acknowledged Ms. R as an authority in the matter.
11. They represented him as (a) reliable (man).
12. We regard this as of great importance.
13. I regard her as a friend.
14. I know him as/to be a very brave man.
15. Ms. Roden described the case as hopeless.
16. We depicted him as a clown.
17. We can define gravity as the force of a traction between any two objects.

Note that when the sentences are converted into passive voice, they will become subject complement, as in

18. The problem is considered *as settled*. (It is **SVC**.)
19. His attitude was described *as unfriendly*. (It is **SVC**.)
20. These words may be used *as determiners*.
21. She was referred to *as the principal of the school*.
22. What was once regarded *as impossible* has become a reality.

That will be the end of the illustration of the five basic types of the English verb on the basis of the writer's extensive review of grammar books, reference books, and the consultation of English dictionaries. It should be pointed out that most English verbs have more than one type. Verbs like *ask* may have as many as four, and *get* as many as all, of the types. The constructions of each verb are to be learnt by heart. Those English learners always find it difficult to use the verb correctly. The five basic types of the verb are very important in that they determine the five types of the predicate/predicative, which in turn give the five basic patterns of the sentence. By amplifying them with various kinds of attributives and/or adverbials, A.S. Hornby expanded them into his 25 sentence patterns at the end of *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, 1994. Moreover, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Great Britain: The Pitman Press, 1978) is also a good English dictionary for those English learners because it tells us how to use each word correctly in English. At the end of the dictionary there is a table of codes to describe the patterns of each verb. The authors of the dictionary used simple and basic English words to define, describe, and illustrate each word in

the dictionary so that English learners can easily read and understand each definition and description.

Any suggestion, comment, and critique will be welcome of this article.

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