

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Verbs can be classified as **transitive** or **intransitive**.

A **transitive verb** requires both a subject and an object.

i.e. *I gave you the doll.* (doll is the direct object of “gave” and “you”)

Without a direct object, the meaning of a transitive verb is unclear.

Incomplete: *The boy held.* (What did the boy hold?)

Complete: *The boy held the owl.*

An **intransitive verb** cannot take an object.

i.e. *The child will nap until 2:00.* (Nap is an intransitive verb, and the sentence has no object.)

A lot of people confuse the words *lie*, *lay*, and *laid*.

Present	Past	Past Participle
lie (intransitive) <i>You look sick; lie down and rest.</i>	lay (intransitive) <i>She lay next to the crib.</i>	lain (intransitive) <i>She had lain on the bed for too long.</i>
lay (transitive) <i>Lay the book down.</i>	laid (transitive) <i>He laid the kitten down.</i>	laid (transitive) <i>She had already laid the money on the counter.</i>

Practice Exercise # 1:

Underline the verb in each sentence and identify if it is used transitively or intransitively. Circle the object of each transitive verb.

1. Bill is watching a movie.
2. Sally paints.
3. Bill struggled at his new school.
4. The ballerinas dance wonderfully.
5. The movie is about to begin, so we will eat our ice cream in the car.
6. I am reading Harry Potter.
7. She rolled a lucky number seven.

Practice Exercise # 2:

Complete the following sentences by inserting the correct form of the words “lie” and “lay.”

1. She will _____ the baby down in the crib.
2. _____ down and rest.
3. I can't find my keys. Did you _____ them on the table like I asked?

4. He had _____ near the fire all evening.
5. She had already _____ the book down.

Answer Key:

Exercise 1:

1. watching/transitive
2. paints/intransitive
3. struggled/intransitive
4. dance/intransitive
5. eat/ transitive
6. reading/ transitive
7. rolled/transitive

Exercise 2:

1. lay
2. Lie
3. lay
4. lain
5. laid

Works Consulted:

<http://web.ku.edu/~edit/lie.html>, <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/trnsintr.html>,
<http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/rvtrintr.html>