

MA GRAMMAR / WEEK 11

Verb patterns and complementation

MA Grammar · Week 11
Quirk et al., Chapter 16

Classify the use, not just the verb

Constructed examples

The seminar began.
The tutor began the seminar.
The draft remained incomplete.

Today's goals

Identify complementation patterns.
Distinguish predicatives and objects.
Evaluate omission and passive tests.

Complementation describes a verb's pattern

Identify the lexical verb and its intended sense.

Record the participants and states selected by that use.

Distinguish selected completion from freely added circumstances.

Combine omission with meaning, distribution and substitution tests.

Intransitive uses do not take an object

Simple pattern

The students arrived.
The discussion continued.

Additional circumstances

The students arrived after lunch.
The discussion continued in Room 2.

Copular verbs link subject and predicative

Adjective phrase

The explanation seems convincing.

Noun phrase

Rana became the coordinator.

Convincing and the coordinator are predicated of the subject.

Some adverbials complete the pattern

Required location

The meeting is in Room 2.

Optional location

The students discussed the paper in Room 2.

The location fills a different structural role in each use.

Monotransitive uses select one object

Ordinary object and passive

The tutor revised the handout.

The handout was revised by the tutor.

Restricted passive

The book costs twenty pounds.

A measure NP does not behave like an ordinary affected object.

Prepositional objects need their own label

The argument rests on two assumptions.

On introduces the prepositional object two assumptions.

The argument rests on them, not *rests them on.

Compare: The tutor placed the books on the desk.

Workshop 1 · Sort the observed patterns

1. The students laughed after the presentation.
2. The results became clearer.
3. The team collected the questionnaires.
4. The proposal depends on external funding.

Identify subject, verb and each complement or circumstance.

Drill key · Explain the relations

Items 1–2

1: intransitive laughed plus time adverbial.
2: copular became plus subject
complement clearer.

Items 3–4

3: monotransitive collected plus direct
object.
4: prepositional depends on plus
prepositional object.

Workshop 2 · One verb, two uses

Constructed report A

The tutor grew impatient.

Constructed report B

The department grew tomatoes in the teaching garden.

What changes in the relation after grew?

A lexical identity can hide a pattern change

Impatient is an adjective phrase functioning as subject complement.

Tomatoes is a noun phrase functioning as direct object.

Tomatoes were grown is a natural passive.

*Impatient was grown by the tutor does not preserve the copular meaning.

Text laboratory · A research report

Constructed teaching data

- 1 The interviews lasted two hours.
- 2 The participants remained calm.
- 3 The team transcribed the recordings after the session.
- 4 The analysis relied on a revised coding scheme.
- 5 The final meeting was in the language laboratory.
- 6 The students read during the break.

Build an inventory with difficult cases

Classify the observed use of each lexical verb.

Compare two hours with the recordings: are the diagnostics identical?

Separate after the session from on a revised coding scheme.

Explain why read in line 6 does not require one uniquely recoverable object.

Suggested analysis of the report

Clear patterns

- 2: copular, calm as subject complement.
- 3: monotransitive, recordings as object; optional time phrase.
- 4: prepositional rely on.

Cases needing care

- 1: duration measure after lasted; passive is unavailable.
- 5: copular location pattern.
- 6: read has no overt object in this use.

Challenge · Is omission decisive?

Claim: if a phrase can be omitted, it is always an adjunct.

Compare The students read the article and The students read.

Explain why the article is still an object when it is present.

Exit response · Object or predicative?

The tutor became a reviewer.

The tutor contacted a reviewer.

Compare the role of a reviewer in the two clauses.

Use predication and passive evidence.

Portfolio 4 · Defend a verb analysis

Write 500–600 words on two or more verb uses.

Include omission, predication or passive evidence.

Discuss one borderline case and the limits of a test.

Next week: Quirk et al., §§16.29–47.