

Introduction to Linking Verbs

Connecting subjects to descriptions, identities, and states of being.

While action verbs act as the motor moving a sentence forward, **linking verbs** act as an equal sign (=). They don't show action; instead, they connect the subject of the sentence to details about who, what, or how they are.

1. WHAT IS A LINKING VERB?

A linking verb connects the subject to a noun or adjective in the predicate that describes or renames it.

The Equal Sign Rule

If you can replace the verb with an equal sign (=) or a form of *is/are* and the sentence still makes sense, it's a linking verb!

Example: The tea **tastes** sweet. → The tea = sweet.

2. THE "TO BE" FAMILY

The forms of *to be* are the primary linking verbs in English:

- Am / Is / Are** (Present state)
- Was / Were** (Past state)
- Be / Being / Been** (State of being)

Examples:

- She **is** a teacher.
- They **were** tired after the walk.

3. SENSORY & STATE LINKING VERBS

Words related to the five senses or states of being can also link the subject to a description:

Sensory Links	State Links
Look, Sound	Become, Seem
Taste, Smell, Feel	Appear, Remain

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

The Bridge of the Sentence (Linking Verbs)

Objective

Help the learner identify and use linking verbs to connect subjects with descriptions or identity words using the "Equal Sign Test" and simple sentence-building exercises.

Preparation

Have index cards, a marker, and a few simple object cards or familiar text available.

Learn

Read through the foundational rules together:

- **The Sentence Bridge:** Linking verbs do not show physical or mental motion. They act as a bridge or equal sign (=) linking the subject to a descriptor.
- **State of Being:** Instead of showing what a subject *does*, a linking verb shows what a subject *is*, *seems*, or *feels*.
- **The Equal Sign Test:** Swap the verb with "is", "are", or an equal sign (=). If the descriptive connection holds, it's a linking verb.

Do Together

1. Write the sentence "*The soup smells delicious*" on an index card.
2. Ask: Is the soup actively using a nose to smell something? (*No—it's describing the state of the soup!*)
3. Perform the **Equal Sign Test**: Change the sentence to "*The soup = delicious*" or "*The soup is delicious*."
4. Contrast this with an action verb: "*She smells the flowers*." (*Action—you can mime it!*)

Practice

1. Give the learner three simple subjects (e.g., *The cat*, *The weather*, *My friend*).
2. Ask them to complete each sentence using a linking verb from a target bank (**is, seems, tastes, looks, was**).
Example: "The cat **is** sleepy."
3. **The "Bridge Removal" Check:** Read the sentence back without the linking verb (e.g., "*The cat... sleepy*"). Point out how the description becomes disconnected without the bridge.

Wrap-up

Ask the learner to summarize:

- Does a linking verb show action?
- What math symbol works like a linking verb?
- Give one example of a "sensory" linking verb!

Coach's Notes

- **Action vs. Linking Confusion:** Verbs like *look*, *taste*, and *smell* can be either action or linking depending on context. Use the "Equal Sign Test" whenever the learner gets stuck.
- **Keep It Descriptive:** Pair linking verbs with strong adjectives (e.g., *calm*, *bright*, *sweet*) so the relationship between the subject and descriptor stays visual and direct.