Copular Verbs

Some verbs require a word or phrase after them to complete their predicate. This word or phrase which completes the predicate of a verb is called its **complement**. A verb which joins a subject with its complement is called a **linking or copular verb**. Such a verb is also called a **verb of incomplete predication**.

The most common copular verbs are **be** and its forms (is/am/are/was/were), **act**, **become**, **feel**, **appear**, **grow**, **taste**, **sound**, **remain**, **look**, **turn**, **went**, **ran** etc.

The complement that follows a copular verb may be a **noun, an adjective, an adverb or an adverbial phrase**.

He is an **engineer**. (Noun)
They are our **neighbors**. (Noun)
Those are **clouds**. (Noun)
The food is **delicious**. (Adjective)
His performance was **superb**. (Adjective)
The program was **entertaining**. (Adjective)
God is **everywhere**. (Adverb)
He was **in the next room**. (Adverbial phrase)
She remained a **spinster**. (Noun)
The crowd turned **violent**. (Violent)
That sounds **interesting**. (Adjective)
She went **abroad**. (Adverb)
John ran **very fast**. (Adverb)
He acted **in a treacherous manner**. (Adverbial phrase)

Copular verbs do not normally take objects, but sometimes they are used transitively.

She **acted** well. (Here the copular verb acted merely links the subject she with the complement well.)
She **acted her part** well. (Here the verb acted has an object (her part). It is, therefore, used transitively.)
I was **feeling** unwell. (Copulative use because the verb is followed by a complement, and not object)
The doctor **felt the patient’s pulse**. (Transitive use because the verb felt has an object)
The proposal **sounds** interesting. (Copulative use because the verb is followed by a complement, and not object)
The general **sounded the bugle**. (Transitive use because the verb has an object)

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