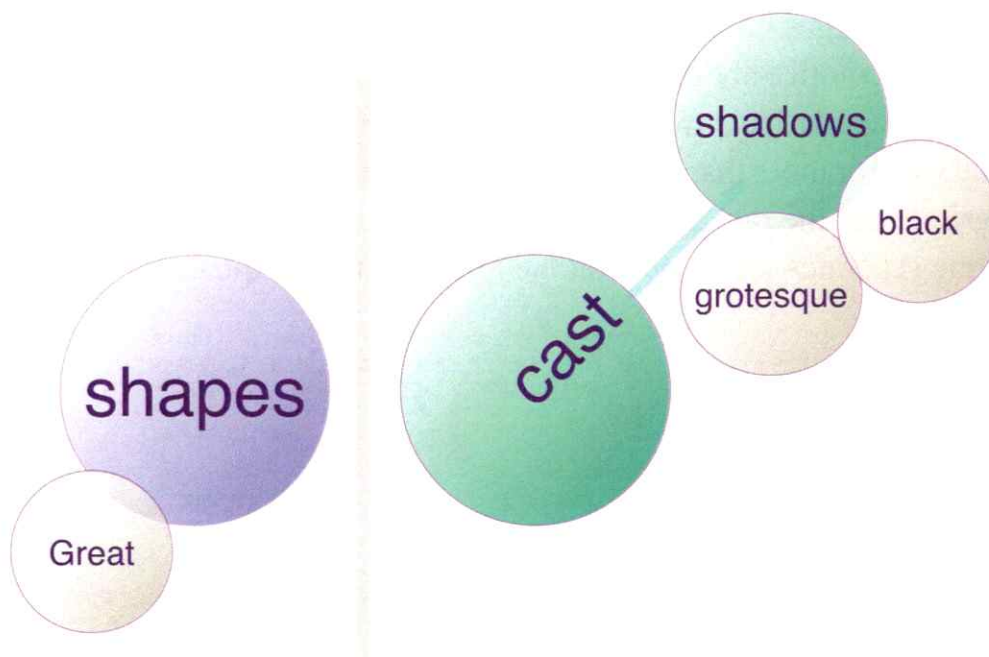


Even though the sentence is not about the verb, the sentence structure is based on the verb. Sometimes the verb is what we call a *being* verb, which means that it asserts that something exists. An example is: “Once upon a time, there was a hobbit.” The word *was* is a being verb; it means that a hobbit existed. Being verbs, however, are relatively rare. Most sentences use either *action* verbs or *linking* verbs, so those are the two kinds of verbs that we will emphasize. Action verbs sometimes transfer their action to a direct object, and linking verbs sometimes link their subjects to subject complements. That sounds complicated at first, but it is not. Let us look first at some action verb sentences. Here is a sentence from H.G. Wells’s novel *The Time Machine* (one of my favorite books). The actual sentence, or at least the beginning of it, is “Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows....” The essence of the structure is that shapes cast shadows. *Shapes* is the subject, *cast* is the action verb, and *shadows* is a direct object.



When the action verb transfers the action to a noun or pronoun so that the noun or pronoun gets verbed, that noun or pronoun is a *direct object*. It directly receives the action. The direct object cannot be the object of a preposition.

When the action verb transfers its energy to a direct object, we call it *transitive* (v.t.), and when it does not, we call it *intransitive* (v.i.).