

Lesson 17: Linking Verbs

LEARN

- A **linking verb** links the subject of a sentence with other words that tell about the subject. A linking verb does not show action.

A shark **is** a meat-eating fish.

Whale sharks **are** the largest of all sharks.

- Different forms of the verb *be* are often used as linking verbs. Use the form of *be* that agrees with the subject of the sentence.



Subject	Forms of <i>be</i>	
	Present	Past
singular noun <i>he, she, it</i>	is	was
plural noun <i>you, we, they</i>	are	were
<i>I</i>	am	was

The tank in this room **is** huge.
Those sharks **are** hammerheads.
I **am** curious about sharks.

It **was** open all day.
They **were** popular with visitors.
I **was** busy yesterday.

PRACTICE

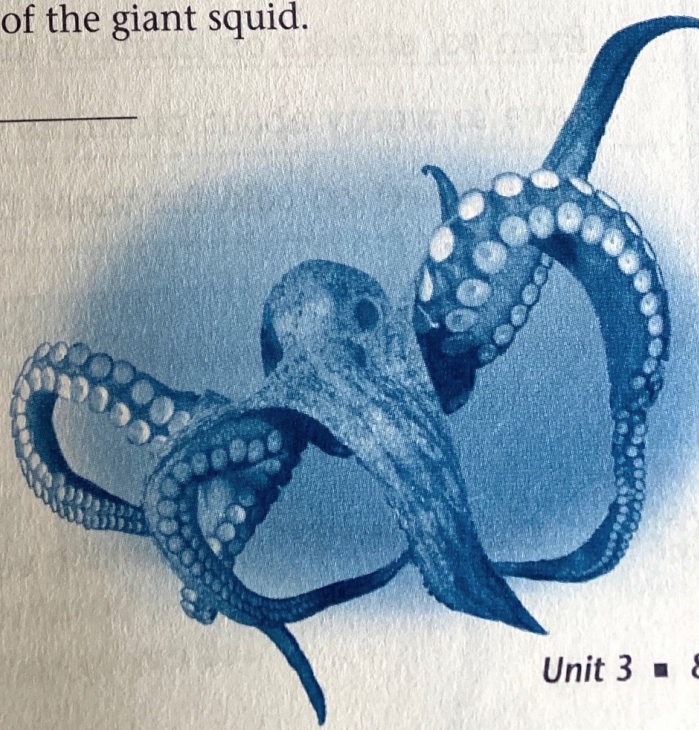
A Read each sentence. Choose the linking verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject. Then write the linking verb on the line.

1. We **were** at the aquarium yesterday. (was, were)
2. I **was** excited about the new shark exhibit. (was, were)
3. The tiger sharks **were** the biggest. (was, were)
4. One shark **was** 20 feet long. (was, were)
5. Shark teeth **are** razor sharp. (is, are)


6. That movie about the great white shark _____ **was** _____ terrifying!
(was, were)
7. Some viewers _____ **were** _____ afraid of sharks for years. (was, were)
8. Shark attacks on humans _____ **are** _____ rare. (is, are)
9. The total number _____ **is** _____ about 100 attacks each year. (is, are)
10. About 20 attacks _____ **were** _____ deadly last year. (was, were)

B Write the present-tense or past-tense form of **be** that correctly completes each sentence.

1. The giant squid _____ **is** _____ one of today's rarest sea creatures.
2. Some of its tentacles _____ **are** _____ 90 feet long!
3. Long ago sailors _____ **were** _____ afraid of the giant squid.
4. To them it _____ **was** _____ a sea monster.
5. These days I _____ **am** _____ very interested in giant squids.
6. Their homes _____ **are** _____ far below the ocean's surface.
7. Until recently no photos of these creatures _____ **were** _____ available.
8. Scientists _____ **were** _____ unsure of the squid's size for a long time.
9. Some whales _____ **are** _____ enemies of the giant squid.
10. A deep, round scar on a whale _____ **is** _____ the mark of a squid attack.
11. The octopus _____ **is** _____ an ocean dweller, too.
12. It _____ **is** _____ a shy animal.



C Jasmine wrote this report about piranhas. She made eight mistakes using linking verbs. Use the proofreading marks in the box to correct the errors.

Remember  Different forms of the verb *be* are used as linking verbs. Use the form of *be* that agrees with the subject of the sentence.






Many people ^{are} ~~is~~ afraid of piranhas. The fear of this fish probably got started because of old movies. In old jungle movies people ^{were} ~~was~~ often attacked by hungry piranhas.

In real life most piranhas ^{are} ~~is~~ harmless to people. Twenty different types of piranhas live in South America. Many of them eat the fruit and nuts that fall into the water.

Red-bellied piranhas ^{are} ~~is~~ meat eaters, though. Black piranhas are meat eaters, too. Both of these fish have sharp, pointed teeth, and their jaws ^{are} ~~is~~ powerful. When the water level is high, these piranhas find plenty of food. They don't bother people.


During dry spells the water level falls. Then the piranhas ^{are} ~~is~~ hungrier, and they ^{are} ~~is~~ more dangerous. Even so, attacks on humans are rare. Of course we don't have to worry about piranhas in North America. Our climate ^{is} ~~are~~ too cold for these fish.

Proofreading Marks

-  Add
-  Period
-  Take out
-  Capital letter
-  Small letter



Red-bellied piranha

 Did you correct eight linking verbs?

WRITE

D Use a linking verb to join a subject from Box A to a word from Box B, and write a sentence. You can add other words to your sentence, and you can use a choice from a box more than once. An example is done for you. **Answers will vary. Sample answers are given.**

A

the ocean whales
dolphins a child

B

giants huge
curious mammals

1. Whales are giants of the sea.
2. The ocean is a huge body of water.
3. Dolphins are mammals.
4. A child is curious about whales and dolphins.

A

alligators the animal
jaws many people

B

similar powerful
reptile afraid

5. Alligators are similar to crocodiles.
6. The jaws of an alligator are very powerful.
7. The animal is a reptile.
8. Many people are afraid of alligators.

Proofreading Checklist

- Did you use a linking verb in each sentence?
- Did you use a choice of the linking verb **be**?