Six Troublesome Verbs

Lie and Lay

The verb *lie* means “to rest,” “to recline,” or “to be in a certain place.” *Lie* does not take a direct object. The verb *lay* means “to put [something] in a place.” *Lay* generally takes a direct object.

### EXAMPLES

- A napkin is **lying** on each diner’s plate.  [no direct object]
- The servers are **laying** a napkin on each diner’s plate.  [*Napkin is the direct object of are laying.*]
- The seed **lay** on the ground.  [no direct object]
- We **laid** seed on the ground for the wild birds.  [*Seed is the direct object of laid.*]
- The issues have **lain** before the voters.  [no direct object]
- The state legislators have **laid** the issues before the voters.  [*Issues is the direct object of have laid.*]

### Exercise 7  Choosing the Forms of Lie and Lay

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. On your desk are **(lying, laying)** several letters that require your signature, Ms. Carmichael.

   1. **lying**

1. If you are sick, you should be **(lying, laying)** down.
2. They **(lay, laid)** the heavy crate on the handcart.
3. Lucia’s mother has been **(lying, laying)** the canvas out to dry.
4. Amy **(lay, laid)** down for a while.
5. **(Lie, Lay)** down and rest for a minute.
6. She had just **(lain, laid)** down when the doorbell rang.
7. They **(lay, laid)** their plans before the committee.
8. The calf **(lay, laid)** on a pile of straw.
9. Kiyoshi has just **(lain, laid)** his paintbrush down.
10. Please **(lie, lay)** all of those blankets down here.
**Sit and Set**

The verb *sit* means “to be in a seated, upright position” or “to be in a place.” *Sit* seldom takes a direct object. The verb *set* means “to put [something] in a place.” *Set* generally takes a direct object.

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<tr>
<td>set</td>
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<td>set</td>
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**EXAMPLES**

Who *is sitting* next to the hearth? [no direct object]

Who *is setting* the chair next to the hearth? *[Chair is the direct object of is setting.]*

Where *should* we *sit*? [no direct object]

Where *should* we *set* the groceries? *[Groceries is the direct object of should set.]*

We *sat* near the end zone during last night’s game. [no direct object]

We *set* the giant papier-mâché football near the end zone during last night’s game. *[Football is the direct object of set.]*

**Exercise 8 Choosing the Forms of Sit and Set**

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. *(Sit, Set)* this box of diskettes on her computer desk, please.
   
   1. *Set*

1. After he had struck out, Pete *(sat, set)* on the bench.
2. Part of San Francisco’s Chinatown *(sits, sets)* on an incline that overlooks San Francisco Bay.
3. Where were the packages *(sitting, setting)* this morning?
4. We had *(sat, set)* the new cushions on the Adirondack chairs.
5. In Japan people often *(sit, set)* on tatami instead of chairs.
6. They were *(sitting, setting)* placemats on the table.
7. Have you *(sat, set)* here long, Aaron?
8. We have *(sat, set)* down our packs and gotten out our map.
9. Mr. Carr told me to *(sit, set)* the equipment on his desk.
10. I may never know who *(sat, set)* on my glasses.
**Rise and Raise**

The verb *rise* means “to go up” or “to get up.” *Rise* does not take a direct object. The verb *raise* means “to lift up” or “to cause [something] to rise.” *Raise* generally takes a direct object.

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<td>raise</td>
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<td>raised</td>
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</table>

**EXAMPLES**

One by one, the students’ hands were rising. [no direct object]

One by one, the students were raising their hands. [Hands is the direct object of were raising.]

Una rose and then walked to the front of the classroom. [no direct object]

Una raised her eyebrows and then walked to the front of the classroom. [Eyebrows is the direct object of raised.]

The number of women who work outside the home has risen steadily during the past decade. [no direct object]

Has working outside the home raised their economic status? [Status is the direct object of Has raised.]

**Exercise 9 Choosing the Forms of Rise and Raise**

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. The financial planner predicted, “In the near future, interest rates will not (*rise, raise*); they may decline.”

1. *rise*

1. Air bubbles have been (*rising, raising*) to the surface.
2. Increasing the import duty had (*risen, raised*) retail prices.
3. The speaker (*rose, raised*) from her chair and took the microphone.
4. The star has (*risen, raised*) in the east.
5. The rooster (*rises, raises*) early.
6. Before and during the Revolutionary War, many colonists worked hard to (*rise, raise*) public sentiment against King George III.
7. Hot-air balloons can (*rise, raise*) because they contain heated air, which is less dense than the surrounding air.

8. At the tribal council meeting, someone (*rose, raised*) the issue of land ownership within reservation boundaries.

9. Taylor is (*rising, raising*) the fallen child to her feet.

10. To make traditional challah, braid the bread dough after it has (*risen, raised*) for an hour.

**Review E** Choosing the Forms of *Lie* and *Lay*,
*Sit* and *Set*, and *Rise* and *Raise*

Choose the correct verb form in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. The snapshots of our trip to Kenya are (*lying, laying*) on top of the photo album.

   1. *lying*

1. All week that box has (*lain, laid*) unopened on the desk.

2. We had (*rose, raised*) our hats to salute the astronauts.

3. The fawn (*lay, laid*) motionless in the underbrush.

4. Our applications were (*lying, laying*) in front of the file.

5. Would you like to (*sit, set*) with us at the powwow?

6. Yesterday I (*sat, set*) the telephone book on this table.

7. Where have you (*laid, lain*) your glasses?

8. Kathy sang as she (*lay, laid*) the baby in the crib.

9. Please (*rise, raise*) if you have a question.

10. Last night’s victory really (*rose, raised*) the team’s confidence.

11. Our potbellied pig, Oscar, often (*lies, lays*) in my lap when I watch TV.

12. Fred should (*lie, lay*) on his side to stop snoring.

13. After the fire, the museum curator (*sat, set*) on the curb and wept.

14. Tempers (*rose, raised*) as the debate progressed.

15. In Washington, D.C., we will (*lie, lay*) flowers at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

16. Mrs. Nasser (*sat, set*) the tabbouleh and the kibbe next to other traditional Lebanese foods.

17. He has (*sit, set*) the pie on the ledge.

18. Billows of dust had (*risen, raised*) from the field.

19. Haven’t they (*sat, set*) down yet?

20. You should (*lie, lay*) on a padded surface to do exercises.