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listen is intransitive and it always has to be followed by either to or for: lis·ten intr.v. lis·tened, lis·ten·ing, lis·tens To make an effort to hear something: listen to the radio; listening for the bell. listen is intransitive and it always has to be followed by either to or for: lis·ten intr.v. lis·tened, lis·ten·ing, lis·tens To make an effort to hear something: listen to the radio; listening for the bell. and what is the difference between for or to ???? and thank you two To listen to the radio. - You are taking in the sound, hearing it, and processing it. To listen for the bell. - You are waiting to hear the sound of the bell. To listen for something connotes waiting, or anticipation. Originally Posted by josama listen is transitive and it always has to be followed by either to or for Perhaps? . . . Nope, Venus, if it were transitive you could follow it with the direct object without the intervention of a preposition. It IS intransitive, as the dictionary states: lis·ten intr.v. lis·tened, lis·ten·ing, lis·tens To make an effort to hear something: listen to the radio; listening for the bell. Ok, this has always confused me... I was under the impression that transitive verbs carry an object (direct or indirect), and that intransitive verbs don't carry an object at all. ?? Ok, this has always confused me... I was under the impression that transitive verbs carry an object (direct or indirect), and that intransitive verbs don't carry an object at all. ?? Yes, I know. I'm a little bit confused by that in English, too. I think it's easier in Spanish. In this case, the object supposedly is the object of the preposition, not of the verb. I'm going to seek something to read about that... To listen to the radio. - You are taking in the sound, hearing it, and processing it. To listen for the bell. - You are waiting to hear the sound of the bell. To listen for something connotes waiting, or anticipation. so if you say " are you listening for the sound ?" its the same as " are you hearing the sound ?" so if you say " are you listening for the sound ?" its the same as " are you hearing the sound ?" No, the opposite in fact. He's listening to the sound. - He's actually hearing it. He's listening for the sound. - He's waiting to hear it. (This is just my opinion. Let's wait to hear what others say...) so if you say " are you listening for the sound ?" its the same as " are you hearing the sound ?" I would think that the 1st sentence implies waiting, and the second would imply that it is happening at that moment... I would think that the 1st sentence implies waiting, and the second would imply that it is happening at that moment... I would say the same thing. listen is intransitive and it always has to be followed by either to or for: lis·ten intr.v. lis·tened, lis·ten·ing, lis·tens To make an effort to hear something: listen to the radio; listening for the bell. I would also think that if you're standing in front of someone and using it as a command, you could always just drop the endings and just use "listen!". Either ending could be implied.... So what you say is Listening for the sound =waiting to hear the sound ???? So what you say is Listening for the sound =waiting to hear the sound ???? In essence, yes. This woman is listening for something. She expects to hear a sound. So, she has a look like she's anticipating hearing it. This girl is listening to something. She has on headphones, and she's actively listening. I know that my pictures are silly! But, I hope it helps you understand the nuance. So what you say is Listening for the sound =waiting to hear the sound ???? They're not equal sentences, however they are impling a similar concept. In essence, yes. This woman is listening for something. She expects to hear a sound. So, she has a look like she's anticipating hearing it. This girl is listening to something. She has on headphones, and she's actively listening. I my pictures are silly! But, I hope it helps you understand the nuance. Now I understand it thank you all So what you say is Listening for the sound =waiting to hear the sound ???? Yes, Roniy. You are correct. It means you expect the sound to occur, so you are listening for it. I was under the impression that transitive verbs carry an object (direct or indirect), and that intransitive verbs don't carry an object at all. ?? Transitive verbs carry a direct object. What do you carry/are you carrying? I carry / am carrying a bucket of water? What are you eating? I am eating a brownie. "Listen to" follows the pattern of verb + preposition, so it must always be followed by a preposition, in this case "to" or "for," as have been discussed. It is not transitive. Those are PERFECT illustrations! I think that gets the point across better than saying it. "Listen to" follows the pattern of verb + preposition, so it must always be followed by a preposition, in this case "to" or "for," as have been discussed. It is not transitive. Yes Gen, but I think that that's in fact what is causing us (at least Venus and me) so much trouble. Because, usually, intransitive verbs don't have to be followed by anything, so, "stop" could function as an instransitive: "Hey, stop!" But another characteristic that transitives verbs have (at least for me) is that they perform an action over something, so, when you listen to music, for me it's obvious that the action of listening is being performed over the music. Listen, for me, would be intransitive only if you give an order like: Hey, listen!, but not if you listen to something. I know this is not the thread so I will shut up. IF I say "pay attention for the bell" is also like " Listen for the bell" right ??? IF I say "pay attention for the bell" is also like " Listen for the bell" right ??? You pay attention TO someone/something. The meaning is pretty similar, but not exactly the same, I think You pay attention TO someone/something. The meaning is pretty similar, but not exactly the same, I think Pay attention wouldn't sound right to me. They have a similar meaning, but I would use listen in this case. Listen is intransitive in form, but it is also one of those verbs that comes "bundled" with a preposition. Listen to is a verb form that is clearly transitive, but many grammarians use the word "verb" strictly, denoting a part of speech with no regard to nuances of sense or function implied by yoking the verb with a preposition. "Listen to" is the same grammatically as hear, though you can listen without hearing something, and listen for something that can't yet be heard-- and you can hear things you weren't listening for. Hearing without listening is the autonomic act without the cognitive-- usually identical with "being startled." I don't consider listen to be the same verb as listen to because "Listen to the music" isn't a verb/adverbial-prepositional-phrase cluster in the same sense that "listen with care" is. In the first case the object of the preposition (music) is also the object of the verb, whereas in the second case the object (care) is the object of the preposition, and the verb remains clearly intransitive. So listen is an intransitive verb in form, but when you bundle it with certain prepositions (to and for) you 1) modify the verb to permit a transitive use of it, or 2) create a new verb, namely listen to or listen for. English is susceptible to coinage, but you can't just tack a preposition onto a verb, it's idiomatic usage that "bundles" certain combinations like look at or feel like. Of these examples, the first makes a transitive verb out of an intransitive one, and the second works the other way around. (Yes, feel can be either, but feel like is intransitive only. You can't just forcibly bundle verb/preposition pairs into new verb forms that don't make sense-- listen with isn't a verb. So listen is an intransitive verb in form, but when you bundle it with certain prepositions (to and for) you 1) modify the verb to permit a transitive use of it, or 2) create a new verb, namely listen to or listen for. So, listen to is, in a sense, a new verb form? So, is it transitive, or intransitive? Argument #1: It's transitive because the embedded to mandates that it performs an action on an object. Argument #2: It's intransitive because the to is simply an embedded preposition that has become part of the verb. Which argument should I listen to? The blurb below about making a transitive verb out of an intransitive one makes me lean towards #1. Josama's post #7 quotes a dictionary, and says that this verb (listen or listen to) is intransitive. This makes me lean towards #2. English is susceptible to coinage, but you can't just tack a preposition onto a verb, it's idiomatic usage that "bundles" certain combinations like look at or feel like. Of these examples, the first makes a transitive verb out of an intransitive one, and the second works the other way around. (Yes, feel can be either, but feel like is intransitive only. Ok, so this is totally clear. Listen is intransitive in form, but it is also one of those verbs that comes "bundled" with a preposition. Listen to is a verb form that is clearly transitive, but many grammarians use the word "verb" strictly, denoting a part of speech with no regard to nuances of sense or function implied by yoking the verb with a preposition. "Listen to" is the same grammatically as hear, though you can listen without hearing something, and listen for something that can't yet be heard-- and you can hear things you weren't listening for. Hearing without listening is the autonomic act without the cognitive-- usually identical with "being startled." I don't consider listen to be the same verb as listen to because "Listen to the music" isn't a verb/adverbial-prepositional-phrase cluster in the same sense that "listen with care" is. In the first case the object of the preposition (music) is also the object of the verb, whereas in the second case the object (care) is the object of the preposition, and the verb remains clearly intransitive. So listen is an intransitive verb in form, but when you bundle it with certain prepositions (to and for) you 1) modify the verb to permit a transitive use of it, or 2) create a new verb, namely listen to or listen for. English is susceptible to coinage, but you can't just tack a preposition onto a verb, it's idiomatic usage that "bundles" certain combinations like look at or feel like. Of these examples, the first makes a transitive verb out of an intransitive one, and the second works the other way around. (Yes, feel can be either, but feel like is intransitive only. You can't just forcibly bundle verb/preposition pairs into new verb forms that don't make sense-- listen with isn't a verb. WHOA! You're just the kind of teacher I need right now! Thank you for the superb explanation There is nothing strange, or unusual, about: "Listen!" I use this often. The result is a small girl completely still, eyes locked with mine, her attention focussed entirely on what she can hear so that she can tell me about it. Intransitive listen is alive and well. "Pay attention!" ... is also OK, but is much less exciting than "Listen!" It is an instruction, not an invitation. Intransitive listen is alive and well. Yes, obviously using a verb in the imperative mood doesn't impair its nature. In fact, aren't most single-word verbal commands made with intransitive verbs? Yes, obviously using a verb in the imperative mood doesn't impair its nature. In fact, aren't most single-word verbal commands made with intransitive verbs? Pass Good one-- but are you talking to the driver behind you who's tailgating, or exhorting Time itself to do its thing? There's that weird thought-association thing at work again. This time I am exhorting anyone looking for comments about imperative moods to pass me by in their search [It took me ages to work out what you meant, and then to realise that my last post was following the "Listen", "Pay attention" formula. I need another coffee.] So, listen to is, in a sense, a new verb form? So, is it transitive, or intransitive? Argument #1: It's transitive because the embedded to mandates that it performs an action on an object. Argument #2: It's intransitive because the to is simply an embedded preposition that has become part of the verb. Which argument should I listen to? The blurb below about making a transitive verb out of an intransitive one makes me lean towards #1. Josama's post #7 quotes a dictionary, and says that this verb (listen or listen to) is intransitive. This makes me lean towards #2. Ok, so this is totally clear. Your last statement confused me into thinking you'd figured it out and didn't need an answer. If you break everything into parts, the verb listen is intransitive and to is a preposition, and prepositions take objects. This kind of literal, mechanistic parsing says that "listen to music" and "listen with care" are both verbs modified by adverbial prepositional phrases. It's possible to "diagram" them that way, and if you do so, the teacher hands back your grammar test without checking anything wrong. But music is clearly the object of the act of listening, and care is not. An object is what verbal action is done to, and an adverb shows how it is done. "With care" is adverbial, so you have listen (verb) with care (adverb phrase), but "listen to" (verb) music (direct object) logically, and in my view correctly, parses the grammar (structure) in a way that is congruent with the rhetoric (content). To do so you have to consider "listen to" a different verb from "listen," and think of preposition as enclitics rather than separate entities (listen + up) or proclitics to adverbial phrases that don't answer "how" questions (listen + to music). You can see that "listen up" could be argued either way, because it is intransitive, so why force the argument that it is a separate verb? The "up" can be called idiomatic, and gotten out of the way by that catch-all categorization. But "listen to" is clearly transitive, and the argument that it is therefore a different verb from "listen" just about makes itself. So I opt for #1, in your question above. If #2 implies "listen to" is intransitive, it is wrong. You can't just "listen to." You have to listen to some "objectifiable" thing. Your last statement confused me into thinking you'd figured it out and didn't need an answer. But "listen to" is clearly transitive, and the argument that it is therefore a different verb from "listen" just about makes itself. So I opt for #1, in your question above. If #2 implies "listen to" is intransitive, it is wrong. You can't just "listen to." You have to listen to some "objectifiable" thing. Thanks, Fox. This is clear. As a matter of fact, I feel better because your explanation conforms with my initial thoughts (argument #1). But, I began to doubt myself when I saw the following posts: listen is intransitive and it always has to be followed by either to or for It IS intransitive, as the dictionary states: lis·ten intr.v. To make an effort to hear something: listen to the radio; listening for the bell. "Listen to" follows the pattern of verb + preposition, so it must always be followed by a preposition, in this case "to" or "for," as have been discussed. It is not transitive. Yes, there is disagreement. You have to use what you know about grammar to describe a situation that is both grammatic (structure, function) and rhetorical (usage, meaning). To say "listen" is a verb, period, end of subject, and "to" is a separate part of speech, and to is what takes the object "music," you have to believe that "listen to music" isn't what you do, but "listen" is what you do and "to music" is how you do it. You also have to believe that "listen to" is intransitive, and this is very hard for me because it is nonsense. To say "listen to" is a verb, you have to broaden your definition of what constitutes a verb. That's easy when it comes to "listen to," but what about other things the phrases-as-verbs approach opens the door to-- like "play possum?" I'm fairly comfortable codifying what is intuitive, so I can say "play possum" is a verb that means "dissemble" or "feign," but then there's the awkward codicil about idiomatic restrictions. "Play possum" is intransitive because the damn possum is figurative and doesn't even exist, much less get acted upon. But "feign" wants an object, and in playing possum the thing you're always feigning is "being dead." "Feign death" is a transitive verb + object construction. This is the kind of conundrum strict grammarians are afraid will create chaos, but what are you going to do with a phrase like "play possum?" Call possum a subjective complement? Is "I'm playing possum" really the same construction, and carry the same sense, as saying "I'm playing Ophelia in tonight's performance of Hamlet?" Whoa, bad example-- it turned out Ophelia wasn't playing around, but from an actor's point of view performing that role does entail a bit of playing possum. Thanks, Fox. This is clear. As a matter of fact, I feel better because your explanation conforms with my initial thoughts (argument #1). But, I began to doubt myself when I saw the following posts: hehehe, It's just that you shouldn't have paid attention to what I said... It's just that it what the dictionary says, and, as I'm not a native English speaker... I didn't study English grammar as thoroughly as I did -with, to, no prep????- Spanish. (