

How do you tell when they are action verbs and when they are linking verbs?

If you can substitute am, is, or are and the sentence still sounds logical, you have a linking verb on your hands.

If, after the substitution, the sentence makes no sense, you are dealing with an *action* verb instead. Here are some examples:

Sylvia tasted the spicy squid eyeball stew.

Sylvia is the stew? I don't think so! Tasted, therefore, is an action verb in this sentence, something Sylvia is *doing*.

The squid eyeball stew tasted good.

The stew is good? You bet. Make your own! It's a linking verb!

I smell the delicious aroma of a mushroom and papaya pizza baking in the oven.

I am the aroma? No way! Smell, in this sentence, is an action verb, something I am *doing*.

The mushroom and pineapple pizza smells heavenly.

The pizza is heavenly? Definitely! Try a slice! It's a linking verb!