

## SENTENCE STRUCTURE

A sentence is a set of words that contain:

1. A subject (S): Who or what a sentence speaks about; usually a noun, pronoun or a noun phrase that acts or is described. For example:

- ❖ *The boy cries* (subject is The boy)
- ❖ *You speak English* (subject is you)
- ❖ *The dog was sick* (subject is The dog)

The subject of a clause identifies an important participant in the event or state described by the predicate verb. Depending on the verb, the subject identifies who does something, who or what has a certain property, who or what is in a particular state.

To identify the subject, it often helps to formulate a question based on what general situation the clause is about, For instance: “Boys gathered in the street” is about someone gathering somewhere. To find the subject, we ask a question like “*who gathered somewhere?*” the answer is boys.

2. A **predicate**: It is a part of a sentence or clause that expresses what is said of the subject and that usually consist of a verb with or without objects, complements, or adverbial modifiers. For example:

- ❖ *You speak English* ( the predicate is **speak English**)

Note that the predicate always contains a verb. Sometimes the predicate is only a verb. For example:

- ❖ *Smoke rises* (the predicate is a verb *rises*)

Sentence structure is the way a sentence is arranged, grammatically. The sentence structure of your writing includes where the noun and verb fall within individual sentence.

Sentence structure depends on the language in which in which you are writing or speaking. It is common in English for a simple sentence to look like this: “*She ate the orange.*” In this case, the sentence structure is “*Subject (S), verb (V), object (O)*. There are many ways to make the sentence structure much more complicated while still providing a framework for the information you are conveying and being grammatically correct.

## SENTENCE PATTERNS

English learners and writers are required to study different aspects of the language, i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. But that is not enough, they also have to consider the sentence as a whole. That means you have to learn basic sentence patterns.

### What is a sentence pattern?

A sentence pattern is an arrangement of words. This arrangement needs to be grammatically correct structure. It means the placement of verbs and nouns should be correct to form a

meaningful sentence. Apart from that, there are punctuations which play an important role in making a sentence readable and understandable.

Without the correct placement of words, you cannot express your thoughts properly while speaking. Same way, without proper use of punctuations, you can't express your thoughts effectively in writing. Note that the structure and pattern differ for different languages.

### **Basic parts of the sentence patterns**

- In English, if you want to write a sentence you have to use important parts which are subjects and verbs. When putting together, they will express your thoughts in an understandable sentence. Here a subject is used either a noun or pronoun form and says what or who is doing an action, and the verb represents the action or a state what is happening, for example, "*drink*" is an action, while "*depend*" can be said a state verb.
- A good example of a simple sentence containing contains a subject and a verb is "*Smith walked*".
- In actual use, we don't speak or write such short sentences. Because we would want to explain the idea in a more clear manner or emphasis on a particular subject or an action. For example when we consider a sentence like "*Smith walked.*" we would have questions like "*to where?*", "*how much?*", "*with whom?*" etc.
- To answer these questions, we generally use more words like modifiers, comparative words, phrases etc. For example a new sentence with an adverb would be "*Smith walked slowly*"

### **What is an object? (O)**

In general terms, an object denotes someone or something which is affected by the action described by the verb. In the following clauses, the object is highlighted:

- ❖ "*We mixed the two liquids in a test glass.*"
- ❖ "*They placed the test tube in a steel container.*"

Object is always the first noun or noun phrase appears in sentence predicates.

### **TYPES OF OBJECTS**

#### **i. Direct object (Od)**

Is the one that receive the action of the verb in a sentence. For this type of object, the subject of the sentence does something directly to the object. For example:

- ❖ "*Juan kicked the **ball***"
- ❖ "*the young man threw the **rock***"

❖ “*Richard wrote a letter*”

The subject is doing something (the verb) directly to the object. In a sentence, the direct object is the noun or noun phrase that’s receiving the action of the verb. The basic construction works like this: **Subject + Verb + Who or What**.

### Function and position of a direct object

- Function:

To explain whatever the subject of the sentences does, like from the above examples (*kicked, threw, and wrote*), it does to the direct object (*the ball, the rock, a letter*).

- Position:

It is typically positioned directly after the transitive verb.

#### ii. Indirect object (Oi)

The object is receiving the action of the verb, but in an indirect way. A sentence has an indirect object whenever when the subject of the sentence does something to something or someone else (indirectly). That is why the term indirect is used. For example:

- ❖ “*I gave my girlfriend a rose.*”
- ❖ “*Lisa told her niece a story.*”
- ❖ “*Joshua built Emma a fence*”

The subject is doing something (the verb), but someone (or something else) will receive the result of that action. A noun other than the subject will receive the action of the verb, so that from the above examples nouns are the indirect object.

### Function and position of an indirect object

- Function:

If the indirect objects were removed, the sentences would still make sense. However, the reader wouldn’t know who or what the action was intended for.

- Position:

The indirect object comes between the direct object and the action verb from the above sentences.

### What is a complement? (C)

The element that should be filled in to complete the clause is called a **complement**. A complement is an element in a clause that adds some more information to either the Subject or the Object.

## TYPES OF COMPLEMENTS

### I. Subject Complements (Cs)

These talk more about (modify) the *subject* in terms of its attributes, traits, characteristics, uniqueness, or behavior. They usually follow the verb to BE.

❖ *John is an arrogant student.*

A subject Complement usually follows the subject and the verb. The verb is often a **verb to be**, but it may also be one of a few other verbs that are able to link complements to their subjects in meaning. Like:

- ❖ *Feel* aged.
- ❖ *Appear* foolish.
- ❖ *Remain* quiet.
- ❖ *Looks* smart.

### II. Object Complements (Co)

These talk more about (modify) the *object* in terms of its attributes, traits, characteristics, uniqueness, behavior or state of affair.

They come immediately after the object:

❖ We painted the door **black**.

## What are the adverbials?

Adverbials usually tell something extra about the action, happening or state described by the rest of the sentence.

For example, the time when it happened, the place where it happened and the manner in which it happened.

- ❖ Karuli was playing **well**
- ❖ Salha was playing **with great skills**.

## What is a phrase?

A phrase is a group of two or more words that express a single idea but do not usually form a complete sentence. Words can be grouped together, but without subject and a verb. This is called a phrase.

Because a phrase has neither subject nor verb, it can't form a predicate. Phrases can be very short or quite long.

Phrases can't be used alone, but you can use them as part of a sentence, where they are used as part of speech.

## TYPES OF PHRASES

There are several types of phrases such as:

### I. Noun phrase (NP)

A noun phrase consist of a noun and all its modifiers:

***"The black beautiful girl has come."***

### II. Verb phrase (VP)

A verb phrase consists of a verb and all its modifiers:

***"He was waiting for the rain to stop."***

### III. Gerund phrase

A gerund phrase is simply a noun phrase that starts with a gerund.

***"Taking my dog for a walk is fun."***

### IV. Infinitive phrase

An infinitive phrase is a noun phase that begins with an infinitive verb.

***"To donate time or money is an honorable thing"***

### V. Prepositional phrase (PP)

A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and can act as a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

***"The book was on the table."***

## What is a clause?

Clauses are groups of words that have both subjects and predicates, unlike phrases, a clause can sometimes act as a sentence, and this type of clause is called an **independent clause**. This is not always the case, and some clauses cannot be used on their own – these are called **dependent clauses** or **subordinate clauses** and need to be used with an independent clause to complete their meaning.

## TYPES OF CLAUSES

### I. Independent clause.

Independent clause is the clause that can stand alone as a complete simple sentence even though it is usually functioning as part of a larger sentence. For a sentence to be complete, all it needs is a subject and a verb.

*“The dog is barked at him.”*

### II. Dependent clause.

Dependent clause is the one that does not form a simple sentence by itself. Also called a subordinate clause, it is connected to the main clause of a sentence by a sentence conjunction such as *that* or *when*.

*“I went out on the bike that Mary gave me for my birthday.”*

The main clause of the sentence is *“I went out on the bike”* – a complete idea that can stand on its own as a complete sentence.

The words that follow (*“that Mary gave me for my birthday”*) are a dependent clause, acting Subordinate to the main clause.

They contain a complete idea in their own right, including subject and corresponding verb (*“Mary gave”*), but the existence of the **subordinating conjunction** *that* indicates that the clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence. It depends on the main clause, because the main clause contains the object (*“bike”*) that the verb in the dependent clause targets.

*“When a man broke into the house, the dog barked at him”*

## What is a sentence?

A complete sentence has a subject and predicate, and can often be composed of more than one clause. As long as it has a subject and a predicate, a group of words can form a sentence, no matter how short is.

*“You ate fish.”*

## TYPES OF SENTENCE STRUCTURES.

### 1. Simple sentence structure

A simple sentence structure consists of one independent clause. (An independent clause contains a subject and verb, and expresses a complete thought)

#### **Independent clause**

- ❖ *I like coffee.*
- ❖ *Mary likes tea.*
- ❖ *The earth goes round the Sun.*

## 2. Compound sentence structure.

A compound sentence is two (or more) independent clauses joined by conjunction or semicolon. Each of these clauses could form a sentence alone.

### **Independent clause + coordinating conjunction + independent clause.**

- ❖ *I like coffee and Mary likes tea.*
- ❖ *Mary went to work but John went to the party.*
- ❖ *Our car broke down; we came last.*

There are seven coordinating conjunctions:

- ❖ And, but, or, nor, for, yet, so

## 3. Complex sentence structure.

A complex sentence consists of an independent plus a dependent clause. (A dependent clause starts with a subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun, and contains a subject and verb, but does not express a complete thought.)

### **Independent clause + Subordinating conjunction + Dependent clause.**

- ❖ *We missed our plane because we were late.*
- ❖ *Our dog barks when she hears a noise*
- ❖ *He left in a hurry after he got a phone call.*

Here are some common subordinating conjunctions:

- ❖ After, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, whether, while.

Here are the five basic relative pronouns:

- ❖ That, which, who, whom, whose.

## **What are the conditional sentences/if clauses?**

Conditional sentences are also known as Conditional Clauses or if clauses. They are used to express that the action in the main clause (*without if*) can only take place if a certain condition (*in the clause with if*) is fulfilled.

## TYPES OF CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

There are three types of conditional sentences:

### I. Conditional Sentence Type 1.

It is possible and also very likely that the condition will be fulfilled.

❖ **Form:** *if + simple present, will-future.*

*“If I find her address, I’ll send her an invitation.”*

The main clause can also be at beginning of the sentence. In this case, don’t use comma.

*“I will send her an invitation if I find her address.”*

**Note:** Main clause and / or if clause might be negative:

*“If I don’t see him this afternoon, I will phone him in the evening”*

### II. Conditional Sentence Type II.

It is possible but very unlikely, that the condition will be fulfilled.

❖ **Form:** *if + Simple past, Conditional tense (would + infinitive)*

*“If I found her address, I would send her an invitation”*

*“If I had some money, I would lend it to you”*

*“If someone copied my work, I would tell the tutor”*

The main clause can also be at the beginning of the sentence. In this case don’t use comma.

*“I would send her an invitation if I found her address.”*

**Note:** Main clause and / or if clause might be negative.

*“If I had a lot of money, I wouldn’t stay here”*

**NOTE:** When we give advice we say; *“If I were you”* not: *\*If I was you\**

### III. Conditional Sentence Type III.

Refers to situations in the past. An action could have happened in the past if a certain condition had been fulfilled. Things were different then, however. We just imagine, what would have happened if the situation had been fulfilled.

❖ **Form:** *if + past perfect+ would have (past conditional)*

*“If I had found her address, I would have sent her an invitation.”*

*“If we had hired a car, we would have saved time.”*



Sometime in the past, I wanted to send an invitation to a friend. I didn't find her address, however. So in the end I didn't send her an invitation.

The main clause can also be at the beginning of the sentence. In this case don't use comma.

*"I would have sent her an invitation if I had found her address."*