

Basic Sentence Structures in the English Language

A sentence is a group of words that are put together to make one complete thought.

Introduction:

To understand sentence structures in the English language, you must first have a general understanding of the types of words that are used to make sentences.

Noun – a person, place or thing

Singular examples (one): brother, home, sock, mouse

Plural examples (more than one): brothers, homes, socks, mice

Verb – an action

Examples: jump, sit, talk, have

Adjective – describes a noun

Examples: colorful shirt, funny story, tall boy

Adverb – describes other words (not nouns)

Examples: jumped yesterday, talks fast, sings loud, very pretty, luckily for us

Subject – the noun or nouns that perform the action

Example: The dog jumped.

The subject of this sentence is the noun, dog, because it is performing the action of jumping.

Example: Dogs and cats sleep.

The subjects of this sentence are the nouns, dogs and cats. This is called a **compound subject** because there is more than one subject performing the same action.

Object – the noun or nouns that receive the action

Example: The child drank milk.

The object of this sentence is the noun, milk, because the child is drinking the milk. The milk is receiving the action.

Example: She is eating bread and cheese.

The objects of this sentence are the nouns, bread and cheese. The subject is eating them both.

Expanding Sentences

The examples above are basic sentences. Basic sentences can be expanded, or lengthened, by adding adjectives, adverbs and objects.

1. Subject-Verb (S+V)

These types of sentences contain a single Subject and a Verb. Auxiliary verbs may or may not be present; depending on the sentence.

For example:

He is writing.

Subject: He, Aux Verb: is, Verb: Writing

She walks.

Subject: She, Verb: Walks

They were singing.

Subject: They, Aux Verb: Were, Verb: Singing.

Ronny was playing.

Subject: Ronny, Aux Verb: was, Verb: Playing

Julie is studying.

Subject: Julie, Aux Verb: is, Verb: Studying

This is the basic subject-verb pattern.

2. Subject-Verb-Object (S+V+Obj (N Phrase))

These types of Simple Sentences contain a Subject, Verb and a Noun Phrase (object).

Bill kicks the ball.

Subject: Bill, Verb: kicks, Obj (NP): the ball

He found his lost bag.

Subject: He, Verb: found, Obj-Noun Phrase: his lost bag

Julie is riding an Austrian horse.

Subject: Julie, Verb: riding, Obj-Noun Phrase: an Austrian horse.

They will sell their new car.

Subject: They, Verb: sell, Noun Phrase: Their new car

This is a basic subject-verb-object pattern.

3. Subject-Verb-Adjective (S+V+Adj)

These types of sentences contain a Subject, a Verb and an Adjective.

For example:

She looks pretty.

Subject: She, Verb: looks, Adj: pretty

They were suspicious.

Subject: They, Verb: were, Adj: suspicious

This is the basic subject-verb-adjective pattern.

4. Subject + Verb + Obj-Noun Phrase + Adjective: (S + V + N Phrase + Adj)

The examples of sentences having subject, verb, noun phrase and adjectives are given below-

Ronny painted his car black.

Subject: Ronny, Verb: painted, Obj-N Phrase: his car, Adj: Black

Joe is riding an Austrian horse very fast.

Subject: Joe, Verb: riding, Obj-N Phrase: Austrian horse, Adj: Very fast

She colored her finger nails red.

Subject: She, Verb: colored, Obj-N Phrase: her finger nails, Adj: red

He will keep your kids happy.

Subject: He, Verb: keep, Obj-obj-N Phrase: your kids, Adj: happy

Her father's call makes him angry.

Subject: Her father, Verb: call, Obj-N Phrase: makes him, Adj: angry

5. Subject + Verb + Noun Phrase + Place: (S + V + N Phrase + Adv. of Place)

Given below are some examples of these types of sentences-

Apples are everywhere.

Subject: Apples, Verb: are, Adv. of Place: everywhere

Ronny has his breakfast at home.

Subject: Ronny, Verb: has, N Phrase: his breakfast, Place: at home

Joe is singing a song at the stadium.

Subject: Joe, Verb: singing, N Phrase: a song, Place: at the stadium

She will read her new book in the garden.

Subject: She, Verb: read, N Phrase: her new book, Place: in the garden

They will ride their favorite swing in the amusement park.

Subject: they, Verb: ride, N Phrase: their favorite swing, Place: in the amusement park.

6. Subject + Verb + Obj-Noun Phrase + Obj-Noun Phrase

Go through the examples of above type of sentences given below-

Joe gave her mother an Italian dining set.

Subject: Joe, Verb: gave, Obj-N Phrase: her mother, Obj-N Phrase: Italian dining set

Ronny and Ron told Joe's father their house addresses.

Subject: Ronny and Ron, Verb: told, N Phrase: Joe's father, N Phrase: their house address

He gave his father an old model of Mercedes.

Subject: He, Verb: gave, N Phrase: his father, N Phrase: old model of Mercedes

They lent their son a great deal of money.

Subject: They, Verb: lent, N Phrase: their son, N Phrase: great deal of money

He was calling your father at his office.

Subject: He, Verb: calling, N phrase: your father, N Phrase: at his office

7. Subject + Verb + 'To' + Base Form of the Verb: (S + V + 'To' + Base form of the verb)

Go through the examples given below-

He is going to sing.

Subject: He, Aux Verb: is, Verb: going, Base Form: sing

Joe likes to cry.

Subject: Joe, Aux Verb: Likes, Base form: Cry

Jill needed to act.

Subject: Jill, Intransitive Verb: needed, Base Form: act

She likes to swim.

Subject: She, Verb: likes, Base Form: swim