



 **U LEARN**

Writing

LEVEL 1 • VOLUME 1

U^{LEARN} Writing

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PREREQUISITE ENGLISH SKILLS

Sentence Structure



Introduction to Sentence Structure

Great writing skills begin with properly constructed sentences. When sentences are poorly constructed, they are hard to understand and can confuse the reader. Well-written sentences are easy to understand and enjoyable to read. After mastering proper sentence structure, we can then go on to connecting sentences together to form paragraphs.

In Prerequisite English Skills, we will learn how to build each sentence in a way that follows the rules of grammar and is clear to the reader. We will study the parts of a sentence, proper punctuation, quotations, and avoiding run-on sentences. We will practice splitting up long sentences, editing fragmented sentences, and using quotation marks. In Prerequisite English Skills, we will learn how to construct each sentence so that it is grammatically correct and clear to the reader. We will practice creating complex sentences while avoiding lengthy, run-on sentences. We will master types of sentences and proper punctuation.



SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS



What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought.

EXAMPLE:

1. *The cat is black.*
2. *Santiago studied for his history test after supper.*
3. *Jonah went to the store to buy party paraphernalia.*



What is a fragment?

A fragment is a group of words that is incomplete or missing words.

EXAMPLE:

1. *The black cat*
2. *Santiago studied test*
3. *Went to the store to buy party paraphernalia*





What are a subject and a predicate?

The **subject** of a sentence is who or what the sentence is about. It is a noun, which can be a person, place, thing, or idea. The **predicate** contains a **verb**, which is an action word, and tells what the subject is doing. Every complete sentence must contain both a subject and a predicate.

EXAMPLE:

Javier studied for the science test. **1**

Javier is the subject of this sentence because he is the person that this sentence is about.

Studied for the science test is the predicate because it tells what the subject (Javier) did. **2**



1. Imperative sentences have implied subjects. Although the subject is usually not spoken out, that is because by definition, the subject of an imperative sentence is always "you." For example, "Hand me the screwdriver" does not speak out the subject, "you."
A predicate will often contain a noun. This is called a predicate noun. It is a noun that is in the receiving end of the verb and is not the subject of the sentence. For example: "I ate a chicken sandwich." "I" is the subject, and "chicken sandwich" is the predicate noun. In general, for simple sentences, the first noun of the sentence will be the subject, and the second will be the predicate noun.
2. "Being" words are also considered verbs. Examples are: is, was, were, are, will be, could be. Similarly, possession words are also verbs. Examples are: have, had, has, will have. Understanding this will help students see how all proper sentences have a verb of some form in them. For example, in the sentence "All complete sentences have a verb," the word "have" is a verb. This will also help students with question 4 in part A of the practice, which contains the verb "is." Training students to include a subject and predicate in every sentence is vital. Although more advanced writers can use literary license to make use of fragmented sentences ("Who gave you that book?" "Blake."), beginners must first recognize what a conventional sentence looks like before they begin to bend the rules. Instead of one word replies, such as in the example above, students should be trained to write out the idea in full. ("Blake gave it to me.") As an example, they should be trained to respond to "What is your favorite subject?" with a complete sentence: "Math is my favorite subject," rather than the one-worded response: "Math."

Sentence Structure

SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS • LESSON 1



Always make sure your sentences contain a subject and predicate and are not missing any key words. When your sentences are complete and flow nicely, they will be easier for the reader to understand.

Practice

A. Read the following statements. Write **(S)** for sentence or **(F)** for fragment. **1**

1. You don't want to get lost in the desert. S
2. The length of my couch. F
3. I bought new table. F
4. The red book sits on the shelf. S
5. The principal walked into a noisy classroom. S
6. After the walk home from school. F
7. For the fifth time. F
8. On the dusty shelf in the basement. F
9. Couldn't find the hidden treasure. F



1. As an extra exercise, for each of these examples you can have students explain whether it is missing the subject, predicate, or other words.
In question 6, the phrase is a fragment because it explains the time of the action (adverb) but not what happened at that time (subject and predicate). A proper sentence would include the subject and predicate, even when responding to a question. For example, if responding to the question "When did you eat your snack?", the response would be "I ate my snack after the walk home from school." The extra practice on page 13 focuses on answering a question with a full sentence.

LESSON 1 • SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS

B. Circle the **subject** of each sentence, and underline the **predicate**.

1. I bought apple juice and cups at the store.
2. Our class went on a field trip.
3. Mrs. Graham went to her daughter's play.
4. The weather in Florida is usually hot for most of the year.
5. This old chess game was given to me by my grandfather.
6. The shiny blue fish splashed happily down the river.
7. My brother won second place in the science fair.
8. Cooper and Javier dressed up as soldiers for the play.
9. Five children in my class stayed up late for a pajama party.

C. Fill in a **subject** for each sentence.

1. Cooper came home late yesterday.
2. He was punished for making my parents worry.
3. I felt bad for him.
4. The dog was barking loudly and tugging at his leash.
5. My mother baked fresh chocolate chip cookies.
6. She clapped her hands to get our attention.

Sentence Structure

SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS • LESSON 1

D. Fill in a **predicate** for each sentence.

1. Milo had a great time .
2. His older brother scored some great shots .
3. Their uncle Sam drove up on a motorcycle .
4. The black, hairy gorilla was eating a banana .
5. The bright yellow banana tasted delicious .
6. The shiny red firetruck flew down the street .

Extra Practice

Write a sentence to respond to each question. (Answers can be imaginary.)

Be sure to include a **subject** and **predicate** in each sentence.

1. When did you eat your snack today?

I ate my snack at the end of recess.

2. What is your favorite sport?

My favorite sport is soccer.

3. Why did you race home so quickly?

I raced home because my grandfather came to visit us.

4. What is your pet's name?

My pet's name is Buddy.

5. How did you get to the airport?

We took a taxi to the airport.

6. What did you have for supper last night?

I had meatballs and spaghetti for supper.