

SECTION

19

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE



GRAMMAR USAGE

INTRODUCTION

We have explored the Grammar of the English Language in previous sections. It is useful to remember that the study of Grammar aims to provide a systematic description of the rules of the language - covering words, sentences and their combination to produce meaning in communication.

Welcome back, learner! Previously, we explored the different parts of speech such as interjections, prepositions, nouns and many more. Today, you are going to learn how to combine parts of speech or words effectively to form meaningful sentences.

Think of walls and bricks. Consider the individual bricks to be the parts of speech and sentences to be the walls. Just as individual bricks need to be put together to build strong walls, good sentences need well-arranged words. This lesson will aid you to understand sentence structure and function better, helping you to use them meaningfully to express yourself clearly and accurately in speech and writing.

By the end of this section, you should be able to

- Identify and use subject and predicate in sentences.

Key Ideas

- *The Sentence:* It is a group of words that expresses a complete thought and is in its simplest form made up of a subject and a predicate. It begins with a capital letter, and ends with a full stop, an exclamation mark or a question mark.
- *The Subject:* It is the part of the sentence which 'controls' the verb. Usually, it is at the beginning of a sentence and is the person or thing that is doing the action.
- *Predicate:* It is the part of the sentence that contains the verb and often says something about the subject.
- *Elements:* Elements are the essential constituents of a sentence that work together to convey meaning.

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

Activity 19.1

1. Perform any ONE of these activities and note down what you said to the other party to get what you wanted:
 - a. Ask for something from your parent.

- b. Buy a sachet of water.
 - c. Call a sibling or a friend to join you for food.
2. What do you observe? This is more fun when you do 'Activity 1.1' with two other friends so you can compare your notes after the activity as it will give you a clearer perspective. This is important for feedback.

WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought or idea. It begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!). Thus, after these punctuation marks, the next word must begin with a capital letter. The sentence must be clear and grammatically meaningful. Examples:

- a. Can you help me with my project work?
- b. I'd like to buy a sachet of water.
- c. Kojo, let's eat!

Activity 19.2

1. In this activity, there are two groups of flash cards. One after another, choose a card from each group and join them meaningfully. You can do this with a friend.

GROUP A

His name

Abu

His method

The women seated
under the tree

The Cat and the Dog

Learners

GROUP B

are in their cage

works

travelled to Konongo
to see his uncle

must learn to read

are my sisters

is Mensah

2. What do you observe differently about the flash cards of Group A and Group B? Note down your observations and share them with your peers.

PARTS OF THE SENTENCE

A sentence is made up of two parts namely, the **subject** and the **predicate**.

The Subject

It is the part of the sentence about which something is said. For example:

- a. The children sleep on the mat.

In this example, should someone ask, ‘Who sleeps on the mat?’, the logical answer will be ‘The children’. This makes ‘The children’ the subject since it is what is being talked about in the sentence.

Other examples:

- b. In spite of their hard-work, their employer never appreciated them. (Question: Who never appreciated them? A: **their employer** – the subject)
- c. Dancing is the hobby of most young adults. (Question: What is the hobby of most young adults? A: **Dancing** – the subject)

Types of Subjects

There are three forms namely *simple*, *compound* and *complex subjects*.

1. **The Simple Subject:** It is made up of one word.

Examples:

Iddrisu is a doctor.

Phones are helpful devices.

2. **The Compound Subject:** It is made up of two or more words that are joined by conjunctions like **and**, **but**, and **or**. Compound subjects joined by ‘and’ take plural verbs.

Examples:

Senam, Kukua and Mohammed are my friends.

Sandra, together with her friends, has finished the assignment.

John or Mary will represent the team.

3. **The Complex Subject:** It is the subject that uses *modifiers* to add information to the simple subject. Because of the complex nature of this subject, it is tricky to form sentences with them, as you must be careful to identify the *headword* of the complex subject in order to choose the right verb that will agree with it.

Consider the sentence: **The books on top of the shelf are mine.** When the **Question: What is mine** is asked, the appropriate answer will be ‘**The books**

on top of the shelf or simply **'The books.'** But simply answering the question with **'The books.'** is not enough as there might be other books on the shelves. To distinguish those that are **mine** from those that are not, **'on top of the shelf'** is used to make **'The books'** you are referring to definite. A plural verb, **'are'** instead of **is**, is used since the headword - **'books'** - is plural.

Other examples:

- a. The team that won the championship is celebrating.
- b. The bread covered in eggs and sesame seeds is tasty.

The Predicate

The predicate is the part of the sentence that contains the verb and gives information about the subject. It expresses what the subject **does, is or experiences**. Note that a predicate can be made up only of a verb group. For example:

- a. Dogs bark.
- b. The dog barks whenever there is an intruder.
- c. My mother always tells interesting stories.

Activity 19.3

1. This activity is called **'The Sentence Hunt'** game. Form two teams of three members. Your task is to collect different words from the scrambled flash cards you have been given to form sentences. Display them under different word zones namely *Noun Shrine I*, *Verb Mosque*, *Noun Shrine II*, *Adjective Avenue* and *Adverb Church*.

The team that completes the activity first wins. Get creative! Determine a reward for the winning team before the start of the game.



Here is a sample.

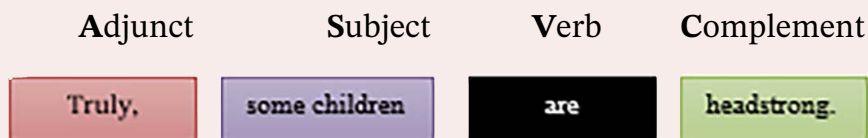


Adverb Church // **Noun** Shrine I // **Verb** Mosque // **Adjective** Avenue

2. Still in your teams, further display over your word zones the following element headings: **Subject, Verb, Object, Complement and Adjunct**.

Let this note be your guide:

- i. Subject (s) – Noun Shrine I
- ii. Verb (V) – Verb Mosque
- iii. Object (O) – Noun Shrine II (after action verbs)
- iv. Complement (C) – Adjective Avenue, Noun Shrine II (after linking verbs)
- v. Adjunct – Adverb Church



Look carefully at the example above.

What is the link between the part of speech and the type of element? Note down your observations. Share with your friends.

Elements of the Sentence

Elements of the sentence are the essential constituents of the sentence that work together to convey meaning. Each element plays a specific role in constructing a complete and clear sentence. The elements are Subject (S), Verb (V), Object (O), Complement (C) and Adjunct (A). Apart from Subject (S) the other four (4) elements form part of the predicate. Hence, sentences are formed by combining **S** with one or more of the elements of the predicate. Note that it is mandatory to have **V** in a sentence.

Subject (S): It is the element which represents the performer of the action in the sentence. The subject is represented with **S** in the following examples:

- i. **My friend (S)** likes playing pranks on people.
- ii. **All the eggs (S)** are spoiled.
- iii. **The dog (S)** pounced on the cat.
- iv. **They (S)** made the class prefect captain of the team.

Verb (V): It is the element which describes the action in the sentence.

For example:

- i. My friend **likes (V)** playing pranks on people.
- ii. All the eggs **are (V)** spoiled.
- iii. The dog **pounced (V)** on the cat.
- iv. They **made (V)** the class prefect the captain of the team.

Object (O): It is the element that receives or is directly affected by the action. It is the noun that follows the action verb.

For example:

- a. The students elected **the school prefect (O)**.
- b. They took **my dictionary (O)**.
- c. We carried **the firewood (O)** to the market.

Complement (C): This element refers to another element already mentioned in the sentence. In other words, complement provides additional information about the subject, verb or object which is important to the meaning of the sentence. Complements sometimes follow linking verbs such as *be, look, seem, appear, appoint* and *elect*.

For example:

- a. We are **students (C)**.
- b. The flowers smell **beautiful (C)**.
- c. They elected him **school prefect (C)**.

Adjunct (A): This element provides extra information which is not vitally important to the basic meaning of the sentence. It can therefore be removed without changing the intended meaning of the sentence. Usually, adverbs and prepositional phrases are adjuncts. For example:

- a. We carried the firewood **to the market (A)**.
- b. They **hurriedly (A)** walked **to the ICT laboratory (A)**.
- c. The children sang **on the way home (A)**.

Let us consider the elements of the following sentences:

1. The tall tree// is //behind the building.

S V A

2. His son// became /a fashion designer.

S V C

3. The doctor// discharged //the patient.

S V O

4. Certainly, // I //am going to sleep.

A S V

5. It //will rain// tonight.

S V A

Activity 19.4

1. Embark on these Sentence Building activities with/without a friend.
2. Consider the two groups of clauses in the table below; which group expresses a complete thought?
3. Change the heading of 'Clause 1' or 'Clause 2' to 'Simple Sentence' if the clauses under them are meaningful.
4. What else do you observe about the structure of the clause group you have captioned 'Simple Sentence'?

Clause 1	Clause 2
The sun rises in the east	Before I go to bed
Ghana gained independence in 1957	Until the sun goes down
The learner is doing the homework	Because of the injury

Activity 19.5

1. In this activity of Sentence Building, you have been given two groups of clauses. Combine them using coordinators **and**, **but**, **or** to form compound sentences.

What do you observe about the structure of this kind of sentence formation?

Clause 1	Clause 2
Ghana is a country in West Africa	The capital city is Accra
I had brushed my teeth	I was forced to eat something
I will start my business	I will work for my mother I will travel to seek greener pasture

2. In this activity of sentence building, you are to join clauses from 'Clause 1' to clauses from 'Clause 2' to form complex sentences.

What do you observe about the structure of the complex sentence?

Clause 1	Clause 2
I brush my teeth	Because of the injury
The coach did not include the player in the list	Since they were rotten
All the oranges were thrown away	Before I go to bed

3. In the final activity of sentence building, you have been given two groups of clauses. Join them to form compound-complex sentences.

Write down your observations about the structure.

Clause 1	Clause 2
I had brushed my teeth but was forced to eat something	Because I was too hungry
I went to the store and bought some eggs	Because my father asked to do so.
I saw my friends and we decided to buy some food	While I was walking to school

Activity 19.6

1. Read the paragraphs and write out all the sentences. Group them under the headings simple, compound, complex and compound-complex as labelled in the table below.

Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, has a rich and diverse history. While the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Ghana in the 15th century, they were soon followed by other European powers, including the British, Dutch and Germans. Because it is strategically located and has abundant natural resources, Ghana became a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade; however, this period of oppression had a profound impact on the country's development. After centuries of colonial rule, Ghana finally gained independence on March 6, 1957, and Kwame Nkrumah became its first president. Since then, Ghana has continued to grow and evolve, while becoming a stable democracy and a leader in West African politics.

Ghana's rich history dates back to the ancient Ghana Empire. Founded around 300 CE, this powerful kingdom played a significant role in the trans-Saharan trade, connecting West Africa to the Mediterranean region. As European explorers arrived, Ghana's strategic location made it a prized colony; however, the Portuguese, British, Dutch and Germans fought for control. The scramble for Ghana led to the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, where European powers divided

Africa among themselves. Ghana's struggle for independence began in the mid-20th century, led by visionaries like Kwame Nkrumah and J.B. Danquah.

The first one for each type has been done for you. Let it guide you.

Sentence Type	Examples
Simple	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, has a rich and diverse history. 2. 3.
Compound	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After decades of colonial rule, Ghana finally gained independence on March 6, 1957, and Kwame Nkrumah became its first president. 2. 3.
Complex	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Ghana in the 15th century, they were soon followed by other European powers, including the British, Dutch and Germans. 2.
Compound - Complex	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because it is strategically located and has abundant natural resources, Ghana became a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade; however, this period of oppression had a profound impact on the country's development. 2.

TYPES OF SENTENCES

Sentences have different structures and are used for varied purposes. Consequently, the sentence pattern is broadly grouped under structural and functional types.

Structural Types of Sentences

The structural type of a sentence refers to the way a sentence is constructed based on the number and types of clauses it contains. Clauses are groups of words that contain a subject and a predicate. There are four types of structural types of sentences.

1. Simple Sentence

It is a sentence that contains one independent or main clause. This means that a simple sentence has one subject and one predicate and expresses a complete thought. Examples:

- a. My parents are honest.
- b. Too much salt is bad for your health.
- c. You must be ambitious!

Each of these sentences has only one subject and a predicate. Hence, they are all simple sentences.

2. Compound Sentence

It is a sentence that contains two or more independent clauses joined by coordinators **and**, **but** and **or**. These clauses can also be joined by a semi-colon. Examples:

- a. I wanted to go to the farm, but it began to rain.
- b. My father cooked jollof rice for the family gathering and everyone enjoyed it.
- c. I can take a taxi to work or drive my car.
- d. My sister prefers to wear traditional clothing or modern African prints.
- e. The traffic in Kumasi is terrible; it takes hours to commute.
- f. My cousins are twins; both study at University of Development Studies; the male twin is majoring in Computer Science while the female twin is majoring in Actuarial Science.

Note: Apart from the last sentence which has three independent clauses, each of the other examples above contains two independent clauses variously joined by *and*, *but*, *or* and *semicolon*. Each of these clauses can be expressed alone as separate sentences.

3. Complex Sentence

This sentence contains one independent clause and one or more dependent/subordinate clauses. Although a dependent clause has a subject and a predicate, it cannot stand alone as a sentence. To be meaningful, they rely on the independent clause. Dependent clauses begin with subordinators such as **while**, **after**, **when**, **although** and **because**.

Examples:

- a. I will go out when it stops raining.
- b. After graduating from Senior High School, I plan to pursue a degree in Nursing.
- c. Because I forgot my lunch, I had to buy food from the cafeteria.

4. Compound-Complex Sentence

It has two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. The clauses are joined together with coordinators and subordinators. The compound-complex sentence, therefore, combines the structure of both the compound and complex sentences.

Examples:

- a. She is learning to play guitar; even though she finds it difficult, she practises daily.
 - b. While I was studying for my exams, I realised that I needed to focus on science; my friends however were struggling with mathematics.
 - c. After I wake up, I go for a run; however, the traffic in town makes it difficult for me to find a safe route.
5. 1 Do this Real-Life Scenario Activity alone and later with your peers.
- a. Write a sentence to reflect each of these scenarios:
 - i. Expressing excitement
 - ii. Ordering food
 - iii. Asking directions
 - iv. Giving directions
 - b. Compare your sentences with your peers' sentences. Together, group your sentences and that of your peers in different groups based on the function of the sentence i.e. Questions, Statements, Exclamation and Commands.
 - c. Explain to your friends your reason for the grouping.
5. 2 Act out the real-life scenarios in 'Activity 5.1a.' using your written sentences.

Functional Types of Sentences

Sentences can be grouped based on the purpose of the sentence in communication. There are broadly four functional types of sentences namely declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory.

1. Declarative Sentence

A declarative sentence makes a statement and is used to provide information, give opinion or state a fact. It simply tells something to the reader or listener.

Examples:

- a. She loves to watch movies.
- b. He is not sociable.
- c. The sun sets in the west.

2. Interrogative Sentence

An interrogative sentence asks questions. Hence, it ends with a question mark (?). This type of sentence seeks information and is usually introduced by words such as **why, where, when, what, how or who**.

Interrogative sentences are used to obtain information or response or clarification from the reader or listener.

Examples:

- a. Why are you late?
- b. What time did the meeting end?
- c. How do I get to the party?
- d. Where did you go when the visitor arrived?
- e. Whom did you give my book to?

Note that interrogative words are not the only means of asking questions. Sometimes, there is a process called inversion. Inversion is the process of reversing the order of the subject and the auxiliary verb. This is where the first auxiliary (i.e. the first verb element) is placed before the subject.

Examples:

Statement/Declarative	Inverted form (Interrogative)
a. It is raining outside.	Is it raining outside?
b. You finished your homework.	Have you finished your homework?
c. You know the answer.	Do you know the answer?

NB: It is important to note that some statements do not have auxiliary verbs that can be inverted to form interrogative sentences. When converting such statements into interrogatives, the “dummy DO” concept must be applied. This is where the appropriate form of the verb ‘do’ becomes the operator in the interrogatives during the conversion of declaratives when there is no auxiliary verb in the original declarative or statement.

Examples

Declarative/Statement	Inversion (Interrogative)
a. He knows the answer.	Does he know the answer?
b. They want more food.	Do they want more food?
c. He went to the movies.	Did he go to the movies?

3. Imperative Sentence

This sentence type is used to give commands, instructions or make requests. It can end with a full stop (.) or an exclamation mark (!) when it is expressing urgency. Depending on the tone, imperative sentences can be polite or forceful. The subjects of imperative sentences are usually implied (they are not stated).

The subject/listener is expected to take action.

Examples:

- a. Stop talking and listen to me!
- b. Write your name and index number on top of the paper.
- c. Kindly close the door.

In these examples, it can be observed that in as much as the speaker is addressing someone, that subject is not stated; it is merely implied – YOU.

4. Exclamatory Sentence

It is a sentence that expresses strong emotion such as surprise, anger, joy or excitement. It always ends with an exclamation mark (!).

Examples:

- a. I can't believe we won!
- b. How could you betray my trust!
- c. I got the job!
- d. This is going to be the best vacation ever!

Review Questions

Identify the sentences among the following options.

1. Because I woke up late
2. Ghana is a West African country.
3. What a beautiful day!
4. Under the bridge
5. If I had studied smarter.

Identify the subject and the predicate.

6. The food on the table belongs to your younger sibling.
7. I gave the teacher my homework.
8. The junior wearing the school uniform directed me to the library.
9. Quickly, we submitted our project work.
10. The capital of Volta Region is Ho.

Identify the elements which make up each of the sentences below:

11. The chef cooked the guests a delicious meal.
12. They offered me a job.
13. The dog barked loudly.
14. The car stopped abruptly.
15. The children are playing in the park.
16. The president appointed my mother a minister.
17. My father is a nurse.

Identify whether each sentence is simple, compound, complex or compound-complex

18. She will come if you invite her.
19. And the rain fell.
20. When the sun sets, we shall go for a walk and you can join us.
21. He likes reading books because they are interesting.
22. Philip is shy but Phyllis is outspoken.

Combine the sentences to form a compound or complex sentence

- 23. He didn't study for the exam. He failed.
- 24. I like Banku. I don't like Kenkey.
- 25. The car broke down. I called a mechanic.
- 26. She was tired. She went to bed early.
- 27. It was raining. We went to the park.

Rewrite the following as compound-complex sentences

- 28. He finished the homework. He went to the gym. His friends joined him later.
- 29. She was late for school. She missed the bus. Her mother drove her.
- 30. The storm passed. The sun came out. We went outside.

Identify whether each sentence is declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory

- 31. Please close the door when you leave.
- 32. I can believe I passed the test!
- 33. How did you solve that Maths equation?
- 34. That is the school library.
- 35. Cholera can kill.

Answers to Review Questions

Identify the sentences

1. Ghana is a West African country.
2. What a beautiful day!
 - A. Identify the subject and the predicate

Subject	Predicate
1. The food on the table	belongs to your younger sibling.
2. I	gave the teacher my homework.
3. The junior wearing the school cloth	directed me to the library.
4 ...we	Quickly, ... submitted our project work.
5. The capital of Volta Region	is Ho.

Identify the elements of each of the sentences below:

3. The chef // cooked // the guests // a delicious meal
S V O O
4. They // offered // me // a job.
S V O O
5. The dog// barked// loudly.
S V A
6. The car // stopped // abruptly.
S V A
7. The children // are playing // in the park.
S V A
8. The president // appointed // my mother // a minister.
S V O C
9. My father// is// a nurse.
S V C

Identify whether each sentence is simple, compound, complex or compound-complex

10. She will come if you invite her. **COMPLEX**
11. And the rain fell. **SIMPLE**
12. When the sun sets, we shall go for a walk and you can join us. **COMPOUND-COMPLEX**
13. He likes reading books because they are interesting. **COMPLEX**
14. Philip is shy but Phyllis is outspoken. **COMPOUND**

Combine the sentences to form a compound or complex sentence

15. He didn't study for the exam so he failed.
16. I like Banku but I don't like Kenkey.
17. The car broke down so I called a mechanic.
18. She was tired and went to bed early.
19. Although it was raining, we went to the park.

Rewrite the following as compound-complex sentences

20. Because he finished the homework, he went to the gym and his friends joined him later.
21. Since she was late for school, she missed the bus but her mother drove her.
22. After the storm passed, the sun came out and we went outside.

Identify whether each sentence is declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory

23. Please close the door when you leave. **IMPERATIVE**
24. I can't believe I passed the test! **EXCLAMATORY**
25. How did you solve that math equation? **INTERROGATIVE**
26. That is the school library. **DECLARATIVE**
27. Cholera can kill. **DECLARATIVE**

Extended Reading

- Wiredu. F.J., (1992). Organised English Grammar with Answers, A Self-Study and Practice Book for Students of Senior High Schools, Training Colleges, the Polytechnics and the Universities (2nd ed.): Academic Publications Accra. (Pg. 81 – 90)

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- Wiredu. F.J., (1992). Organised English Grammar with Answers, A Self-Study and Practice Book for Students of Senior High Schools, Training Colleges, the Polytechnics and the Universities (2nd ed.): Academic Publications Accra.
- Sackeyfio, N. A., et al, Ghana Senior Secondary School English Book 1. Oxford University Press.

Glossary

Headword	is the primary word in a phrase or clause that determines the grammatical function and meaning.
Modifiers	are words that add detail and often describe the headword in a sentence.
A Prepositional Phrase	begins with a preposition followed by a pronoun or noun or noun phrase.
Operator	In grammar, operator is a word or a phrase that performs a specific function in a sentence or a clause, often related to negation, modality, or focus.

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