

Basic Sentence Construction

Word Forms

- Sentences can contain Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs, Adjectives, and Prepositions.

Nouns

- Nouns include people, places, and things and can be singular or plural.
- Nouns can be concrete or abstract.
- Concrete nouns are touchable, such as cat, fish, bird, scissors, cup, table, etc.
- Abstract nouns include ideas such as happiness, sadness, harmony, etc.

Noun Placement

- Nouns can be the subject, direct object, indirect object, or object of a preposition in a clause.

Noun Practice

- Name two concrete nouns.
- Name two abstract nouns.

Verbs

- Verbs indicate action and can be conjugated to indicate tense.
- Verbs can also link a subject and a subject complement in order to describe a subject.

Verb Placement

- Verbs typically go after the subject of a sentence to indicate the action the subject is taking.

Verb Practice

- Name two action verbs.

Descriptive words: Adjectives and Adverbs

- Adjectives describe nouns
 - Pretty, ugly, blue, large, small
- Adverbs describe verbs
 - Often identifiable by “ly” endings
 - Prettily, horribly, often, well

Adjective placement

- Adjectives go before the noun: “Pretty girl,” “ugly bruise,” “blue dog,” etc.
- The exception to this rule: when an adjective is used as a subject complement. (More on this later.)

Adverb placement

- Adverbs need to go near the verb they are describing, but do not always need to go before or after a verb.
- Examples: “He ran merrily” “He happily sang.” (They are both acceptable.)

Examples

- The **big, black** cat jumped *happily* onto my lap.
- He played his **electric** guitar *merrily* along with his **favorite** song.

Descriptives Practice

- Use an adjective to describe something.
- Use an adverb to describe an action.

Prepositions

- Prepositions are also added to sentences to indicate location in space or time.
- Think of everything a squirrel can do to a tree!

Prepositional phrases

- Nouns behind prepositions indicate where/when something happened
- Called “objects of prepositions.”
- Make up prepositional phrases

Examples

- The dog ran **around** the tree.
- Katie dances **in** her apartment.
- My cat cuddles with me **at** night.

Preposition Practice

- Try to create a prepositional phrase

English Sentence Structure

- Complete sentences must contain a **subject** and a **predicate**.
 - Subject: usually a noun that indicates what the sentence is about
 - Predicate: verb or verb phrase describing what is happening to the subject.
 - Can be very simple to very, very complex.

Examples of simple sentences

- The dog ate.
 - Subject: “dog;” predicate: “ate.”
- Katie dances.
 - Subject: “Katie;” predicate: “dances.”
- I am hungry.
 - Subject: “I;” predicate: “am hungry.”

Sentence Practice

- Create a simple sentence.

Using linking verbs

- Linking verbs do not have action, per se, but are used to describe a noun.
- Sometimes they are “to be” verbs: am, is, are, was, were, etc.
- The word used to describe the noun that comes after the linking verb is called the subject complement.

When do we use linking verbs?

- To describe the subject of the sentence rather than giving it an action.
 - Example: “The cat is tired,” “I am hungry,” “He is pretty.”

Linking Verb Practice

- Create a sentence with a linking verb

Objects

- Sentences can also have objects.
- Objects are nouns which receive an action.

Examples of sentences with objects

- The boy ate chocolate cake.
 - “The boy” is the subject; “ate” is the predicate; “chocolate cake” is the object.
- Katie threw the ball.
 - “Katie” is the subject; “Threw” is the predicate; “the ball” is the object.

Direct vs. Indirect Object

- Two types of objects: direct vs. indirect
- Direct objects: answers the question “what,” or “who?”
- Indirect objects answer the question, “to whom,” or “for what?”

Example

- Katie threw the ball to Whitney
 - Subject: “Katie;” Predicate: “threw;” Direct object: “the ball;” indirect object: “Whitney.”

Object Practice

- Create a sentence with a direct and indirect object

Putting it all together

- The big, black cat happily chased the mouse down the hallway.

Now you try!

- Create a sentence with:
 - An adjective and adverb
 - A direct object
 - A prepositional phrase

Other considerations

- There are other things sentences can contain, such as coordinating conjunctions, subordinate conjunctions, and relative pronouns.
- Come to our advanced sentence structure workshop to learn more!