

MAKING SENTENCES

SENTENCES are the units you use to build-up a piece of writing.

A sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Below are some sentences. Begin each one with a capital letter and end each one with a full stop.

- | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | the ghost haunted the house |
| 2 | i like chocolate |
| 3 | she goes to work at eight o'clock |
| 4 | he was fishing under the bridge |
| 5 | the monster struck at midnight |
| 6 | give me two of them |
| 7 | they say you should not go there |
| 8 | he lives near the railway station |
| 9 | i am not going to help you |
| 10 | a shiver ran down her back |

Sometimes a sentence may end with a question mark or an exclamation mark (!).

A sentence ends with a **question mark** when it asks a question.

Example: What are you doing ?

A sentence ends with an **exclamation mark** when it requires emphasis.

Example: Don't do that !

Punctuate the following individual sentences correctly. Some are ordinary sentences. Some are questions:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | is it going to be a fine day |
| 2 | i am going to France |
| 3 | can I help you |
| 4 | blood oozed from a deep wound in his arm |
| 5 | we must keep Britain tidy |
| 6 | who was that 1 saw you with last night |
| 7 | which one do you fancy |
| 8 | are you really fourteen |
| 9 | stop |
| 10 | watch out |

A sentence is not merely a collection of words with a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. **To be a proper sentence, a word or a group of words must make sense standing on its own.**

Jump!

The word above is a sentence. It makes sense standing on its own. It gives an order.

Four.

The word above cannot be a sentence by itself. It needs other words to be added to it to make sense. Though sentences can be as short as one word, they may also be quite long. For example:

Although the rain was pouring down, Karen still hoped that the game would be played and that she would cover herself with glory.

Here are some groups of words. Some of them are sentences and some are not. Write out the sentences only and correctly punctuate them. Remember, a question is a sentence.

- 1 the miser counted his money
- 2 in the front
- 3 although it was raining
- 4 because the vampire would not go away
- 5 it was raining
- 6 stop
- 7 can I help you
- 8 as well as he could
- 9 the aeroplane crashed in the field
- 10 the ghost would appear soon

A sentence must have a verb in it. A verb describes what someone does or is. Most verbs are the 'doing' words in sentences. For example:

The boy **kicked** the ball.

The girl **ran** home.

Kicked and ran are the doing words of these sentences. See if you can spot the doing words in the sentences on the next page.

Underline each verb in the sentences below.

- 1 The horse jumped over the fence.
- 2 A car smashed into a wall.
- 3 I write many letters.
- 4 He hurled the discus a record distance.
- 5 The plane flies very high.
- 6 I do not open other people's letters.
- 7 I often yawn during the maths lesson.
- 8 She gives him a pound on Sundays.
- 9 The police chased the gangsters' car.
- 10 The plant grew very tall.

Most sentences have a **subject** in them. If you have difficulty in underlining the subject, ask yourself what the verb of the sentence is and ask who is doing the action of the verb.

For example: The boy **kicked** the ball. Kicked is the verb. Now ask your self who kicked. The answer is the boy. So boy is the subject of the sentence.

What are the subjects of these sentences? Underline the subjects:

- 1 The fisherman caught a pike.
- 2 She mistook the price of the dress.
- 3 They did not get in.
- 4 The motorist had a puncture.
- 5 He sat on a drawing pin.
- 6 The invaders destroyed the town.

SUMMARY

When writing a sentence there are **four** things to remember:

- 1 A sentence must make sense.
- 2 A sentence must start with a CAPITAL LETTER.
- 3 A sentence must end in **one of three ways:**
it must end with a FULL STOP, a QUESTION MARK or an
EXCLAMATION MARK.
- 4 A sentence must have at least one VERB.

These are all sentences:

I want to go. May I go?

Sometimes sentences can be incomplete. These sentences are usually found in direct speech. Direct speech is when you write down the exact words that someone said.

For example:

"You sure?"	- is short for "Are you sure?"
"Yes, certain."	- is short for Yes, I am certain.
"Just disappeared, I reckon."	- is short for "He's just disappeared, I reckon."
"Yes . . ."	- is short for "Yes, I wonder what's happened to him."

When writing an incomplete sentence make sure that the missing parts are easily understood.

REVISION

A) Punctuate these sentences correctly. Beware! Some are questions:

- 1 it was a sunny day yesterday
- 2 who were you with yesterday
- 3 give me that box
- 4 the creature had hairy scales all over it
- 5 the clock has not gone since yesterday
- 6 how many are going
- 7 can you see out of the window
- 8 the floor needs a good clean
- 9 halt ,
- 10 the earthquake caused many casualties

B) Which of these groups of words make sentences? Copy out the sentences only and correctly punctuate them.

- 1 under the house
- 2 i am going home
- 3 by the side of the fountain
- 4 he caught fourteen fish in the canal
- 5 where are the others
- 6 blocking up the path
- 7 stop
- 8 which was bad for them
- 9 are you able to help me
- 10 over near the door

Now add words to the groups of words that did not make sense to turn them into sentences.

C) Write these sentences out and underline the subjects:

- 1 The car had a sun-top roof.
- 2 The house with the bay windows had an overgrown garden.
- 3 A hair-raising scream came from the room.
- 4 I will help my mother.
- 5 The beech tree was turning a golden brown.
- 6 He cannot help his sister.
- 7 She will not go skating.
- 8 The kiosk beside the pier sells candy floss.
- 9 A book of many pages will be needed.
- 10 A ghostly figure crept down the passage.

D) Now write your own sentences

Write five sentences about your birthday. Write five sentences about being ill. Write five sentences about your street.

VERBS

We now know that words that tell us about actions are called verbs.

The bus **stopped** at the depot. The referee **blew** the whistle.

The verb answers the question: What does someone or something do?

What did the bus do? It **stopped**.

What did the referee do? He **blew** the whistle.

That is why verbs are often called 'doing words'.

Some verbs do not tell us about actions. **Instead they describe what something or someone is, or how they are.**

I am the champion. She has jet black hair.

These are sometimes called the **being and having** verbs and they may be written in the following ways:

am are is **was were** has **have had**

has been **had been** **have been**

Notice how they help other words to make a sentence:

I am sixteen. They **were** a long way from home. The girl had a bad time.

A) Underline the being and having verbs in the sentences below.

- 1 I am not quite sure.
- 2 He was a fool.
- 3 They were not in the room.
- 4 The players are a very happy crowd.
- 5 The girl is up a tree.
- 6 I have fourteen fish in the net.
- 7 He had a lovely garden before the storm.
- 8 It had been a long hot day.

B) Put in a '**being**' or a '**having**' verb to make these sentences:

- 1 I . . . fifteen.
- 2 The player . . . in the goal mouth.
- 3 They very sad at his death.
- 4 The visitors in the castle.

In each of the sentences below there is a **verb** that tells us about an **action** and a **verb** that tells us **how or what someone was**. Pick out the verbs and say which kind of verb each one is.

- 1 . The singer appeared ill and the group left the stage.
2. The group were terrific and played all my favourite songs.
3. I passed the ball but Thompson seemed half asleep.

Verbs are very important. All proper sentences must have at least one verb and, of course, sentences may have more than one verb.

Examples: (The verbs in the sentences are underlined).

The machines **churned** noisily round as they **produced** the newspapers for the next day.

Dad **heard** the shout, **looked** up, and the ball **hit** him in the face.

TIME IN SENTENCES

In a sentence a verb must have a time to it. It must tell us when an action took place. A verb must tell us if an action took place -

in the **past** in the **present** or in the **future**

This is called the **tense of a verb**.

PRESENT TENSES of the verb to write

I write
You write
He/she writes

I am writing
You are writing
He/she is writing

We write
You write
They write

We are writing
You are writing
They are writing

PAST TENSES of the verb to write

I wrote
You wrote
He/she wrote

I have written
You have written
He/she has written

We wrote
You wrote
They wrote

We have written
You have written
They have written

I was writing
You were writing
He/she was writing

I had written
You had written
He/she had written

We were writing
You were writing
They were writing

We had written
You had written
They had written

CHOOSING YOUR TENSE

When you are writing stories, you have to decide which **tense** you are going to use. The actions of the people in the story are usually described in the **past tense**.

They **walked** into the bank separately. Jack **walked** to the far end and **pretended** to be writing a cheque. Bob **remained** near the door.

Sometimes the writer may decide to describe what happens in the present tense to make it sound more exciting.

They **walk** into the bank separately. Jack **walks** to the far end and **pretends** to be writing a cheque. Bob **remains** near the door.

When you have decided on the tense you want to use to describe actions, you must stick to it. You must not start in the present tense and then switch to the past tense.

The car **slides slowly** to a stop. The people in it are watchful. One of them **gets** out and **looks** up and down the street. Then they all got out. They **walked** towards the bank.

Where does the paragraph above switch from the present to the past tense?

CONTINUOUS PRESENT & CONTINUOUS PAST TENSE

Sometimes in writing the continuous present and continuous past tense are used. Look at the examples below.

(a) I am walking along the street.
(I'm walking along the street.)

(b) She was walking along the street.

Sentence (a) has an example of the **CONTINUOUS PRESENT TENSE**. It describes an action that is continuing (that has not yet been finished) at the present time.

Sentence (b) has an example of the **CONTINUOUS PAST TENSE**. It describes an action that took place in the past, but was continuing.

You will probably use the continuous past in your own writing quite often.

For example:

That Saturday Jenny and I were walking towards the ground. A group of visiting supporters were walking behind us. They were jeering at us and trying to annoy us.

You can see in the piece above why it is called the 'continuous past tense'.

AUXILIARY VERBS

Verbs may consist of more than one word.

Look again at this sentence:

Verbs may consist of more than one word.

It gives us an example of a verb consisting of more than one word. The main part of the verb is **consist**, but it is **helped** out by the verb **may**. The whole **verb is may consist**.

The verbs that sometimes help other verbs are called **AUXILIARY VERBS**. Some people call them 'helping verbs' because they help the main verb in a sentence.

Let us look at some of the places where auxiliary verbs are used.

When verbs form their FUTURE TENSES (when they describe what will happen in the future), they have to have a helping hand:

*I shall **enjoy** seeing Mark again.*

The train will be late.

Of course, the **main part of the verb** may be **separated** from the auxiliary verb by other words.

*I shall certainly **enjoy** seeing Mark again.*

The train will never be late.

Will the train be late?

When verbs form certain kinds of **PAST TENSE** (describing actions in the past), they use **have, has or had** as the auxiliary verb:

*I have never **been** to dance classes before.*

*Janey has **lost** a lot of weight.*

*Had the doctor **driven** her husband home?*

Of course, verbs which need auxiliary verbs and verbs which don't need them may appear in the same sentence:

*I have **forgotten** which film we **agreed** to see.*

*He has lost the ring she **gave** him.*

In the sentences above, **agreed and gave** do not need auxiliary verbs.

Put an **auxiliary verb** (helping verb) into these sentences. Say after each sentence whether it is past or present time.

- 1 I going to the seaside.
- 2 The train coming down the track.
- 3 The ballfloating into the net.
- 4 The people . . . crowding into the match.
- 5 The houses . . . falling down.
- 6 I . . . looking for my friends.
- 7 She . . . complaining about the tights.
- 8 He realising a dream.
- 9 The cyclists . . . pedalling hard.
- 10 The eggs lying on the grass.

G. Put an auxiliary verb (helping verb) into these sentences. Say after each whether it is past or present time:

- 1 She hoping to go to college.
- 2 The red balloon . . . floating over the pier.
- 3 The team losing the match.
- 4 The boy . . . dreaming of becoming a star.
- 5 Her parents moving on Tuesday.
- 6 I . . . seeing the doctor tomorrow.
- 7 The house by the river . . . failing down.
- 8 The moonhiding behind a cloud.
- 9 The hen sitting on the eggs.
- 10 You going to help me find the answer.

H Write this paragraph out changing the verbs to the present tense, then re-write changing the verbs to the past tense.

People streaming into the stadium. Programme-sellers selling programmes. Boys looking for their mates. All the home team supporters wearing their scarves. Some of them chanting. Policemen stopping people getting crushed.

Put an auxiliary verb (helping verb) in to help form these sentences:

- 1 I caught a cold.
- 2 The bandsmen won the contest.
- 3 She ridden the horse for many hours.
- 4 It been the most happy day of my life.
- 5 She rubbed all the shine off it.
- 6 I glimpsed someone like him before.
- 7 The student . . . missed the train by two minutes.
- 8 You been told the truth.

REVISION A. Write out these sentences and underline the verbs:

- 1 The girl sat on the settee.
- 2 The butterfly settled on the cabbage.
- 3 The duke flies to Australia tomorrow.
- 4 The forester cut down the tree.
- 5 I discussed the programme with him.
- 6 The ball pitched near the wicket.
- 7 You open the tin for me.
- 8 He grew to be a tall young man.
- 9 She missed her mother a great deal.
- 10 The paper boy always fetches it for him.

REVISION B. Complete these sentences by putting a verb in them:

- 1 The car out of control.
- 2 The swimmer at the deep end.
- 3 I you will get better.
- 4 The burglar the lady's jewels.
- 5 The TV announcer the news
- 6 The music centre on fire.
- 7 The egg off the table.
- 8 The poacher the deer in the forest.
- 9 Grandma the new jersey.
- 10 The gardener up the leaves from the orchard.

REVISION C. Make sentences of your own using these verbs:

kills	conquered	surprised	squandered
witnessed	spoilt	fries	burned

REVISION D. Underline the 'being' and 'having' verbs in these sentences:

- 1 He was under the lorry.
- 2 What is the right answer?
- 3 I am hopeful today.
- 4 The actors are in the green room.
- 5 They were sure of the question.
- 6 The jockeys have two saddles.
- 7 It has seven compartments.
- 8 The travellers had a bumpy ride.
- 9 It has been wonderful for them.
- 10 This year has been the best yet.

REVISION E. Put in a 'being' or 'having' verb to make these sentences:

- 1 It . . . on the television.
- 2 He to China.
- 3 The children . . . in the way.
- 4 The butcher in the shop.
- 5 I . . . very hurt.
- 6 There fifteen of them in the team.
- 7 The grass a lot greener.
- 8 It the work of a life time
- 9 She . . . too tall for the job.
- 10 What . . . the best tablets?

REVISION F. Put these into past tense. Do not use a 'being' or 'having' verb:

- 1 I believe in freedom.
- 2 He breaks everything.
- 3 The branch touches the window sometimes.
- 4 The builder builds very quickly.
- 5 That trick deceives most people.
- 6 She soon opens the parcel.
- 7 The athlete runs a mile in record time.
- 8 She hurries down the hill.
- 9 The cook cracks the egg.
- 10 That takes the biscuit.

MAKING THE VERB AGREE WITH THE SUBJECT

As you know verbs are words that describe actions. The person who does an action, or has the action done to them, is the **SUBJECT** of the verb.

SUBJECT	VERB	
I	throw	water at the audience.
The clown	throws	water at the audience.
The speaker	was hit	by a paper dart.
You	were hit	by a paper dart.

In each of the sentences above the **verb agrees** with the **subject**. When the **subject changes, the verb changes**. It would be quite wrong to say:

I throws water at the audience.

or You was hit by a paper dart.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
I throw	We throw
You throw	You throw
The clown throws	The clowns throw

SINGULAR	PLURAL
I was hit	We <i>were</i> hit
<i>You were</i> hit	You <i>were</i> hit
She was hit	They <i>were</i> hit

When writing sentences, always make sure the verb agrees with the subject.

Mark the sentences below by putting a tick or a cross beside them.

They was eating in the restaurant. They were eating in the restaurant.

She and I has not talked for a long time. She and I have not talked for a long time.

None of us are very brainy None (not one) of us is very brainy.

ORGANISING SENTENCES

The position of parts of a sentence can affect its **meaning**. It can also affect the **emphasis**.

MEANING

Careless organisation of a sentence can, affect its meaning as in the example -

Wanted: desk by local man with roomy drawers.

should be reorganised to read

Wanted by local man: desk with roomy drawers.

Reorganise the following sentence:

For sale: antique table belonging to widow with Queen Anne legs.

EMPHASIS

Read these two sentences aloud:

Luckily, no harm was done. No harm was done, luckily.

On the surface these two sentences say exactly the same thing. In saying them aloud, however, you almost certainly gave the word 'luckily' more emphasis when it came at the beginning of the sentence rather than at the end. Even when reading these sentences silently to yourself, you would emphasise 'Luckily' when it came at the beginning. This is called 'fronting' - putting the word or phrase you want to emphasise at the beginning of the sentence. This 'fronting' emphasis works mainly with simple sentences.

Read the following pairs of sentences aloud:

- 1a To give the team their due, they fought hard.
- b They fought hard, to give the team their due.
- 2a To be perfectly frank, I couldn't care less.
- b I couldn't care less, to be perfectly frank.
- 3a Reluctantly, the singer sang one last encore.
- b The singer reluctantly sang one last encore.
- 4a Slowly, he pushed open the creaking door.
- b He pushed open the creaking door slowly.

You should have found that the words at the beginning of a sentence are emphasised. It can often add interest and variation to your writing if you change around the word order of your sentences as long as you are careful not to confuse the meaning. You must try to avoid repeating the same kind of sentence formation again and again.