



IIT Madras
ONLINE DEGREE

SIMPLE SENTENCE & AGREEMENT RULES - 1

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- A simple sentence has only one clause.
- Therefore, that is the main clause of the sentence.

For instance, see the following.

- a. It was Monday morning.
- b. Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes.
- c. He considered Monday specially unpleasant in the calendar.

- d. After the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday, it was difficult to get into the Monday mood of work and discipline.
- e. He shuddered at the very thought of school: that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class teacher; and the Head Master with his thin long cane.

The sentence:

- a. has only four words,
- b. has six words,
- c. has eight words,
- d. has 22 words, and
- e. has 28 words.

They have only one verb each with a tense. In

a. we have “was”,

b. has “was” once again,

c. has “considered”,

d. has “was”, and

e. the last, has “shuddered”,

ACTIVITY

1. Look at the following paragraph. Identify simple sentences by underlining them.

He droned on monotonously. Swaminathan was terribly bored. His teacher's voice was beginning to get on his nerves. He felt sleepy. The teacher called for home exercises. Swaminathan left his seat, jumped on the platform, and placed his note-book on the table. While the teacher was scrutinizing the sums, Swaminathan was gazing on his face, which seemed so tame at close quarters. His criticism of the teacher's face was that his eyes were too near each other, that there was more hair on his chin than one saw from the bench, and that he was very very bad-looking. His reverie was disturbed. He felt a terrible pain in the soft flesh above his left elbow.

ANSWERS

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bad-looking. His reverie was disturbed. He felt a terrible pain
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- All simple sentences have more than or only one Noun Phrase (NP) working as subject, but only one Verb Phrase (VP).
- They occur in a certain order in English, as we saw in an earlier unit of this module.
- They are also bound together by a rule of agreement. Verb (V) in VP should agree with Noun(N) in NP in terms of number.

- If Noun is in singular number, the verb must necessarily be in singular number. You can only say the following :

Devadutt cooks rice.

You cannot say the following:

**Devadutt cook rice.*

- This is ungrammatical. All verbs in English must agree with, must match, their nouns in the NP in number. There is no exception to this rule. “Devadutt”, a singular noun, must have a singular verb “cooks”, not cook.

Look at the following sentences.

- a. The sun rises in the east.
- b. Water freezes at zero degrees celcius.
- c. Man is mortal.
- d. Many birds fly together.
- e. Many girls in Africa and Asia are not allowed to go to school.
- f. Children love to play.
- g. Dogs are fighting.

- h. Freedom fighters were ordinary people with great love for the country.
- i. Very young babies sleep for up to 16 hours a day.
- j. Mahatma Gandhi was popular also among the British.
- k. India has a history of great literature in all languages.
- l. All kinds of prophets have been respected in India.

In all of these sentences, the underlined verb above matches its noun in number; the verb is in singular number, if its noun is in singular number.

- d. Birds fly
- e. Girls... are
- f. Children love....
- g. Dogs are...
- h. Freedom fighters were...
- i. Very young babies sleep...
- l. ...prophets have...

Nouns in English are plural generally when they take “s”, or “es” after them, but verbs become plural when they take no “s” or “es” after them.

See the following table for better illustration.

Singular Nouns	Singular Verbs
The sun	Rises..
Water	Freezes..
Man	Is..
Mahatma Gandhi	Was..
India	Has..

- Plural nouns take “:s”, “es”, “have”, but plural verbs just go in their neutral form as given in dictionaries. See the table below for better comparison.

Plural Nouns	Plural Verbs
Birds	fly
Girls..	are
Children	Love..
Dogs	Are..
Freedom fighters	Were..
Very young babies	Sleep..
...prophets	Have..

- **Note:** There is, however, an exception. Pronouns like “I” and “You”, even when singular, take plural verbs in English. They take verbs without “s”, “es”; they take “have”. In the past tense, however, you say “I was”, but “you were”.

ACTIVITY

2. Look at the following sentences. Verbs have been removed and placed in brackets after each sentence. In each sentence, there is, therefore, a blank. Fill in these blanks with the correct form of the given verb.

- a. I to inform you that my son Swaminathan of the First Form, A section, was assaulted by his Scripture Master yesterday in a fanatical rage.**(beg)**
- b. I ... that he is always most insulting and provoking in his references to the Hindu religion. **(hear)** It is bound to have a bad effect upon the boys. This is not the place for me to dwell upon the necessity for toleration in these matters. I am also informed that when my son got up to have a few doubts cleared, he was roughly handled by the same teacher. His ears were still red when he came home last evening.

- c. If it is so, you may kindly inform us as we are quite willing to withdraw our boys and send them elsewhere. I may remind you that Albert Mission School is not the only school that this town, Malgudi,..... .(**possess**)
- d. I..... you will be kind enough to inquire into the matter and favour me with a reply. (**hope**)
- e. If not, I to inform you, I shall be constrained to draw the attention of higher authorities to these Unchristian practices. (**regret**)

ANSWERS

- a. I **beg** to inform you that my son Swaminathan of the First Form, A section, was assaulted by his Scripture Master yesterday in a fanatical rage.
- b. I **hear** that he is always most insulting and provoking in his references to the Hindu religion. It is bound to have a bad effect upon the boys. This is not the place for me to dwell upon the necessity for toleration in these matters. I am also informed that when my son got up to have a few doubts cleared, he was roughly handled by the same teacher. His ears were still red when he came home last evening. The one conclusion that I can **come** to is that you do not want non-Christian boys in your school.

- c. If it is so, you may kindly inform us as we are quite willing to withdraw our boys and send them elsewhere. I may remind you that Albert Mission School is not the only school that this town, Malgudi **possesses**.
- d. I **hope** you will be kind enough to inquire into the matter and favour me with a reply.
- e. If not, I **regret** to inform you, I shall be constrained to draw the attention of higher authorities to these Unchristian practices.

Thank You!