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**English-I (Basic English)**  
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**Lecture 20**  
**Sentences in English**

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Phrases

- [The [student [of English]]] NP
- [Students [from Chennai]] PP
- [The [student [of English]] [from Chennai]]
- \* The student from Chennai of English
- The student [of English] [from Chennai] [with long hair]



Welcome to the class. Today, we are going to talk about sentences. We have looked at phrases in English. We understand how different words come together to constitute a phrase. Particularly, different words belonging to different categories of parts of speech come together and make a phrase. We have looked at this process in little detail.

Let us look at the summary of this one more time. Keeping in mind that these are longer chunks, but they are not sentences, and with the help of these, we will move forward to understand what makes the sentence. How do we get a sentence? We have very small sentences. Sentences can be very big too. So, what are the essential components of a sentence is what we are going to discuss today, or at least we are going to begin discussing today.

We understand a sentence; sentences are essential components of conversations; sentences are basic units in our speech. When we speak to others, we speak in sentences. Sentences combine to create a discourse. And we know that in the discourse, we do not have unrelated sentences. So, before we go to discourse before we go to understand how we listen to people, how we understand the context, how we understand, how we hear people, how we make sense when people speak, we need to understand various components of a sentence.

And more importantly, we need to understand what are the crucial factors for making of a sentence. We will discuss those things. We are going to begin with this thing. But, let us quickly summarize what we mean by phrases and how they make a phrase, how we make a phrase together.

So, start with this same example that in the noun phrase, 'the student of English', we have 2 nouns but this preposition and noun. i.e., noun phrase together make a prepositional phrase, and it becomes part of the bigger phrase, which is a noun phrase. So, 'the student of English' we can say, has another prepositional phrase embedded in it, and this is the process of how elements get combined within a phrase to make a sentence.

So, when we say, when we define a sentence, that a sentence is a meaningful combination of words. We need to say more than this; we need to say a sentence is a meaningful combination of words. Of course, but this combination is worked at within a phrase, to make a phrase and thus we understand the larger chunk that we know as a phrase.

'Students from Chennai', this phrase noun phrase has another PP in it, which is prepositional 'from' and NP 'Chennai.' So, again this noun phrase has another PP in it. We see that we can have more than one prepositional phrase in a noun phrase. Of course, it is going to become a bigger chunk, but we can have more than one prepositional phrase in this. In the next example, we see we have 2 prepositional phrases when we say 'a student of English from Chennai.'

And, at this point, we discussed that we had seen several nouns, 'student', 'English', 'Chennai.' But, these nouns are part of different phrases and thus combine hierarchically to make a bigger chunk of a phrase. So, this is called a structure building. So, this works as if we are building the structure or the foundation for the bigger structure and thus this works.

We noticed other interesting patterns in this structure building process as well, that we saw, remember? This star means ungrammatical and unacceptable. We saw that if we reshuffle the position of this PP; PP in 1 with PP in 2 which is, if we make it instead of 1, 2 if we make it 2, 1 then, this series sequence is ungrammatical. So, we do not say 'the student from Chennai of English'.

However, we can have three prepositional phrases as well. We say 'the student of English from Chennai with long hair', this is possible, and we also notice that the shuffling between 2

and 3 is possible in the sense that it does not result in the whole chunk into ungrammaticality. But still, the first one need not be shuffled.

In other words, in this total noun phrase, the big one, if the nucleus is 'student' as a noun, then we can say as the head of this bigger noun phrase. 'This is student' has this PP as a complement for it, i.e., required element for it. And PP2 and PP3 are additional subsidiary elements giving additional information; therefore, they are called adjuncts. One more time, these terms like complement and adjuncts may not be too essential for you to memorize. But they help us understand this kind of rigidity within a phrase, which we observe quite often.

And when we build our understanding of phrases and sentences, these things become critical information, and therefore they are important for learning. We are going to look at a few more things about phrases little later. But, at this point, we need to move ahead, we are going to move ahead and look at sentences.

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**Sentences**

- 1 • Please (you) sit down.
- 2 • (You) get up.
- 3 • This is a book.
- 4 • [Raju] [likes books].
- 5 • [Raju] [likes pizza with friends at the pizza-hut].

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## Phrases

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Look at these sentences; we can say 'please sit down.' This is a quite smaller chunk of words. We can also say very simply 'get up.' Now, look at this as a sequence of words; they are much smaller than these sequences. So, the point that we want to drive at home is the following: it is not about the number of words that become important in a sentence; it is something else. A large number of words can still not become a sentence. Therefore, a sentence is not simply a combination of words resulting in some meaning. This sequence also results in some meaning, but they are not sentences. Then, of course, we understand, we could see structure building, we could see certain constraints, we could also see how they are put together to build a bigger structure, but they are not sentences.

However, these smaller chunks are sentences. So, what makes it a sentence? How do we know they are sentences? And what are the essential components of sentences, let us look at that. So, first, let us look at more examples, we can also say, 'this is a book.'

'Raju likes books', we can also say, 'Raju likes pizza with friends at Pizza Hut.' Remember, we are trying to make this from smaller to bigger, so this is also a sentence. So, let me give you a number 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. So, as small as 2 is also a sentence, and as big as 5 is also a sentence. Therefore, it requires our meticulous attention at different components that are visible and certain things which are not visible.

I underline and stress this point, certain things which are not so easily visible are going to be critical in understanding the notion of the sentence. For our better understanding, we will come to each these things one after the another.

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## Subjects and Predicates in Sentences

• John loves Mary.

• John likes pizza with his friends.

In the evening, John ...



## Sentences

- 1 • Please (you) sit down.
- 2 • (You) get up.
- 3 • This is a book.
- 4 • [Raju] [likes books].
- 5 • [Raju] [likes pizza with friends at the pizza-hut].



So, the first important part is there are two parts of the sentences; both are equally required, one is subject and the other is called a predicate. It is very simple to know, if we can identify a subject in a sentence, everything else remains predicate. Everything else becomes part of the predicate, and in the predicate, all we need to identify is that there must be a verb. So, look at these sentences, and you will be able to see that this is a subject, and this is that whole thing is a predicate. This is a subject, and this whole chunk is a predicate. Of course, this as a verb is the main component of a predicate.

So, subjects are independent of a predicate. Subjects are outside the predicate in a sentence. So, the first thing we need to know is these two things. Remember, we are trying to look at these things by observing underlying patterns, i.e., what are the things that are common in all



sentences of English. We are only talking about English here, for our purpose to learn English in a better way. So, what can we say as an unequivocal rule, as a rule, which is not going to fail, which is not going to crash.

What can we say that applies across all sentences of this language. Two parts, subjects and predicates, both, must be there in a sentence. So, we can also say, we do not have a sentence without a subject; you do not have a sentence without a predicate. Is it not important to understand these elements? Because if we do not understand, and if we do not know how to pick what becomes a subject in the sentence, we do not understand a sentence.

And it is so basic, so basic for developing our speech, developing speaking that we know a little bit about sentence; a little bit in a more nuanced fashion to understand what a sentence is about. So, we do not have a sentence without a subject; in other words, there must be a subject in a sentence; there must be a predicate in a sentence.

Next, so identify what is a subject in the sentence and what is a predicate in the sentence. Again, having said only this much and before I say more about sentences, what I want you to look at is, and this is again a very simple exercise for you to do. Take a pen and paper and just write down 10 sample sentences like the ones I have told. You can come up with a real sentence that you would have ever spoken or you can just make a sentence.

Identify subjects and predicates in this. At this stage, I am only requesting you to identify subjects and predicates the way I have done here, which will help you understand when you have identified, underlined, bracketed subjects in your sentences, which shows you that you know how to identify a subject. Once you have identified the subject, try to find the rationale why those elements are subjects.

That will give you a much better answer for you to understand the subject of a sentence by yourself. Because you see, if I have to identify subject in these two sentences, I can very easily underline 'John' is the subject in both the sentences. But, if I am asked why these two elements are subjects in these two sentences, I need to say more.

Can I say, because they occur at the initial position of the sentence; looks like so? But, that is only given these two sentences, we can speak a sentence. We can come up with a sentence where there is something else at the beginning of a sentence, but that does not happen to be a subject. So, we can say 'in the evening John likes pizza with his friends.'

Now, in such a sentence, what is the subject? The subject still remains 'John', but 'John' is not at the initial position of the sentence. So, we can say 'in the evening' and add this sentence at the end of it. 'In the evening John likes pizza with his friends', now, 'John' is still the subject of this sentence. So, how do we know what becomes a subject in a sentence? Once you have identified subjects in 10 sentences that you have written in the piece of paper, you will probably get that part as well.

But, before we rush to that, let us look at a few more things. Also, when you identify the predicate, identify verbs in those predicates. That will lead you to find out once you have identified subjects. And once you have identified verbs what the other elements remaining in a sentence are.

For example, if I identify 'John' as the subject in this sentence, and we know this is the predicate, and within the predicate, we know this is the verb. Then, I will be curious to understand what is 'Mary.' Or for that matter in this sentence, when I have identified this whole chunk as a predicate, and I know this is a verb, then we need to know what is 'pizza.' What is 'with his friends.' What are these elements, what is their role?

So, all I am trying to do here is to help you navigate your curiosity about different parts of a sentence where you do not feel losing them. Rather, this process will interestingly increase your interest in these elements. And you will be restlessly curious to find out answers to these questions. But that happens when you look at it through this process. Take any sentence, find out the subject of that sentence. Then, find why that element is the subject of that sentence.

I am asking you to do this with responsibility, because when you start finding out the subject in the sentence, intuitively, you would have done this exercise for most of the sentences grammatically. Then, you need to find out why those elements are subjects. All you need to do is to observe the pattern which is staring you at you from your examples.

So, what we have seen until now and what we are going to see beyond this. What I mean by now and beyond is, until now, we have looked at a very small discussion on phrases. But, we have largely looked at words, we have looked at several processes and elements of words to develop our understanding about words and also about pronunciation, our speaking.

Now, we are getting into sentences. All that we have learnt is definitely important. But, what we are also going to find out is there are several things that we know intuitively but, what is



crucial in both parts is the underlying pattern. When you start noticing, searching for these underlying patterns, you find that you know a lot of this by yourself.

All you need to do is to sit down and find those patterns. So, when you find that, you will get to know if this is the verb, what is 'pizza.' And what is 'with his friends.' Trust me, this curiosity is going to make you restless and in a nice way that it will make you find an answer to these questions. And in the process, your understanding becomes better.

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Imperative Sentences

- Come here.
- Sit down.
- Drink a glass of water.

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Look at these sentences, 'come here', 'sit down', 'drink a glass of water.' Now, when we start finding out subjects and predicates in these sentences, what is the subject of these sentences? Try finding it out. We see that these sentences begin with a verb; come, sit, drink. So, apparently, what we see is, we only have a predicate in these sentences.

We only have predicates, if that is so, then how are they sentences? Because we know that we need two things to make a sentence. There must be a subject and a predicate. True; these examples only have predicates in them. Then, this information, our understanding makes us observe that in each one of these sentence, the subject is common 'you,' i.e., the second person singular or plural pronoun.

It is just that it is not visible. So, we get to know; we get to learn more than just the subject. We know the subject is a required element in a sentence. We find out 'you' is the subject of these sentences. And, other parts that we see are predicates. But, we also get to learn that when we are certain that in a particular type of sentence, the subject that you can see can only

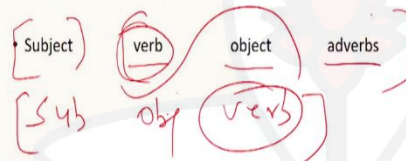
be one specific element. Then, with such kind of predictability following the principle of economy, it is possible to drop that subject.

Even if we do not say it is easily retrievable, understandable and we can find it out. Therefore, we do not need to say it. And therefore, in imperative sentences, a cross-language is, in general, and in English, in particular, we drop the subjects, i.e., 'you.' But underlyingly it still fulfils the grid, for the purpose of the information that it is not breaking the rule of having a subject and a predicate for making of a sentence. That makes us understand a sentence to another level.

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Things to notice ...

- Only sentences have full stops.
- Imperative sentences have subjects (you).
- All sentences will have subjects and predicates.
- Order of words in a sentence



Imperative Sentences

- Come here. (Handwritten: you)
- Sit down.
- Drink a glass of water. (Handwritten: proof)



## Subjects and Predicates in Sentences

• John loves Mary.

• John likes pizza with his friends.

In the evening John



## Phrases

• [The student [of English]] NP

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With this, you can see that we need to pay attention to a certain common and more much simpler elements, i.e., if you look at these sentences; 'Come here'; 'sit down'; 'drink a glass of water'; 'John loves Mary'; 'John likes pizza with his friends'; 'in the evening John likes pizza with his friends.' Everywhere, you are going to notice the full stop at the end of it.

So, keep in mind that only sentences have full stops. We do not use full stops elsewhere. We do not use full stops at the end of the phrase. This still builds your understanding of language and your uses of the language in writing. In speaking, these full stops are marked by pauses. We pause and then start a new sentence.

In writing, we put a dot in English and in some other languages there are other symbols. So, only sentences have a full stop, and every sentence must end with a full stop. We also learnt that imperative sentences, where you have 'you' as a second person; singular pronoun

becomes the subject. And because it is so predictable, it is dropped across all imperative sentences.

Imperative sentences are also known as command and request sentences. All sentences will have subjects and predicates; these two parts are required. And the order of words is first you get the subject and then you have a predicate. If we look at the order of elements within the predicate in English, we see the first element as a verb inside the predicate and then comes the object and then adverbs.

In some languages, this position is reversed. For example, in a language like Hindi, Tamil or Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Odia, Bengali, you see objects coming first and then verb. But, the subject retains its position. So, we say noticing order of words in English; we say English is the language where the verb comes in the middle of the sentence, i.e., the verb medial language. And our languages are verb final languages because, in our languages, the order of objects and verbs is exactly the reverse. It is also known as a mirror image relationship.

So, that is how we notice some of the very simple things as concrete information about sentences. So, if you just keep this much in mind, this is almost universal. No sentence is going to violate this information. Then, having found this much, we need to know, we need to understand in moving forward that are these enough requirements for the making of a sentence or do we need to pay attention to more?

I am sure you would have figured it out by now. So, the answer is, we need to know more, we need to understand more to understand a sentence. Do the practice and try to revise these things as different pieces of information for developing your understanding of a sentence. With more information, we will be meeting with you shortly. Until then, thank you.