



The World of Languages and Languages of the World

The Importance of Word Order

Let's play with word order
in English.

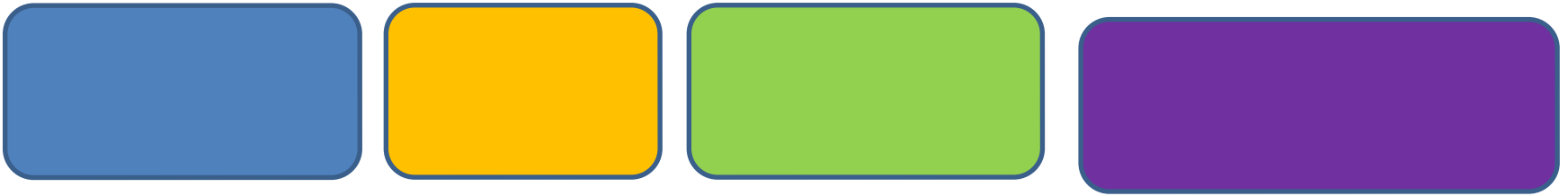
Objectives

- 1. Today we will investigate at the pattern of word order in English, looking at subject and object.
- 2. We will look at the link between word order and meaning.
- 3. We will discover that not all languages use the same word order as English.



Let's Go!

What parts of speech are being described behind the boxes?



Key Vocabulary for Today

In a sentence, the **subject** does the verb.

The **object** receives the verb

The boy eats an apple

The boy = the subject (he's doing the eating)

The apple = the object (it's being eaten)

Find the
subject
and the
object in
each
sentence

The policeman
arrested the dangerous
criminal

The teacher gave an
excellent lesson

The author wrote a
novel

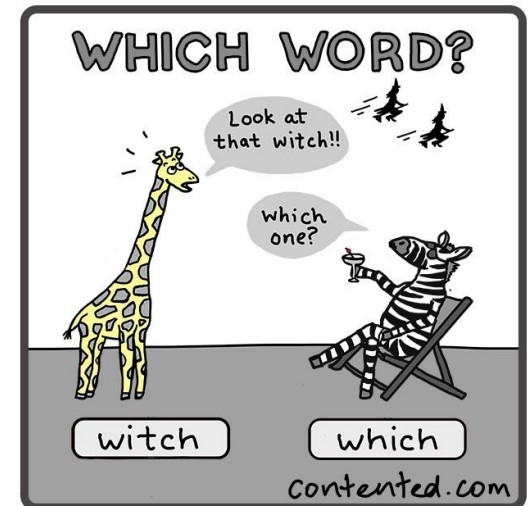


Word Order

All these sentences use the same words. Only one of them is accurate.

- The witch her wig washed.
- Washed the witch her wig.
- The witch washed her wig.
- Her wig washed the witch.

Which one is accurate and why?
So, what is typical word order in an English sentence?



Ιπποπόταμος

Word order in English



In English is our word order follows a clear pattern.



Our sentences are SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT (SVO).



All the other parts of speech are put in around these.



Think of three sentences, write them down and check the rule. Does it work?



Can you write one of your sentences using incorrect word order?

Very important in English word order is.

If the word order rule SVO is not followed, we are guessing what is going on. We are unsure who or what is carrying out the action and who or what is receiving the action of the verb.

The witch her wig washed.

The subject is the person doing the action.

The object is the person receiving the action.

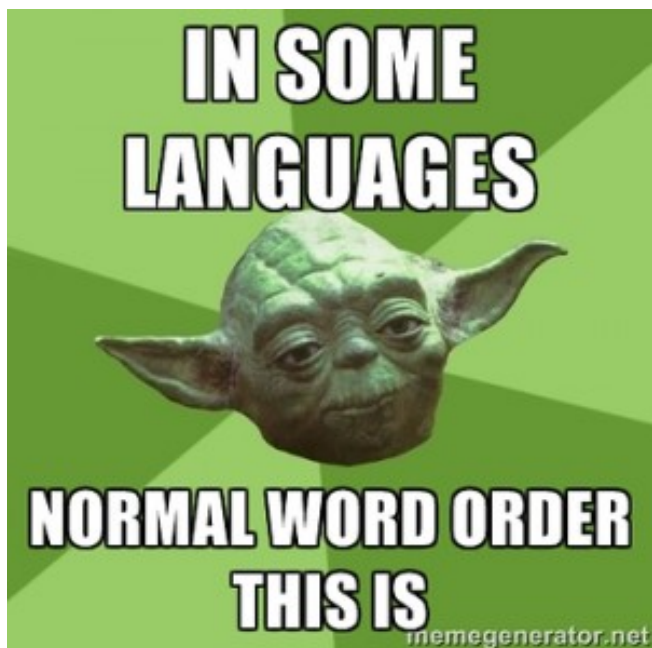
In other languages, word order is less important because they use CASES. We'll look at this later today.

Curious sentences some say...

"Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is."

"Much to learn, you still have."

- What is unusual about these sentences based on your grammatical knowledge?
- How would you "translate" them into English?
- Do you know who speaks in such a mysterious way?



- What effect does this way of speaking create?
- Can you speak like Yoda? Translate the following sentences:
 - Everyone should speak a foreign language.
 - We need longer school breaks.
 - Homework is the best part of my day.
- And now think of 5 of your own sentences worthy of a Jedi...
- Try the extension worksheet from the UK Linguistics Olympiad if you've enjoyed this task!

An Important Question

Thinking about today's lesson, your knowledge of other languages and your understanding of grammar, is word order the same in every language?

Tell us what you know about other languages' word order rules.



Ιπποπόταμος
WoLLow the HIPPO

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Wie ist es mit Deutsch?

German relies on **cases** to show what is the subject and the object.

So, word order does not need to follow the subject, verb, object rule.

These sentences both mean, "The boy eats an apple".

- Der Junge isst den Apfel.
- Den Apfel isst der Junge.

Both Junge (boy) and Apfel (apple) are masculine nouns in German.

Der is nominative = subject.

Den is accusative = object.

Who is doing what is therefore clear without worrying about word order!



ΙΠΠΟΠΟΤΑΜΟΣ
WoLLow the HIPPO

Plenary – match up

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Person or thing doing the action or being described. | S..... |
| 2. Receives the action of a verb. | O..... |
| 3. Modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb | A..... |
| 4. Describes people, places or things | A..... |
| 5. Name of a person, place or thing | N..... |
| 6. Expresses physical actions or states of being | V..... |
| 7. Joins words, phrases or clauses. | C..... |

Verb, Noun, Conjunction, Adjective, Subject, Adverb, Object

Acknowledgements

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- [Star Wars: Linguists Explain the Way Yoda Speaks - The Atlantic](#)