

The Sentence and the Verb

What is a Sentence?

"The grammatically complete expression of a single thought."

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary

"A word, clause, or phrase or a group of clauses or phrases forming a syntactic unit which expresses an assertion, a question, a command, a wish, an exclamation, or the performance of an action, that in writing usually begins with a capital letter and concludes with appropriate end punctuation, and that in speaking is distinguished by characteristic patterns of stress, pitch, and pauses."

Merriam-Webster

Grammatical relationship ← **syntax**

Agreement, grammatical role, coordination, subordination, ...

The thought ← **semantics; pragmatics**

- A predication
- A proposition

Might be implicated, rather than directly expressed (as in a question)

Verbs: the Sentential Heavyweight

The true definition of a sentence:

What the verb says it will be



Gorilla: University of Waterloo; Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

Verbs: the Sentential Heavyweight

The true definition of a sentence:

What the verb says it will be

- Grammatical roles
- Predication
- Event scheme
- (Phrase structure)

e.g., **John kicked the ball.**

kicked (John, the ball)

e.g., **John threw the ball to the dog.**

threw (John, the ball, to the dog)



Fred kicked the ball.

↑
kicker
(subject)

↑
kickee
(object)

The ball disappeared.

↑
subject

Gorilla: University of Waterloo; Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

Example 1: 'Preen'

Preen

Grammatical role: subject

Homer is an argument of 'preen'.

Predication

The entity designated 'Homer' grooms self.

Event schema

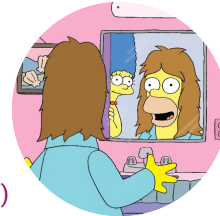
Preen! (Implied argument: 2nd person singular "You")

Event schema: doing

V₁: intransitive verb, one argument (a preener)

We are going to talk about verbs as:

- (V₁) intransitive
- (V₂) transitive
- (V₃) ditransitive



Homer preens.

verb

Homer preens: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, August 15). *Flashback Friday*-. [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10153107665293697>.

Example 2: 'Love'

Loves

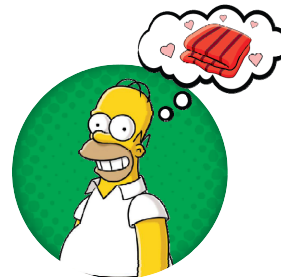
Grammatical role:

- subject ← **Homer**
- object ← **his blanket**

Predication:

The entity designated 'Homer' loves the owned-by-him object, blanket.

Event schema



Homer loves his blanket.

verb

V₂: transitive verb, two arguments (a lover, a loved).

Homer: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, January 25). [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10152968458033697>; Blanket: AptitudeAgency/iStock/Thinkstock

Example 3: 'Give'

Give

Grammatical role:

- subject ← Homer
- direct object ← Kiss
- indirect object ← Mindy

Predication:

The entity designated 'Homer' gives the (metaphorical) object, a kiss, to the entity designated 'Mindy'.

Event schema:

Transferring



Homer gives Mindy a kiss.

verb

Homer on pink: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, July 13). *How to get someone out of bed on a Monday morning*. [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10153037696063697>.

Intransitive, Transitive, and Ditransitive verbs

Eat



Homer eats.

verb

V₁: intransitive verb, one argument (the eater).



Homer eats crap.

verb

V₂: transitive verb, two arguments (the eater, the eaten).

Give



Homer gives Mindy a kiss.

verb

V₃: ditransitive verb, three arguments (the giver, the given, the recipient).

Homer eats: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, January 25). *TONIGHT: Elon Musk arrives in Springfield. Be there at 8/7c*. [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10152677735098697>; Homer & donut: Fox Flash (2006) "Homer Simpson". Wikimedia Commons; Homer on pink: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, July 13). *How to get someone out of bed on a Monday morning*. [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10153037696063697>.