# Title

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Title

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Valence

Thematic relations (roles)

Arg. Structure

Definition

Determining valence

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# Motivation for argument structure

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# 5 minute exercise

What is wrong with the following sentences?

1. Jack gave Mary
2. Petula put the beans
3. Julie laughed Peter

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# Valence

1. Drive
2. Donate
3. Mix
4. Yawn
5. Slap
6. Rain

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# Valence

A verb 'begs to be completed into a sentence' (Tomasello, 1992)

The verb implies a certain number of participants (Valence)

Valence can range from 0 to 3.

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# Valence

Psycholinguistic studies demonstrate that even when we hear verbs in isolation we mentally represent the number of participants (e.g. Shapiro et al. 1987 lexical decision task, or Kim & Thomson, 2000)

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# Thematic relations (roles)

1. Jane fears Peter
2. Peter scares Jane

3. Paul liked the play
4. The play pleased Paul

5. Mary gave Pete a present
6. Pete received a present from Mary

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# Definition

Argument Structure = a level of linguistic representation that comprises

1. the number of essential participants
2. their roles in the sentence
3. how those roles are ordered.

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# Definition

Essential participants are known as ‘arguments’

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# Definition

Argument structure is partly semantic / partly syntactic:

1. Semantic level: roles specified by the verb
2. Syntactic level: ordering of roles.

NB, role of subject, in particular is fixed, e.g.

(1) She gave Patrick a cake

(2) She gave a cake to Patrick

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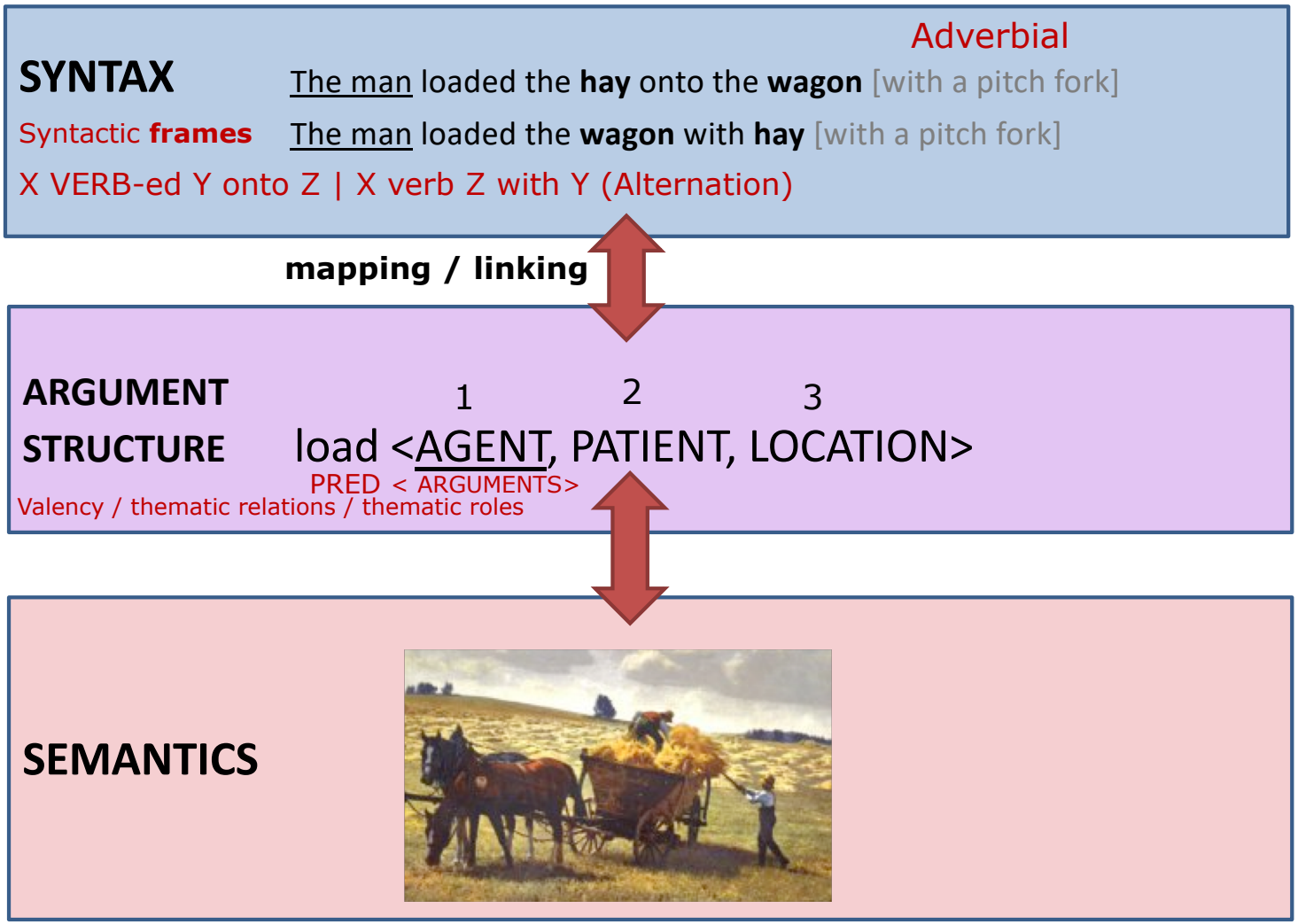
# Definition

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# Determining valence

How do we determine **essential** participants?

Those which are obligatory?

1. * She dropped ~~the pen~~
2. * She took ~~the jacket~~

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# Determining valence

But most arguments can be rendered optional in certain contexts

1. She gives (money) to charity
2. They all gave presents to Mary. Paul gave a pen (to Mary), Jenny gave a book (to Mary), and Brad gave a watch (to Mary)
3. COOKING INSTRUCTIONS: Chop (the carrots) and stir (them) into the sauce


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# Determining valence

In addition, some verbs seem to elicit a wide variety of arguments

1. [ He ] paints [ walls ]
2. [ He ] painted [ the wall ] [ red ]
3. [ He ] painted [ the wall ] [ red ] [ with a paintbrush ] and [ some paint ]
4. [ This brush ] paints well


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# Determining valence

**Extra-valent** arguments which sound "added on"

1. She swam [ ten lengths ]
2. They laughed [ the teacher ] [ out of the room ]

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# Determining valence

1. Method 1: Corpus
2. Method 2: Introspection

These two methods can occasionally give different results!

So there is no foolproof method

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# The Projectionist Account

Why not just use the meaning of the verb to determine how it acts in a sentence?

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# Problems with the Projectionist Account (1)

Jane fears Peter

Peter scare Jane

The two verbs arguably have the same meaning but differ in order of realisation of arguments.

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# Problems with the Projectionist Account (2)

| Frame | Tell | Say |
|---|---|---|
| Verb + N | He told a story | She said her lines |
| Verb + N + N | She told him a story | *She said him a story |
| Verb + N + non-finite clause | He told her to go | * He said her to go |
| Verb + Clause | * She told she was leaving him | She said she was leaving him |

The two verbs arguably have the same meaning but differ in terms of valence.


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# Problems with the Projectionist Account (3)

1. He gave a book to Mary
   He gave her the book
2. He donated a book to the library
   *He donated the library a book

The two verbs have closely related meanings but differ in terms of their *alternation* characteristics (ability to occur in multiple frames)


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# What is a proposition?

A *mental scene* involving at least one *entity* (or argument) participating in an event or situation

A tiger

ENTITY

A tiger creeping through the jungle

ENTITY + SITUATION
= A PROPOSITION


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# What is a proposition?

Contains those entities which make the most important contributions to the **truth conditions** of the sentence

1. The **dog chased** the cat →
   The **robot washed** the cat
   TRUTH CONDITIONS HAVE COMPLETELY CHANGED
2. The dog chased **the** cat →
   The dog **quickly** chased **a** cat
   MINOR CHANGE TO TRUTH CONDITIONS


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# What is a proposition?

1. Proposition
   *chase(dog,cat)*
2. Sentence
   - 2.1 The dog chased the cat
   - 2.2 It chased the cat
   - 2.3 The cat was chased by the dog
3. Utterance
   A: Is your dog energetic?
   B: Well, it chases the neighbour's cat every day!

We need propositions to explain how different surface forms (e.g. 2) can have the same underlying meaning.

The proposition IS the underlying meaning.


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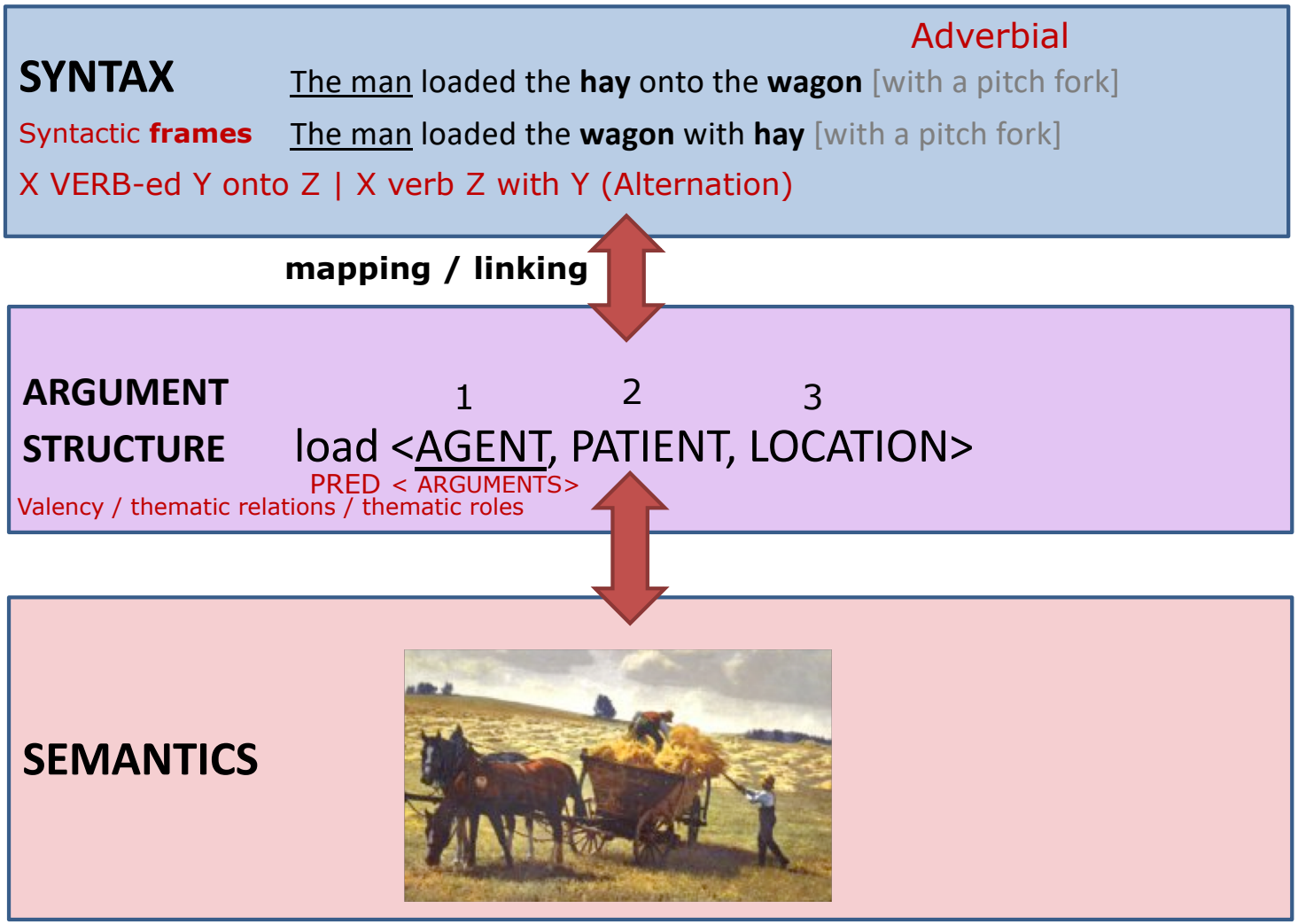
# What is a proposition?

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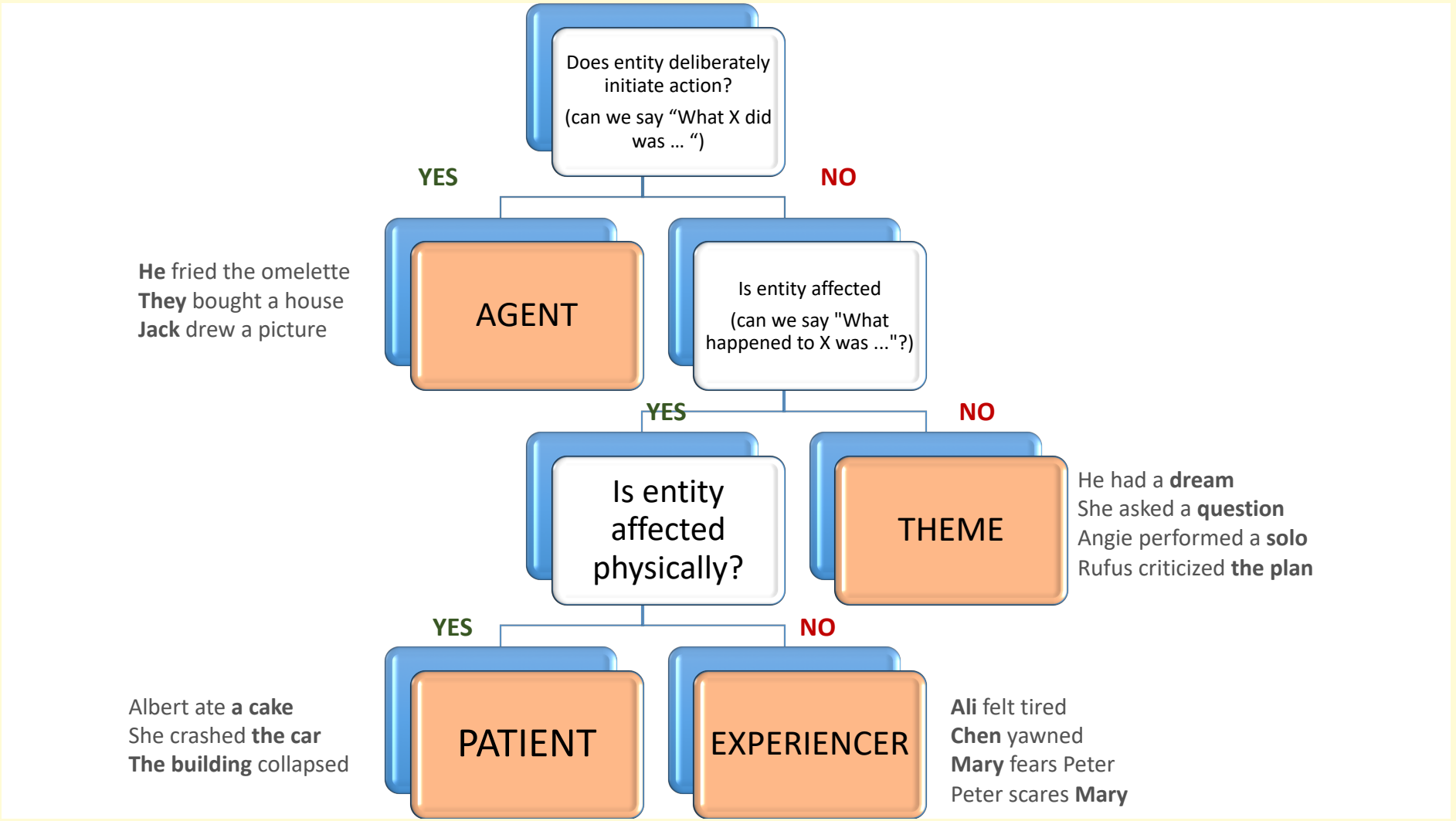
# Main roles for Noun Phrases



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1. Charles crashed the car
2. Mavis heard the noise
3. The noise startled Mavis
4. The tree fell down in the storm
5. Ali considered the exciting proposal
6. Fatimah hated the start of term
7. The swing broke under his weight
8. The doctor felt the patient's foot
9. I like having a bath with my clothes on
10. Jack liked Susan's holiday snaps on Facebook.

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# EXERCISE

1. Charles $_{AG.}$ crashed the car $_{PAT.}$
2. Mavis $_{EXP.}$ heard the noise $_{TH.}$
3. The noise $_{TH.}$ startled Mavis $_{EXP.}$
4. The tree $_{PAT.}$ fell down in the storm
5. Ali $_{AG.}$ considered the exciting proposal $_{TH.}$
6. Fatimah $_{EXP.}$ hated the start of term $_{TH.}$
7. The swing $_{PAT.}$ broke under his weight
8. The doctor $_{AG.}$ felt the patient's foot $_{TH.}$
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# Other roles for Noun Phrases

**Benefactive** is the role typically given to Indirect Object Noun Phrases, e.g.

1. She gave [ him $_{BEN.}$ ] [ a book $_{PAT.}$ ]
2. She bought [ a book $_{PAT.}$ ] [ for him $_{BEN.}$ ]


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# Other roles for Noun Phrases

**Possessor** is the owner of something

1. [ Jack $_{POSS.}$ ] has/owns a Ferrari
2. The house belongs to [ Martha $_{POSS.}$ ]

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# Roles for other types of phrases

Phrases which describe a property of something else are called ATTRIBUTIVES

ATTRIBUTIVES are mapped to Cs and Co.

1. Janice feels happy $_{ATTR}$
2. Losing at bingo makes Martha sad $_{ATTR}$
3. Jack is in a mood $_{ATTR}$

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# Roles for other types of phrases

We can often make questions about attributives using the question word how, e.g.

1. Q: How does janice feel? A: Happy

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# Roles for other types of phrases

Phrases which describe locations are sometimes called LOCATIVES, e.g.

1. Jason is in the park $_{LOC}$
2. Pat loaded the hay onto the wagon $_{LOC}$

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# Roles for other types of phrases

A genuine argument?

1. The girls played baseball in the park

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Nick Riches

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# Roles for other types of phrases

We can make questions about locatives using the question word where, e.g.

1. Q: Where is Jason? A: In the park.

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# Roles for other types of phrases

An instrument is an object used to perform and action, e.g.

1. Angela covered the food with a cloth *INSTR*

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# Roles for other types of phrases

A genuine thematic relation?

1. He **hammered** the nail (? with a hammer)
2. She **filed** her nails (with a nail file).

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After Eating Peas All Tiny Babies Avoid Laughing In Public

AGENT, EXPERIENCER, PATIENT, THEME, BENEFACTIVE, ATTRIBUTIVE, LOCATIVE, INSTRUMENT, POSSESSOR

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1. Jack considers himself a real gigolo
2. Angie sent her father the bundle of letters last Tuesday
3. The steering wheel came off in his hands
4. Jance watched the hovering buzzard
5. Who does this pencil case belong to?
6. Jake painted the wall with red paint.
7. Alina smelt the beautiful flowers

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1. Jack $_{\text{EXP.}}$ considers himself $_{\text{TH.}}$ a real gigolo $_{\text{ATTR.}}$
2. Angie $_{\text{AG.}}$ sent her father $_{\text{BEN.}}$ the bundle of letters $_{\text{PAT.}}$ last Tuesday
3. The steering wheel $_{\text{PAT.}}$ came off in his hands
4. Jance $_{\text{AG.}}$ watched the hovering buzzard $_{\text{TH.}}$
5. Who $_{\text{POSS.}}$ does this pencil $_{\text{TH.}}$ case belong to?
6. Jake $_{\text{AG.}}$ painted the wall $_{\text{PAT.}}$ with red paint $_{\text{INS.}}$.
7. Alina $_{\text{AG.}}$ smelt the beautiful flowers $_{\text{TH.}}$


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How many possible ways can you think of to complete the following sentence?

(NB think of how many different **syntactic structures** can be used after verb)

1. Doctor Who remembered . . .

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