

## CHAPTER : 5

### BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS

The study of any language must necessarily begin with the study of its sentence structure. There are some basic sentence patterns in English : When we say **basic**, we mean the **shortest possible grammatical structure which makes sense**. From these sentences can be derived all complex, compound, long and complicated sentences. We cannot remove a single word from the basic sentence without rendering it meaningless. It may, however, be expanded to any conceivable length. It can be transformed into negative, interrogative, passive or exclamatory sentence. **The basic sentence is a statement; it is affirmative; it is in the active voice and has only one finite verb.**

The parts of a sentence are :

(a) **Subject** : which may be a noun, a pronoun, a noun phrase or a pronoun phrase, eg. : Dog, she, dog's ears, her office etc. It is denoted in the pattern as N/P.

(b) **Verb** : The verb is finite, i.e. it is used in a normal way with a subject and a tense. It may be of the be/become type, transitive or intransitive or of the has/have type. It is denoted in the pattern as 'V' and its specific type given like this : V(be/become).

(c) **Object** : This may again be a noun, a pronoun, a noun phrase or a pronoun phrase and is denoted as N/P.

(d) **Complement** : The complement may be an adjective or an adjective phrase.

(e) **Adverbial** : This is either a single word adverb or an adverb phrase.

There are nine (9) **basic sentence patterns** in English. They are listed here. :

(1) N/P + Verb (intransitive)

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He	came.
We	went.
Monkeys	chatter.
A horse	neighs.
(2) N/P +	Verb + N/P
	(be/become)

'Be' includes the forms is, am, are was, were and 'become' includes verbs like 'seem, appear, look, remain, turn, sound, grow, etc.

Perry	is	a	lawyer.
Della	is	a	secretary.
Paul	became	a	detective.
Henry	remained	a	clerk.
(3) N/P +	Verb +	Adjective	
	(be/become)		

The movie	was	good.
He	grew	angry.
The government	is	unstable.
Switzerland	is	neutral.
Kashmir	is	disturbed.
Martina	looked	confident.
(4) N/P	+ Verb	+ N/P
	(has/have)	

has/have verbs include 'cost', 'resemble', etc.

The Smiths	have	a	bungalow.
Steffi	has	a	labrador.
Sandy	resembles	Perry.	
Gerry	had	a	tortoise.
(5) N/P	+ Verb	+ Adverb/Adverbial	
	(be type)		

Paul	is	downstairs.
Nobody	was	there.
The dog	is	in his kennel.
God	is	in his Heaven.
They	are	on the top shelf.
(6) N/P +	Verb	+ N/P
	(transitive)	

SV A  
The boy stood  
on the table

She	hired	a lawyer.
Perry	fetches	the newspaper.
The police	sought	the house.
Weaver birds	build	nests.
The cheetah	killed	a zebra.

Transitive verbs require an object to complete their meaning.  
This pattern can also be read as :

Subject + Verb + Object

(7) N/P + Verb + N/P + N/P  
(transitive) (indirect object) (direct object)

He	gave	the dog	a bone.
Mr. Brown	showed	us	the house.
Dr. Kohl	taught	us	German.
The war	brought	them	misery.

(8) N/P + Verb + N/P + N/P  
(transitive) (Object) (Object complement)

We	called	him	Ringo.
They	elected	him	Monitor.
The incident	made	him	a hero.
The Board	considered	it	a formality.

There is some confusion among students between pattern (7) and (8). In pattern (7) there are two objects, one indirect and the other direct. The two objects are two different entities. From the examples given above we see that there is 'a dog' (I.O.) and 'a bone' (D.O.); 'us' (I.O.) and 'German' (D.O.), etc. In pattern (8) there is only one object (the direct object) and the other is a complement. Note that the object and the complement are **not** two different entities but one and the same. From the examples given above we see that 'him' (Object) is Ringo (complement) and 'it' (Object) is 'a formality' (Complement).

(9) N/P + Verb + N/P + Adjective  
(transitive)

He	died	his hair	blue.
The court	found	him	guilty.
He	kept	his house	tidy.
His behaviour	made	her	angry.

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Let us include here three (3) more patterns which are not strictly basic.

(1) N/P + Verb + N/P + Adverbial  
(transitive)

Mary	hid	the pistol	in the box.
Jack	threw	the book	out of the window.
He	left	the keys	in the car.
She	removed	the letter	from the drawer.

(2) There + be + N/P + Adverbial

There	were	two cups	on the table.
There	are	nine disciplines	in the college.
There	were	seven members	in the department.
There	was	a guard	at the gate.

'There' can be used with singular as well as plural nouns.

(3) It + be + time/weather/distance

It	is	3 O'clock.
It	is	hot.
It	was	pleasant.
It	is	16 km from the base.

### Some solved examples :

(1) He ruined the painting.

N/P + V + N/P OR S+ V+ O.  
(tr)

(2) The man is a stranger.

N/P + V + N/P OR S+ V+ C.  
(be)

(3) There are five cigarettes in the packet.

There + be + N/P + Adverbial.

(4) The sight was horrible.

N/P + V + Adjective.  
(be)

(5) Alice hesitated.

N/P + V<sub>(Intransitive)</sub>

(6) Martina challenged the decision.

N/P + V + N/P OR S+ V+ O.

- (7) Mary had a lamb.

N/P + V + N/P  
(have)

- (8) The paper is in the drawer.

N/P + V + Adverbial  
(be)

- (9) Bush named it 'Operation Desert Storm.'

N/P + V + N/P + N/P  
(tr) (O) (O.C.)

- (10) The investment made them rich.

N/P + V + N/P + Adjective  
(tr) (O) (O.C.)

- (11) She offered him a drink.

N/P + V + N/P + N/P  
(tr) (I.O) (D.O)

- (12) Sania won

N/P + V  
(intransitive)

- (13) Maria is a champion.

N/P + V + N/P OR S+ V + C.  
(be)

- (14) The test-report is in the laboratory

N/P + V + Adverbial  
(be)

- (15) The publisher gave her a cheque.

N/P + V + N/P + N/P  
(tr) (I.O) (D.O)

### Exercise : 1

Identify the sentence pattern in the sentences given below  
The first is done for you :

- The telephone rang.  
N/P + Verb (intransitive)
- I like my drink chilled.
- He pushed the letter under the carpet.

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- The dog brought her happiness.
- I appointed him secretary.
- The paper was difficult.
- The match began.
- The number is in my diary.
- The bomb exploded.
- Cyclops had one eye.
- She remained a spinster.
- Cats have claws.
- The wolves reared Mowgli.
- There are 108 columns in this hall.
- He pressed the button.
- The party was a success.
- Einstein had a cat.
- The sun is a star.
- The dwarfs saved Snowwhite.
- There are scars on his face.
- Emulsions protect houses.
- The driver disobeyed the instructions.
- The house cost a fortune.
- This set has 72 colours.
- Lincoln abolished slavery.
- The vet examined my dog.
- It is humid.
- He was late.
- The giant screamed.
- Her eyes are beautiful.
- The police thought the call a hoax.
- His heart was heavy.
- He inserted the card into the slot.
- This gave her an idea.
- The experience left him shattered.
- He stayed young.
- They kept the shops closed.
- His hair turned gray.



39. The prices rose.
40. Boeing 747 has four engines.

### Exercise : 2

Identify the pattern in the sentences given below and say whether the sentence is basic or not :

1. They are rogues.
2. He sat and watched television.
3. Harbhajan took thirty-two wickets.
4. Will he achieve his target ?
5. There are temples in Dilwara.
6. It is raining.
7. She ironed her trousers.
8. Gambling is a hobby.
9. Normal petrol has lead.
10. The helmet is on the shelf.
11. His hands shook.
12. Eggs contain calcium.
13. He waited and watched.
14. There is a bank note between the pages.
15. She frowned.
16. We considered the plan a failure.
17. His face grew pale.
18. The branch snapped.
19. The milk is in the pot.
20. Dining rooms have dining tables.
21. Acting became a passion.
22. She recommended this book.
23. The gorilla banged the door.
24. Did he wind the watch ?
25. Milliners make hats.
26. The car is in the garage.
27. The bird brought the chicks some worms.
28. He hung the clothes on the line.
29. He appeared foolish.
30. Clinton called him Buddy.

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31. The farmer had a wife.
32. The wife had a dog.
33. A flying saucer was seen.
34. The maid swept the floor.
35. There are seven IITs in India.
36. The Blacks refused reservation.
37. He is a diplomat.
38. The table is in the centre.
39. Snowwhite blushed. *He blushed.*
40. Mosquitoes cause malaria.

### Exercise : 3

Identify the pattern and spot the sentences which are not

basic :

1. Richard Bach wrote 'Illusions'.
2. There are 13 cinema halls in Jaipur.
3. He is not studying.
4. The library is behind the office.
5. Man proposes.
6. God disposes.
7. They kept the plan a secret.
8. The A.C. is effective.
9. He dragged the sack through the corridor.
10. Caesar offered him a bribe.
11. Has he forgotten his promise ?
12. The parrot squawked.
13. The decision was tough.
14. March has thirty-one days.
15. The postponement gave him time.
16. Cinderella cried.
17. Her sisters grinned.
18. His legs are long.
19. The Australians blamed the pitch.
20. There is a monkey on the roof.
21. He got up and opened the door.
22. Christ forgave Judas.

23. She did not recommend this book.
24. Bangaru Laxman was the Party President.
25. He has a chance.
26. The Smiths are here.
27. The leaves rustled.
28. Bush called him a liar.
29. The dish tasted sweet.
30. She closed the door with a bang.
31. Her job gave her confidence.
32. This batch is responsive.
33. The enemy advanced.
34. The film is in the can.
35. The question has two answers.
36. Beavers make dams.
37. There is a note on her pillow.
38. He did not design this restaurant.
39. He is in jail.
40. The family prospered.

**Exercise : 4**

Identify the pattern in the sentences and spot the ones which are not basic.

1. The card was in his pocket.
2. The letter arrived.
3. He drove the nail into the block.
4. He taught her a lesson.
5. Where is the letter ?
6. He rushed the students inside.
7. They made Sanskrit compulsory.
8. The translation brought her more work.
9. He got a shock and died.
10. He offered him a drink.
11. He licked his bowl clean.
12. The bride looked beautiful.
13. The crocodile snapped his mouth shut.
14. The miners drowned.

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15. Shoes have soles.
16. This dog is a Dalmatian.
17. He is not a fool.
18. He kept himself fit.
19. The guide showed us the Pyramids.
20. He chased the bull across the field.
21. His pronunciation is flawless.
22. Who won the Best Actor award ?
23. He agreed.
24. The job is in his reach.
25. Doors have hinges.
26. Timing is the key.
27. He folded the drawings.
28. Fish do not have external ears.
29. There is dust on the table.
30. It is 264 km from Jaipur.
31. He did not learn computers.
32. He lit a fire.
33. His son became an actor.
34. His socks had ladders.
35. The glasses are in the case.
36. The opposition walked out.
37. They named him Adolf.
38. The passport is valid.
39. She turned and faced him.
40. His throw was accurate.

**Exercise : 5**

Arrange the following sentences in the right order to make meaningful basic sentences. Then identify the pattern :

1. bright looked room the.
2. Him, a, thought fool we
3. twitched his muscles
4. was the on cap head his.
5. few has friends he.
6. planet earth a is the.

7. glass his filled he.
8. English she teaches.
9. fifteen in students there are the class.
10. a she poetess is.
11. in Mary is bedroom the.
12. grumbled the clerk.
13. a drove BMW Newton.
14. the wolf woodcutter killed the.
15. an I idea have.
16. birds are chickens.
17. outside chairs the are.
18. won a book him the prize.
19. behind, boots, a she pair saw of curtain the.
20. a, taught her lesson he.
21. a leg on there is wound his.
22. their teachers lectures prepare.
23. an seemed actress she.
24. a staff office the has.
25. lift the arrived.
26. is the at corner policeman the.
27. in registration noted number they book the log the.
28. more earthquake him projects brought the.
29. expensive dress is the.
30. ran the burglar.
31. the road along line is railway the.
32. an opened account she.
33. room floor my on is the first.
34. chair the broke.
35. was the easy paper.
36. the car, the shop swerved he towards.
37. honest we her found.
38. him, company, a, the promised commission.
39. The a lawn-mower has gardener.
40. porcupine built Durrell gave a the.

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#### Exercise : 6

Identify the pattern in the sentences given below. Identify the sentences which are **not** basic :

1. She is evaluating answer sheets.
2. The possibility made him anxious.
3. She left him in the office.
4. It gave her a shock.
5. They offered him a job.
6. He has identified the pattern.
7. He seemed docile.
8. They selected me captain.
9. The resort is by the sea.
10. Wind blows.
11. The story is fascinating.
12. They elected him General Secretary.
13. The plane took off.
14. He is working.
15. Shops have stocks.
16. They are scientists.
17. The clinic has an X-ray machine.
18. Lawyers argue cases.
19. She solved the mystery.
20. Mrs. Marple chuckled.
21. They invited their friends.
22. There is wine in the bottle.
23. Is it raining ?
24. Grandma told her a story.
25. They sent for an ambulance from the PCO.
26. The decision is wrong.
27. Fish swim.
28. Fish have fins.
29. The players are on the ground.
30. The wicket-keeper shouted.
31. The hospital has 40 beds.



32. He turned traitor.
33. The OBCs demanded reservation.
34. The monkeys steal our food.
35. There is a cockroach in the bathroom.
36. We do not have any rooms.
37. Marriage is a gamble.
38. He survived.
39. Your glasses are in the case.
40. The medicine is useless.

*Exercise (advanced) :*

Identify the sentence pattern and detect the sentences that are not basic :

1. I started the car.
2. I found him in the bar.
3. Mary is unbalanced.
4. Today is Monday.
5. The arrangement is logical.
6. I will fetch you some food.
7. There are three members in the team
8. The gold bars are cylindrical.
9. He made money.
10. Jim bought an antique.
11. Each symbol has a value.
12. Cassette players cost Rs. 2000.
13. Steve noticed the error.
14. The clock stopped.
15. They gave him a medal.
16. The hunter set a trap.
17. They named him Denzel.
18. It is 2 a.m.
19. He gave the dog a bone.
20. He likes it raw.
21. The boy placed the marble in the box.
22. Elizabeth ate 22 muffins.
23. Michael set the statue on a pedestal.

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24. The amount was petty.
25. There were 50 customers in the store.

*Exercise (advanced) :*

Unjumble the following words to form meaningful basic sentences:

1. same the are the instructions
2. is the letters box of full.
3. arrow he replaced the
4. answer is surprising the
5. four there in the toffees box are
6. a is dictator he
7. him considered rascal a I
8. coloured hair his white Danny
9. a square he number placed in each
10. task he his completed
11. four goat legs has a
12. allowed they fifteen him minutes.
13. shrunk the cloth.
14. magic he tricks learns.
15. locked cupboard he burglar the in the
16. wine £ 50 costs red
17. has arms an eight octopus
18. are many in there games 'Dreamland'
19. lowered voice her madam
20. drew she child over a blanket the

*The baby slept in the cot*  
*Students are studying in their rooms* □□□