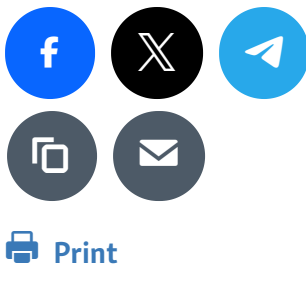


November 09, 2018

Ask a Teacher: Sentence or Statement?

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Many VOA Learning English stories and programs use the words “sentence” and “statement.” But what exactly does each word mean? Are there differences between the two?

This week, our question comes from Armando. Here it is:

Question:

What’s the difference between “sentence” and “statement” and how can I use them? - *Armando*

Answer:

Hello, Armando! I am glad you asked that question. The answer will help a lot of English learners.

First, think of a sentence as a tree and the three kinds of sentences as tree **branches**.

One branch is a statement. Another is a question. Yet another is a command.



Thinking of a sentence as a tree and statements, questions and commands as branches can help you remember the differences.

A **sentence** is a group of words that usually have a subject, verb and information about the subject.

Remember: A sentence can be a statement, question or command.

A **statement** is a basic fact or opinion. It is one kind of sentence. It usually ends with a **period** or **exclamation point**.

To make this clearer, here are examples of the three types of sentences.

The first one is a statement:

Armando studies English every day.

Now, here is the same sentence as a question:

Does Armando study English every day?

And finally, here is the sentence as a command:

Study English every day.

But wait – where did the subject “Armando” go in the command? We do not include subjects in commands. They are understood without being said.

Sentence or statement?

Now, let’s turn to the part of the question about when to use “statement” or “sentence.”

Here is a way to keep it simple:

You can avoid the word “statement” unless you are speaking or writing about something **formal**, such as written or spoken information from a government official.

English teachers sometimes use the word “statement,” but thankfully you don’t have to!

And that’s *Ask a Teacher*.

I’m Alice Bryant.

Do you have a question for Ask a Teacher? Write to us in the Comments area and be sure to list your country.

Words in This Story

branch – *n.* a part of a tree that grows out from the trunk

period – *n.* point (.) used to show the end of a sentence

exclamation point – *n.* a punctuation mark (!) used to show an exclamation

formal – *adj.* suitable for serious or official speech and writing

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