

Universal Grammar, Principles and Parameters, Language Association and the Chomskyan view

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The basic postulate of Universal Grammar is that structural rules innate to humans independent of sensory experience. We can think of Universal Grammar as the set of principles common to *all* languages. It's the initial state of language faculty all humans have. Principles in this may represent parameters that may vary from one language to another.

As Chomsky puts it, Universal Grammar does not encode the actual rules of each language individually. Instead, it contains **principles and parameters**, from which the rules of the language are derived. Thus, invariants across human languages can be represented by principles, and parameters vary freely, encoding cross-linguistic variations.

The idea behind principles and parameters is that a person's syntactic knowledge can be modelled with two formal mechanisms:

1. A **finite set of fundamental principles** common to all languages; e.g., a sentence must always have a subject, even if it is not overtly pronounced.
2. A **finite set of parameters** that determine syntactic variability amongst languages; e.g., SOV vs SVO syntax.