

## THE SENTENCE

### **Definition**

One way to define a sentence is to say that it is an orderly arrangement of words that makes sense. If we wish to be technical, we can say that a **sentence** is a self-contained grammatical unit, usually containing a subject and a verb, which conveys to the listener or the reader a meaningful assertion, command request, or exclamation.

A little reflection reveals that, to be a sentence, a group of words must mean something. If no meaning is received from what is supposed to be a sentence, communication will be disrupted and confusion will arise. Remember this: sense – sentence, no sense – no sentence.

### Examples

Most hotels require a credit card to hold a room. (These words make sense; they express a complete thought. Therefore they make a sentence.)



Every time you make a purchase with your Best Western MasterCard.  
(Here is a “no sense” group of words. The words do not make sense because the thought they express is not complete. Therefore, the group of words is not a sentence.)

To practice what you have learned, click [here](#).

To test what you have learned, click [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Subject and Predicate**

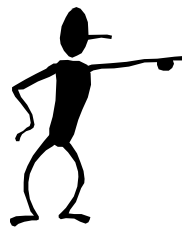
We must be sure that we can recognize the two indispensable parts of a sentence, the **subject** (the unit about which something is said) and the **predicate** (the unit that says something about the subject) the predicate usually includes other units such as modifiers and complements but the most indispensable part of the predicate is the **verb**.

If you are able to select the **subject**, you will then know that the rest of the sentence is the **predicate**. The **complete subject** is the part of the sentence that shows who is speaking or is spoken to or the person or thing spoken about

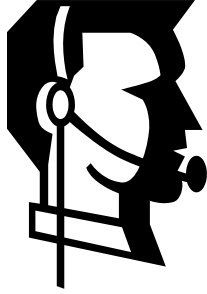
### Examples



*I* am going to Illinois this morning. (*I* is the subject of the sentence, the person speaking.)



*You* are to report to Mr. J. Bond.  
(*You* is the subject, the person spoken to.)



*The agent whom we hired last week is very efficient. (The agent whom we hired last week is the subject, the person spoken about.)*

### **Simple and Compound Subjects**

A **simple subject** is the single most important subject in the complete subject.



The lady in the blue dress is a new training specialist.

*(The lady in the blue dress is the complete subject. The most important single word is *lady*; therefore, *lady* is the simple subject.)*

A **compound subject** consists of two or more words that are equally important and are usually joined by the conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor*.



All major credit cards and principal bank cards are honored in Canada. (*All major credit cards and principal bank cards* is the complete subject. *Major credit cards* and *principal bank cards* are the most important words and are joined by the conjunction and. Therefore, *major credit cards and principal bank cards* is the compound subject.)

To view PowerPoint slides. click [here](#).

To test how much you have learned, click [here](#).