

## 2 Sentence structure: subject, verb, object, etc.

MIKE AND HARRIET ARE MOVING THEIR PIANO UPSTAIRS.  
TOM, MELANIE AND DAVID ARE HELPING THEM.



### 1 Sentence structure

The parts of a sentence are the subject, verb, object, complement and adverbial. A statement begins with the subject and the verb. There are five main structures which we can use to make a simple statement.

1 SUBJECT VERB  
*My arms are aching.*  
*Something happened.*

2 SUBJECT VERB OBJECT  
*I need a rest.*  
*Five people are moving the piano.*

The subject and object can be a pronoun (e.g. *I*) or a noun phrase (e.g. *the piano*).

3 SUBJECT VERB COMPLEMENT  
*This piano is heavy.*  
*It was a big problem.*

The complement can be an adjective (e.g. *heavy*) or a noun phrase (e.g. *a big problem*). The complement often comes after *be*. It can also come after *appear*, *become*, *get*, *feel*, *look*, *seem*, *stay* or *sound*. For adjectives and word order see Unit 104.2.

4 SUBJECT VERB ADVERBIAL  
*It is on my foot.*  
*Their house is nearby.*

An adverbial can be a prepositional phrase (e.g. *on my foot*) or an adverb (e.g. *nearby*).

5 SUBJECT VERB OBJECT OBJECT  
*It's giving me backache.*  
*David bought Melanie a present.*

We use two objects after verbs like *give* and *send* (see Unit 3).

### 2 Adverbials

We can add adverbials to all the five main structures.

*My arms are aching terribly. I really need a rest.*

*Of course this piano is heavy. Fortunately their house is nearby.*

*To everyone's surprise, David actually bought Melanie a present yesterday.*

▷ 34, 36 Word order in questions ▷ 113 Adverbs and word order  
▷ page 377 Seem, look, etc. in American English

# Practice

## A Parts of the sentence (1)

Mike and Harriet are on holiday. They have written a postcard to David and Melanie. Look at each underlined phrase and say what part of the sentence it is: subject, verb, object, complement or adverbial.

- |                                      |                     |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ► We're having <u>a great time</u> . | <u>object</u> ..... |                                     |
| 1 <u>The weather</u> is marvellous.  | .....               | 4 We're <u>on a farm</u> .          |
| 2 We really <u>enjoy</u> camping.    | .....               | 5 We like <u>this place</u> .       |
| 3 It's <u>great fun</u> .            | .....               | 6 The scenery is <u>beautiful</u> . |

## B Sentence structure (1)

After moving the piano, the five friends had a rest and a cup of tea.

Look at this part of their conversation and then write the letters a)–e) in the correct place.

- David: That was a difficult job.
- Tom: I agree.
- Mike: I'm on my deathbed.
- David: Someone should give us a medal.
- Harriet: I've made some more tea.

- |                                    |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| ► Subject + verb                   | <u>b</u> ..... |
| 1 Subject + verb + object          | .....          |
| 2 Subject + verb + complement      | .....          |
| 3 Subject + verb + adverbial       | .....          |
| 4 Subject + verb + object + object | .....          |

## C Word order (1)

Put the words in the correct order and write the statements.

- |                                           |                              |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ► is / Melanie / very nice                | <u>Melanie is very nice.</u> |
| 1 football / likes / Tom                  | .....                        |
| 2 an accident / David / had               | .....                        |
| 3 moved / the piano / we                  | .....                        |
| 4 a tall woman / Harriet / is             | .....                        |
| 5 sat / on the floor / everyone           | .....                        |
| 6 gave / some help / Mike's friends / him | .....                        |

## D Adverbials (2)

These sentences are from a news report. Write down the two adverbials in each sentence.

Each adverbial is a prepositional phrase or an adverb.

- |                                                                            |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ► Prince Charles opened a new sports centre in Stoke yesterday.            | <u>in Stoke</u><br><u>yesterday</u> |
| 1 He also spoke with several young people.                                 | .....                               |
| 2 The sports centre was first planned in 1994.                             | .....                               |
| 3 Naturally, the local council could not finance the project without help. | .....                               |
| 4 Fortunately, they managed to obtain money from the National Lottery.     | .....                               |