

## 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
	<i>My arms</i>	<i>are aching.</i>
	<i>Something</i>	<i>happened.</i>

2	SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT
	<i>I</i>	<i>need</i>	<i>a rest.</i>
	<i>Five people</i>	<i>are moving</i>	<i>the piano.</i>

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

3	SUBJECT	VERB	COMPLEMENT
	<i>This piano</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>heavy.</i>
	<i>It</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>a big problem.</i>

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
	<i>It</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>on my foot.</i>
	<i>Their house</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>nearby.</i>

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

5	SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT	OBJECT
	<i>It</i>	<i>'s giving</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>backache.</i>
	<i>David</i>	<i>bought</i>	<i>Melanie</i>	<i>a present.</i>

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