

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.

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ► 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.

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| ► Prince Charles opened a new sports centre in Stoke yesterday. | <u>in Stoke</u>
<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. | ..... |