

1 Sentences

We can form simple sentences with a subject and a verb in a single clause (*Jenny laughed*). We can include auxiliary verbs (*be, do, have* and modals) as part of the verb phrase and an adverbial after the verb (*She was sitting at the table*). We can use verbs with an object (*She was drawing a picture*), without an object (*She giggled*) or with two objects (*She showed me the picture*). We can also use linking verbs with complements (*It looked very silly*).

We form compound sentences with clauses joined by the coordinating conjunctions **and, but** and **or** (*I made some coffee, but Jenny wanted orange juice*). We form complex sentences with clauses joined by subordinating conjunctions such as **after, because, if** and **while** (*We chatted in the kitchen while I cooked breakfast*).

A Read through this newspaper report and find:

- 1 another simple sentence
- 2 a complex sentence with two conjunctions

A young English teacher saved the lives of 30 students when he took control of a bus after its driver suffered a fatal heart attack. Guy Harvold, 24, had collected the students and
5 three course leaders from Gatwick airport and they were travelling to Bournemouth to meet their host families. They were going to start a course at the International Language Academy in Bournemouth where Harvold works as a
10 teacher.

Harvold, who has not passed his driving test, said, 'I realized the bus was out of control when I was speaking to the students on the microphone.' The bus collided with trees at
15 the side of the road and he noticed the driver was slumped over the wheel. The driver didn't move. He was unconscious.

'We hit a barrier and swerved to the other side of the road and I grabbed the wheel,'
20 Harvold explained. 'The driver's legs were over the pedals and I had difficulty reaching

the brake. We hit a lamp post and it shattered the glass on the front door before I managed to bring the bus to a halt.' Police praised the
25 young teacher's quick thinking. If he hadn't reacted quickly, there could have been a terrible accident.

The bus driver never regained consciousness. He was later pronounced dead at East Surrey
30 hospital. He had worked regularly with the school and was very well regarded by staff. Harvold said, 'I was so relieved that no one else was hurt, but I hoped the driver would survive. It was only later I heard he had died. That's a
35 terrible tragedy.'

The Language Academy's principal told the Gazette that the school is going to send Harvold on a weekend trip to Dublin with a friend, as a gesture of thanks for his bravery. A local
40 driving school has also offered him six free driving lessons.

B Using verbs and conjunctions from the newspaper report above, complete this summary.

English teacher Guy Harvold, 24, ¹ saved the lives of 30 students on a bus from Gatwick to Bournemouth ² the driver ³ a heart attack. The bus went out of control. It ⁴ trees, a barrier and a lamp post ⁵ Harvold could stop it. The driver ⁶ no-one else ⁷ hurt. Harvold, who hasn't passed his driving test, was ⁸ by police ⁹ was ¹⁰ free driving lessons by a local driving school.

Simple sentences and verbs

1 Simple sentences

A simple sentence is a single clause with a subject and a verb.

- 1 *Mary sneezed.* • *Somebody coughed.* • *The train didn't come.* • *People were waiting.*

Simple sentences can also have an object (2) and/or an adverbial, such as an adverb (3) or a prepositional phrase (4).

- 2 *Mr Owen made lunch.* • *I brought some cakes.* • *We drank tea.* • *Everyone enjoyed it.*
 3 *Suddenly the weather changed.* • *We quickly closed the windows.* • *It often rains there.*
 4 *Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway in 1582.* • *He moved to London in 1588.*

Simple sentences with linking verbs, such as **be** or **look**, have complements that describe the subject.

- 5 *Cathy is a nurse.* • *She wasn't ready.* • *Her hair looked wet.* • *The room felt like an oven.*

2 Verbs

Most verbs are action verbs, used to describe actions (what we do) and events (what happens).

- 6 *Richard eats a lot of pasta.* • *It gives him energy.* • *He runs every night.* • *I saw him in the park.*

Some verbs are state verbs rather than action verbs. They are used to describe states: what we think (7), how we feel (8) and relationships, especially those concerned with inclusion and possession (9).

- 7 *I know what you mean.* • *My parents understood everything.* • *They believe in fate.*
 8 *I appreciate all your help.* • *Some people hate cucumber in sandwiches.*
 9 *The city guide contains useful information.* • *That old suitcase belongs to me.*

We don't usually use state verbs in the continuous. (NOT *That suitcase is belonging to me.*)

Other state verbs include: **consist of, exist, include, matter, own, prefer, realize, remember, resemble**

We also use linking verbs (**be, seem, etc.**) to describe states: how things are or seem to be.

- 10 *These flowers are beautiful.* • *Everything seems fine.* • *Your friend appears to be nervous.*

We can use some verbs, such as **taste** or **weigh**, as state verbs (11) or as action verbs (12).

- 11 *Flowers don't usually taste very good.* • *The box weighs two kilos.*
 12 *Have you tasted this soup?* • *They carefully weighed the flour.*

We use the auxiliary verbs **be, do** and **have** with other verbs when we form different tenses (13), questions and negatives (14) and for emphasis (15).

- 13 *The boys have been waiting for you.* • *I think they've gone outside.* • *They're playing football.*
 14 *What did Josh say?* ~ *He didn't say anything.* • *Does he want coffee?* ~ *I don't think so.*
 15 *You aren't working very hard.* ~ *I AM working hard!* • *You don't miss me.* ~ *I DO miss you!*

We also use **be, do** and **have** as main verbs: *He is lazy.* • *He does nothing.* • *He has no money.*

We use modal auxiliary verbs (modals) such as **can, must, should** or **will** with other verbs to express concepts such as permission, obligation, necessity, prediction, etc.

- 16 *Can I leave now?* • *You shouldn't go yet.* • *I must catch the next bus or I'll be late for work.*

C Find an example of each of the following in the newspaper report on page 2.

- 1 a simple sentence with a linking verb:
- 2 a clause with an action verb and an adverb:
- 3 a clause with a modal:

Subjects and verbs

3 Subjects

The subject of a sentence is usually the first noun phrase or pronoun identifying who or what is performing an action expressed by the verb (1). It can identify who or what is experiencing something (2). It can also be the focus of a description (i.e. who or what the complement is linked to) (3).

- 1 *Anthony* lost his keys. • *The dog* ate my homework. • *You* are working too hard these days.
- 2 *The children* heard a loud noise. • *The audience* enjoyed the concert. • *Megan* doesn't like coffee.
- 3 *Lions* are large and powerful. • *Her new classmates* seem friendly. • *Your hair* looks great.

We usually put the subject before the verb except in questions (4) and sentences using inversion (5).

- 4 *Where* has *she* been? • Does *this bus* go to the university? • Isn't *Oslo* in southern Norway?
- 5 *In front of us and blocking the way* stood a large dog. Never had I seen such a fierce animal.

The subject can also be a gerund (6), an infinitive (7) or a clause (8).

- 6 *Reading comics* is her favourite thing. • *Studying* always makes me sleepy.
- 7 *Just to complete the classes* has become my new goal. • *To go without you* wouldn't be any fun.
- 8 *That she would win the election* was never in doubt. • *What he said* wasn't very polite.

4 Subject-verb agreement

It is the subject that determines whether the verb is singular or plural (9). It is the main noun as subject, not a prepositional phrase, that makes the verb singular (10) or plural (11).

- 9 *Adam's sister* lives in Scotland. His *parents* live near London.
- 10 *A new pair of shoes* **doesn't** cost a lot. • *A woman with three children* **was** waiting outside.
- 11 *New shoes* **don't** always feel comfortable at first. • *The children* **were** crying.

We use singular verbs after indefinite pronouns (*everybody*, *nobody*, etc.) as subjects (12). We usually use singular verbs after subjects beginning with *none of* and *neither of* in formal situations (13). We sometimes use plural verbs in informal situations (14).

- 12 *Everybody* in the country **wants** one of these. • *Nobody* except his parents **was** willing to help.
- 13 *None of the candidates* **has** much support. • *Neither of King Henry's sons* **was** born in France.
- 14 *She* shouted, 'None of you **have** a chance.' • *He's* complaining that *neither of them* **were** asked.

We use singular verbs after some subjects that seem to be plural: some nouns ending in *-s* (15), phrases describing an amount (16) and some combinations with *and* (17). There are some nouns such as *people* and *police* which appear to be singular, but which are used with a plural verb (18).

- 15 *The news* **wasn't** too bad. • *Cards* is more than a game for some people. • *Measles* is a disease.
- 16 *£200* is too much. • *20 miles* **was** too far and *two days* **wasn't** enough time.
- 17 *Tom and Jerry* is a rather *old* cartoon. • *Sausage and beans* **doesn't** cost very much.
- 18 *The police* **are** trying to stop speeding in the city, but *people* **are** still driving too fast.

We can use a group noun as subject to refer to several people, with a plural verb (19), or to refer to the group as a single unit, with a singular verb (20), depending on our point of view.

- 19 *The Welsh team* **are** getting tired. • *The committee* **have** not expressed all their views.
- 20 *The Welsh team* is in second place. • *The committee* **hasn't** reached a decision yet.

Other group nouns include: **audience, class, crowd, enemy, family, government, orchestra, staff**

Note that, in American English, a singular verb is typically used after a group noun:

My wife's family always has a big get-together with a barbecue on July 4th.

D Find an example of each of the following in the newspaper report on page 2.

- 1 a clause with an indefinite pronoun
- 2 a clause with a noun referring to a group

E Add one of these verbs to each of the sentences.

does doesn't has have is isn't are aren't was wasn't won't

- ◆ Excuse me, but ^{does} this train stop at Croydon?
- To get an A in every class be easy.
 - Lord of the Flies* the name of the book we had to read last year?
 - My new pair of jeans pockets on the side of the legs.
 - What they're doing in Parliament interest me.
 - Being absent from class a lot going to improve his chances of passing.
 - Jess got really angry with us and screamed, 'None of you my friends any more!'
 - Never I had to listen to so many boring people!
 - I watched *Dances with Wolves*, which about dancing at all.
 - Statistics more difficult than Economics?
 - These new sunglasses made of glass or plastic or anything like that.

F Choose an ending (a–e) for each beginning (1–5) and add appropriate forms of the verb **be**.

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| ◆ The Simpsons <u>is</u> | (.f) | a a lot to carry by yourself, don't you think? |
| 1 Romeo and Juliet | (.) | b usually in their seats before the play starts. |
| 2 Last night's news | (.) | c written by Shakespeare. |
| 3 25 kilos | (.) | d going camping this weekend. |
| 4 Billy as well as all his friends | (.) | e rather exciting, I thought. |
| 5 The audience | (.) | f the name of a television programme. |

G Complete each sentence with one of these words plus **has** or **have**.

committee darts diabetes eggs everybody nobody orchestra police teachers

- ◆ Diabetes has..... become a more common disease, mainly because of the way we eat.
- The conductor and the had very little time to rehearse for the concert.
 - Security is just something that to go through in airports nowadays.
 - from the new student group volunteered to help with the Christmas party.
 - The planning all been given individual copies of the agenda for the meeting.
 - always been a popular game in English pubs.
 - According to the rules, none of the the right to make students stay after school.
 - The no idea how the robbers got into the bank.
 - Bacon and been the Sunday breakfast in our house for years.