

## BASIC SENTENCE PARTS

To find our way around in a sentence, we have to be able to identify its parts. **Four basic building blocks are used in English sentences: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.**

- A. Two basic kinds of signals help us identify nouns. Nouns fit in after **noun markers** like **the, a, an** (articles); **this, these, that, those** (demonstrative or “pointing” pronouns); **my, your, his, her, its, our, their** (possessive pronouns). Nouns change in form when we shift from singular to plural: one car, several cars; one tree, several trees. Most English nouns, but not all, add the final –s to form the plural. Familiar exceptions: one man, several men (same with woman, women); one child, several children; one tooth, several teeth.

Fill in a single word in each blank. Each word you fill in will be a noun, or a word that can substitute for a noun.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ threatened the \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. My \_\_\_\_\_ loved the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. His \_\_\_\_\_ sent her \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Our \_\_\_\_\_ have always lent their \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. This \_\_\_\_\_ will never fit into that \_\_\_\_\_.

- B. Verbs are words that change in form to show a difference in time: You see it now—you saw it yesterday. They live in Mexico now—they lived in New York in the past. A verb may a single word, but oftentimes, it combines with auxiliaries or helping verbs like can (could), may (might), will (would), shall (should); have (has, had); be (is, am, are, was, were). We then get combinations like can swim, might know should have asked, has left, is talking, will be changed. We say that verb forms showing different relationships in time show the tense of the verb: lives (present tense), lived (past tense), will live (future tense).

Fill in a single word in each blank. Each word you fill in will be a verb.

6. The sun will \_\_\_\_\_ soon.
7. The storm had \_\_\_\_\_ the boats.

8. A few words can \_\_\_\_\_ a person's life.
9. The company might have \_\_\_\_\_ the schedule.
10. People have \_\_\_\_\_ the rivers and have \_\_\_\_\_ the oceans.
11. Teachers should \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ their students.

C. Most adjective and adverbs change in form to show differences in degree: short, shorter, shortest; soon, sooner, soonest. They fit in after word like very, more, or rather: very short, more beautiful, and rather late. Adjectives fit in between a noun marker and the noun: a short speech, this beautiful day, and an ancient tomb. They tell us which one or what kind: the red dress, a harmless snake, and a clever answer. Adverbs cluster around verbs to answer questions like how, where, and when. Many adverbs (but not all) have the distinctive -ly ending.

<b>How?</b>	She stopped suddenly. The fog lifted slowly. He breathed heavily.
<b>Where?</b>	I started here. We work upstairs. We slept outside.
<b>When?</b>	We will leave soon. He arrived late. She answered immediately.

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences. The word that fits into the first space in each sentence will be an adjective (or word that can be substituted for an adjective). The word that fits into the second space (with the -ly ending) will be an adverb.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ stranger answered \_\_\_\_\_ly.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ snake \_\_\_\_\_ly attacked the bird.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ driver talked to the officer \_\_\_\_\_ly.
4. Their \_\_\_\_\_ customer complained \_\_\_\_\_ly.
5. My \_\_\_\_\_ friend has treated me very \_\_\_\_\_ly.
6. A very \_\_\_\_\_ river \_\_\_\_\_ly barred our way.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ judge spoke worked \_\_\_\_\_ly to the jury.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ employee worked \_\_\_\_\_ly.
9. His \_\_\_\_\_ parents visited him more \_\_\_\_\_ly.