

- Create subject and predicate puzzles with your students! Half of the class should write a complete subject on a slip of paper, while the other half writes a complete predicate. Encourage students to match up with a member from the other half of the class and read their goofy sentences aloud. Discuss with the class if the sentences are grammatically correct.
- As a class, students can make a Sentence Book as one volume in a class Grammar Library. This book can include definitions, examples and illustrations for key concepts like subjects, predicates, and incomplete and run-on sentences.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.funbrain.com/grammar](http://www.funbrain.com/grammar)  
"The Grammar Gorillas" is a fun game for students to play that tests their knowledge of parts of speech.
- [stufun.com/grammar](http://stufun.com/grammar)  
Learn more about sentences and their components on this fun web site!
- [www.eduplace.com/tales](http://www.eduplace.com/tales)  
This Wacky Web Tales,® site enables kids to use their knowledge about parts of speech to create interesting sentences!

### Suggested Print Resources

- Cleary, Brian P. *A Mink, A Fink, A Skating Rink: What is A Noun?* Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis, MN; 1999.
- Cleary, Brian P. *To Root, To Toot, To Parachute: What Is A Verb?* Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis, MN; 2001.
- McKerns, Dorothy and Leslie Motchkavitz. *The Kid's Guide to Good Grammar: What You Need to Know About Punctuation, Sentence Structure, Spelling and More.* NTC/Contemporary Pub. Group, Lincolnwood, IL; 1998.

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#### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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#### TITLES

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## Sentences

### Grades K-4

Grammar consists of a set of rules of language that can be clearly defined and applied to everyday speech and writing. In the classroom, grammar instruction can often be didactic and static, presenting grammar rules as absolute truth and diminishing the knowledge students already possess about language. In order to maximize the usefulness of teaching grammar, students need to be encouraged to discover the rules themselves, based on their own language experiences in real world contexts. Students already instinctively know a great deal about how language works, and as teachers, we need to bring this information to the surface in a dynamic and useful way.

## Introduction

Sentences are groups of words that can tell a complete thought all by themselves. They consist of two main parts, a subject and a predicate. Incomplete sentences do not tell a complete thought by themselves and are usually missing either a subject or a predicate. A run-on sentence is made up of two or more sentences that should stand alone, and this problem can be easily fixed with the use of a conjunction. There are four different kinds of sentences that show four different reasons for communicating — statements, questions, commands and exclamations.

## Vocabulary

**grammar** — The set of rules that explains how we use language.

**sentence** — A group of words that tells a complete thought all by itself. Sentences start with a capital letter and end with punctuation like a period, question mark or exclamation point.

**punctuation** — The use of special marks that help make our writing more clear. Some examples of punctuation are periods, question marks and commas.

**subject** — The part of a sentence that tells who or what a sentence is about. The subject is the person, place or thing doing or being something.

**predicate** — The part of a sentence that tells what the subject does or is.

**noun** — A word that names a person, place or thing.

**verb** — An action word or a being word.

**simple subject** — The main noun that tells exactly who or what a sentence is about.

**complete subject** — The main noun and all the words that tell who or what a sentence is about.

**simple predicate** — The main verb that tells exactly what the subject does or is.

**complete predicate** — The main verb and all the words that tell what the subject does or is.

**incomplete sentence** — A group of words that does not tell a complete thought all by itself.

**statement** — A kind of sentence that tells something and ends with a period. A statement is also called a telling sentence or a declarative sentence.

**question** — A kind of sentence that asks something and ends with a question mark. A question is also called an interrogative sentence.

**command** — A kind of sentence that tells someone to do something and can end with a period or an exclamation point. A command is also called an imperative sentence.

**exclamation** — A kind of sentence that shows strong feeling and ends with an exclamation point. An exclamation is also called an exclamatory sentence.

**run-on sentence** — A group of words that contains two or more sentences that could stand alone.

**conjunction** — A word that can join words or groups of words. Some examples of conjunctions are “and,” “for” and “but.”

**compound sentence** — A group of words that has two sentences joined by a comma and a conjunction.

## Grammar Rules

- Subject-Verb Agreement:
  - The present tense form of a verb must agree with its subject.
  - If the subject is one person (singular), the verb must tell about one person (e.g., “The girl walks quickly.”). Usually, an *-s* is added to most verbs when the subject is singular. (There are exceptions!)
  - If the subject is more than one person (plural), the verb must tell about more than one person (e.g., “The girls walk quickly.”).

## Grammar Tests

- The “I Know That” Test: If a group of words can be used after “I know that” to make a new sentence, then that group of words is probably a complete sentence.
  - Test: I am going to school. Where I read books.
  - I know that I am going to school. (Makes sense = complete sentence)
  - I know that where I read books. (Doesn’t make sense = incomplete sentence)

## Focus Questions

1. What is a sentence? Give an example. What are the clues that help you know it’s a sentence?
2. Is “ate my lunch” a sentence? Why or why not?
3. What is the subject of a sentence?
4. What is a sentence’s predicate?
5. What is a noun? Give some examples.
6. What is a verb? Provide examples.
7. What is a simple subject? A complete subject? Give an example of both.
8. In the sentence, “The black dog plays with her ball,” find the simple predicate and the complete predicate.
9. What is an incomplete sentence? How does it differ from a complete sentence?
10. Describe the four different kinds of sentences. What type of punctuation is required at the end of each kind? Give examples of these kinds of sentences.
11. What is a run-on sentence? How can this type of sentence be fixed?

## Follow-up Activities

- Make a wall of sentences in your classroom! Take sentences from favorite picture books and write them on a piece of butcher paper hanging on the wall. Students can challenge themselves by identifying the kind of sentence.
- Share the Schoolhouse Rock song “Conjunction Junction.” (See [www.apocalypse.org/pub/u/gilly/Schoolhouse\\_Rock/HTML/grammar/conjunction.html](http://www.apocalypse.org/pub/u/gilly/Schoolhouse_Rock/HTML/grammar/conjunction.html) for an online version of the song and lyrics.) Students can write their own songs about conjunctions.
- Write a paragraph on chart paper from a favorite chapter book. Leave out all of the capital letters at the beginning of sentences and the punctuation at the end of sentences. Encourage students to figure out where the missing capitals and punctuation belong to create sentences.
- Students can imagine they are reporters and write news reports in the areas of sports, weather, features, etc. After writing, each student can exchange reports with a partner and identify all the subjects and predicates in his or her partner’s report, using different colored markers for each. (*Continued*)