

In traditional grammar, **word** is the basic unit of language. **Words** can be classified according to their action and meaning, but it is challenging to define.

A **word** refers to a speech sound, or a mixture of two or more speech sounds in both written and verbal form of language. A **word** works as a symbol to represent/refer to something/someone in language to communicate a specific meaning.

Example : 'love', 'cricket', 'sky' etc.

'[A word is the] smallest unit of grammar that can stand alone as a complete utterance, separated by spaces in written language and potentially by pauses in speech.' (David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Morphology, a branch of linguistics, studies the formation of words. The branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of **words** is called *lexical semantics*.

There are several criteria for a speech sound, or a combination of some speech sounds to be called a **word**.

- There must be a **potential pause** in speech and a **space** in written form between two words.

For instance, suppose 'ball' and 'bat' are two different words. So, if we use them in a sentence, we must have a potential pause after pronouncing each of them. It cannot be like "Idonotplaywithbatball." If we take pause, these sounds can be regarded as seven distinct words which are 'I,' 'do,' 'not,' 'play,' 'with,' 'bat,' and 'ball.'

- Every word must contain at least **one root**. If you break this root, it cannot be a word anymore.

For example, the word 'unfaithful' has a root 'faith.' If we break 'faith' into 'fa' and 'ith,' these sounds will not be regarded as words.

- Every word must have a meaning.

For example, the sound 'lakkanah' has no meaning in the English language. So, it cannot be an English word.

A **sentence** is the largest unit of any language. In English, it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full-stop, or a question mark, or an exclamation mark.

The **sentence** is generally defined as a word or a group of words that expresses a thorough idea by giving a statement/order, or asking a question, or exclaiming.

Example:

He is a good boy (statement), Is he a good boy? (question), What a nice weather! (exclaiming).

Ideally, a sentence requires at least one subject and one verb. Sometimes the subject of a sentence can be hidden, but the verb must be visible and present in the sentence. Verb is called the heart of a sentence.

Example:

Do it. (In this sentence, a subject 'you' is hidden but verb 'do' is visible)

“[A sentence is] a group of words, usually containing a verb, that expresses a thought in the form of a statement, question, instruction, or exclamation and starts with a capital letter when written.” - (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press.)

In other words, a complete English sentence must have **three characteristics**:

- First, in written form, a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period (i.e., a full stop) [.), a note of interrogation (i.e., a question mark) [?), or a note of exclamation (i.e., an exclamation mark) [!).
- Second, it must express a complete thought, not fragmented.
- Third, it must contain at least one subject (hidden/visible) and one verb comprising an independent clause. (An independent clause contains an independent subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.)

Types of Sentences

Structurally, sentences are of four types:

- Simple sentence
- Compound sentence
- Complex sentence, and
- Compound-complex sentence.

Simple sentence

A simple sentence must have a single clause (a single verb) which is independent, and it cannot take another clause.

Example:

I always wanted to become a writer. (One clause – one verb)

Compound sentence

A *compound sentence* must have more than one independent clause with no dependent clauses. Some specific conjunctions, punctuation, or both are used to join together these clauses.

Example:

I always wanted to become a writer, and she wanted to become a doctor. (Two independent clauses – two verbs)

Complex sentence

A *complex sentence* also has more than one clause but of one them must be an independent clause and the other/others must be (a) dependent clause(es). There are also some particular connectors for the clauses of a complex sentence to be connected.

Example:

I know that you always wanted to be a writer. (Here, a dependent clause is followed by a connector and an independent clause. The other way around is also possible.)

Compound-complex sentence

A compound-complex sentence (or complex–compound sentence) is a mixture of the features of compound and complex sentences in one sentence. So, it must contain at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Example:

I know that you always wanted to become a writer, but I always wanted to become a doctor. (Here, one dependent clause is followed by a complex connector and two independent clauses with a compound conjunction between them.)

Functionally, sentences are of mainly four types:

- Declarative sentence
- Imperative sentence
- Interrogative sentence, and
- Exclamatory sentence

Declarative sentence:

An assertive sentence (declarative sentence) simply expresses an opinion/feeling, or makes a statement, or describes things. In other words, it declares something. This type of sentence ends with a period (i.e., a full-stop).

Examples:

- I want to be a good cricketer. (a statement)
- I am very happy today. (a feeling)

Imperative sentence:

We use an *imperative sentence* to make a request or to give a command. Imperative sentences usually end with a period (i.e., a full stop), but under certain circumstances, it can end with a note of exclamation (i.e., exclamation mark).

Examples:

- Please sit down.
- I need you to sit down now!

Interrogative sentence:

An *interrogative sentence* asks a question. Interrogative sentences must end with a note of interrogation (i.e., question mark)

Examples:

- When are you going to submit your assignment?
- Do you know him?

Exclamatory sentence.

An *exclamatory sentence* expresses overflow of emotions. These emotions can be of happiness, wonder, sorrow, anger, etc.

Examples:

- What a day it was!
- I cannot believe he would do that!