# BASICS OF ENGLISH

When one talks of grammar, it is essentially about a set of rules for constructing and analysing sentences. Language use has these two aspects: synthesis and analysis. Analysis is based on what are called units of grammar. They are five in number and they constitute a hierarchy, which means that each unit of the higher rank consists of one or more of the units of the next lower rank.

UNITS OF GRAMMAR

Sentence   —   S (largest unit)
Clause   —   Cl
Phrase   —   P
Word   —   W
Morpheme   —   M (smallest unit)

Here is a diagram (called a tree diagram) which shows how these units are ordered:
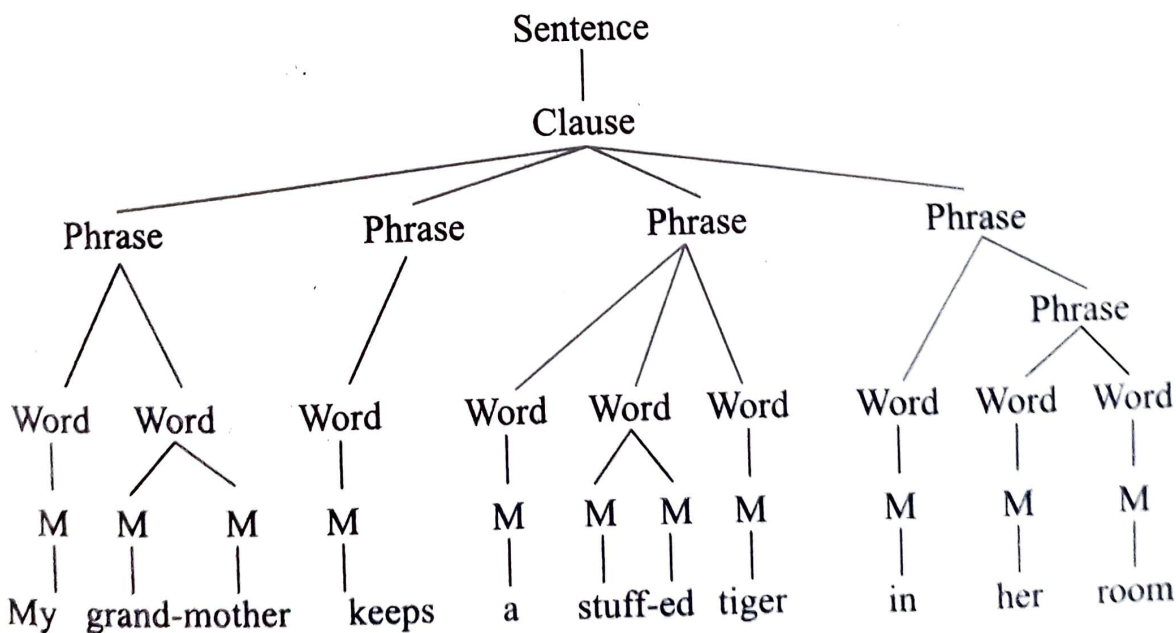
(Note that the word 'stuffed' has two morphemes, stuff and -ed. The word 'grandmother' also has two morphemes: grand and mother. In the latter, both morphemes are independent words while -ed as a suffix in the former is a morpheme which has meaning only when bound to an

independent morpheme. All prefixes and suffixes are bound morphemes in this sense.)

Of the unit called *Word*, there are several classes, the chief among which are Nouns (N), Verbs (V), Adjectives (Adj.) and Adverbs (Adv.). They are marked in the following sentences:

1. College education is very expensive now-a-days.
   N   N   V Adv   Adj   Adv

2. She said that her uncle wore glasses.
    V   N   V   N

3. The floods show no signs of abating.
      N   V   N   N

Two points emerge from the above examples. Some words which are not underlined have to be accounted for. They are of two kinds: In sentence 2, *She* is used in place of a noun and therefore it is as good as a noun (such words are called pronouns). Similarly *her* in the same sentence is roughly like an adjective. In place of *her uncle* one could have *old uncle*. On the other hand, there are words like *that* (sentence 2), *the* and *of* (sentence 3) used primarily to help complete the structure of the sentence.

It is also evident that these words can be identified both formally and functionally. In addition to the formal and the functional criteria, there is meaning attached to them which helps in identifying the word classes.

We will now discuss the types and structure of the first three units, viz., the sentence, the clause and the phrase.

SENTENCE TYPES/PATTERN

Here we are thinking only of what are called simple or basic sentences. All other sentences are merely derivations or transformations of these sentences. These simple sentences are 11 in number:

1. She is a teacher.
2. She is intelligent.
3. She is in the classroom.
4. She laughed.
5. She stood on the table.
6. She has a car.
7. She bought a book.
8. She bought me a book.
9. She put the book on the table.
10. She called her son Hero.
11. Yoga keeps the body fit.

These sentence types have been formed on the basis of the types of verbs and the obligatory elements

1. Linking Verb (V_1) + Noun Phrase (NP) (complement)
2. Linking Verb (V_1) + Adjective Phrase (AdjP) (complement)
3. Linking verb (V_1) + Adverb Phrase of Place (AdvP) (complement)
4. Intransitive Verb (V_1)
5. Intransitive Verb (V_1) + Prepositional Phrase (PP)
6. Intransitive Verb (V_1) + Noun Phrase (NP)
7. Transitive Verb (V_T) + Noun Phrase (NP)
8. Transitive Verb (V_T) + Noun Phrase (NP) + Noun Phrase (NP)
9. Transitive Verb (V_T) + Noun Phrase (NP) + Adverb Phrase (PP)
10. Transitive Verb (V_T) + Noun Phrase (NP) + Noun Phrase (NP)
11. Transitive Verb (V_T) + Noun Phrase (NP) + Adjective Phrase (AdjP)

(A Linking Verb takes a Noun/Adjective/Adverb complement*. An Intransitive Verb is that which does not take an object and therefore cannot be changed into the passive voice. A Transitive Verb is that which takes an object and therefore can be changed into the passive voice.)

Since the simple sentences are one-clause sentences, their structure is Noun Phrase + Verb Phrase (where phrase can comprise either one word or more than one word.) We can represent it thus:

$$S \text{————————} NP + VP. \text{ (S = Sentence)}$$

CLAUSE TYPES

There can be many ways of looking at clause types. For example, we can have Finite Clauses or Non-finite Clauses. Take the following sentences:

1. It would be nice (if everybody came.)
2. The nicest thing would be (for everybody to come.)
3. (That everybody came) is amazing.
4. (Everybody's coming) is amazing.
5. (As she had to cook dinner), we finished work early.
6. (The dinner having been cooked), we started for the theatre early.

The bracketed clauses in 1, 3 and 5 are finite as they have a finite** VP in them; whereas those in 2, 4 and 6 are non-finite as they have a non-finite VP in them.

Again, clauses can be Declarative, Interrogative and Imperative, depending upon whether they are statements, questions or commands:

1. She will comelate tonight. (Declarative)
2. (a) Will she come late tonight? (Interrogative)
   (b) Who will come late tonight ?

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* A complement identifies, describes and locates a noun which may be either

3. Get ready soon. (Imperative)

Finally, we may classify clauses into the following types:

I. Noun Clauses

1. (That she is intelligent) is recognised by everyone.
2. Everyone recognises (that she is intelligent).
3. She told me (the clothes were wet).
4. She told me (that the clothes were wet).
5. (Who set the house on fire) is a mystery.
6. She told me (how she had managed to get a first).
7. I asked her (if/whether she was going to America).

All the bracketed clauses in the above sentences function as nouns.

II. Adverbial Clauses

Clauses which function as adverbs (show or give *place, reason, time, purpose, condition, contrast*) are adverbial:

1. She danced (wherever she found an appropriate audience).
2. She did not go to college (because she was unwell).
3. (When the prime minister arrives), there is going to be a big celebration.
4. She gave me her pen (so that I could write the letter).
5. (If you come punctually), you will get an extra promotion.
6. (Although she lost), she played an exciting game.

III. Adjectival or Relative Clauses

Relative Clauses begin with either a relative pronoun (*who, whom, which, whose, that*) or with a relative adverb (*where, when, that*):

1. Here is the boy (who won the cup).
2. Show me the watch (which/that you bought yesterday).
3. Is there anyone (who can accompany me to the station)?
4. That is the house (where I was born).
5. It was the year [(when) I was born].

Note: English Grammar permits only three functions of a word or a phrase or a clause: Noun, Adjective, Adverb, if we take away the Verb (Phrase)

IV. Comparative Clauses

1. She is always spending more money (than she can earn).
2. This house is less airy (than the one we lived in last year).

V. Prepositional Clauses

1. She was amazed (at what she saw).
2. There is no evidence (of who killed the tiger).

It must be noted that all the types described above are of *Subordinate Clauses*.

There are also *Co-ordinate Clauses* which are mainly of three types:

1. She became lazy (and neglected her work).
2. She went to Bombay (but could not meet her uncle).
3. She was tired (so she lay down to rest).

Clauses can also be correlative:

1. (Either the driver was careless) (or he did not see the cyclist).
2. The constable (both gave a shout) (and jumped to one side).
3. He (neither plays games) (nor does he go to the cinema).

CLAUSE STRUCTURE

The structure of a clause consists of five elements:

Subject	—	S (always an NP)
Verb	—	V (always a VP)
Object	—	O (always an NP)
Complement	—	C (either an NP or an AdjP)
Adverbial	—	A (either an AdvP or a PP; occasionally an NP)

These elements can have the following combinations depending upon the choice of verb:

1. SV — She/was sleeping.
2. SVO — She/wrote/a poem.
3. SVC — She/is/ a writer. She/is/pretty.
4. SVA — She/stood/on the table. She/is/there.
5. SVOO — She/wrote/me/several letters.
6. SVOC — They/appointed/him/secretary. They/proved/him/ wrong.
7. SVOA — She/put/the book/on the table.

PHRASE TYPES

There are three types or classes of phrases:

Noun Phrases (NP), Adjective Phrases (AdjP) and Adverb Phrases (AdvP), all of which have the same basic structure:

$$(M) \quad H \quad (Q)$$

where H stands for head (noun in an NP, adjective in an AdjP and adverb

qualifier(s), i.e. modifiers which follow the head. In the formula given above, M and Q have been put inside brackets. It means that they are optional elements. Thus H alone is the obligatory element without which there can be no phrase.

Here are examples of the Noun Phrase:

Fresh fruit in the shop
M   H   Q

Fresh Fruit
M   H

Fruit in the shop
H   Q

Fruit
H

In Noun phrases M has a limited number of constituents, e.g.
These first three most beautiful girls
M   M   M   M   M

but Q has theoretically no limit, e.g.

Fruit grown in Kashmir, kept in cold storage, transported to the plains
H   Q   Q   Q

and sold in the retail market ...
              Q

In fact, sentences generally become big through addition of Qs.

Examples of the Adjective Phrase:

Very beautiful indeed
M   H   Q

Extremely hot
M   H

Kind enough
H   Q

Pretty
H

Examples of the Adverb Phrase:

Very quickly indeed
M   H   Q

Rather efficiently
M   H

Loudly enough
H   Q

Greedily
H

Besides these, we have one more important type of phrase:

Prepositional Phrase (PP)

It will be seen that a prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and a noun phrase:

in the classroom

on the table

at the post office

It will be in order here to know a little more about prepositions.

Prepositions are important structural words. They have been called, 'hooking words', since they are used to hook nouns, pronouns, and word-groups on to preceding words and word-groups including sentences. The purpose of the hooking is to mark the relation of the noun, pronoun or word-group with another word or word-group. The most frequently used prepositions are: *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to* and *with*.

The different important relations marked by prepositions are:

i. *Time* - I'll see you *at* six in the evening.

ii. *Position* - Please put the book *on* the table.

iii. *Direction* - Do you walk *to* college?

iv. *Association* - She lives *with* her parents,

v. *Agency* - The window must have been broken *by* a football.

vi. *Instrumentality* - Ramu finds it hard to write *with* a pen.

vii. *Manner* - Do you like to travel *by* bus?

The same preposition may express different relations in different contexts:

a. She sat *by* the door. (position)

b. Can you finish this work *by* Sunday? (time)

c. You can go to England, *by* air or *by* sea. (manner)

d. Meet me *at* the station. (position)

e. Don't throw the ball *at* me. (direction)

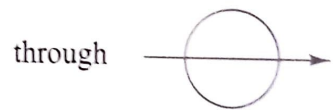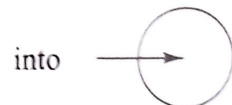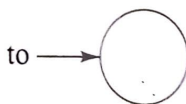f. He goes to college *at* 10 O' clock. (time)

The best way to get a clear picture of the movement, the direction, and the relationship in time and space which the prepositions express is to

Place or Position

across

along

at

between

by

in

on

over

Direction

from

into

off

through

to
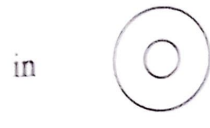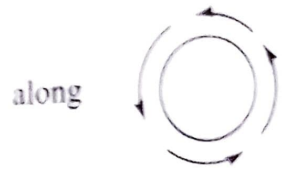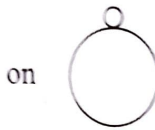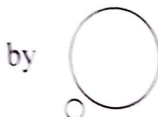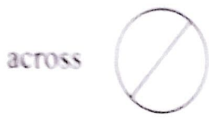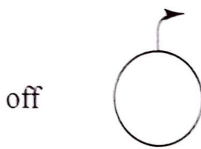
Association

of ⟶   for ⟶   with +

Prepositions at the End of Sentences

A preposition is usually placed before a noun or a pronoun:

    a. He was *in* Bombay *during* July.

    b. The dog jumped *at* her throat.

    This led many grammarians to rule that a preposition should never be placed at the end of a sentence. This is disproved by usage. A preposition is used at the end of a sentence in the following three cases:

    (i) If it governs a relative pronoun which is implied but not expressed: This is the girl I gave the pen *to*. (This is the girl to whom I gave the pen.)

    (ii) If *that* is used instead of the relative pronouns *which* or *whom*:

This is the house that she was born *in.* (This is the house in which she was born.)

(iii) If the sentence is introduced by an interrogative pronoun or adjective: What are you thinking *of*?

Ordinary and Extended Uses of Prepositions

Study the following sentences:

    a. She is sitting *on* a chair. (*in* a chair if it has arms.)
    b. We had a long discussion *on* Prasad's *Kamayani.*
    c. They lived *in* a dark room.
    d. He took no interest *in* this matter.
    e. Malati fell *from* the roof.
    f. It is clear *from* his reply that he is not coming.

It was stated earlier that prepositions are used to hook nouns, pronouns, and word-groups on to preceding words and word-groups. The hooking may mark one of the five relations mentioned previously in a simple way as in *a, c,* and *e* above. This is the ordinary use of prepositions. In many cases, however, the ordinary use is extended to cover non-literal meanings as in *b, d,* and *f* above. It is these extended uses which cause the greatest difficulty.

Given below are a few important prepositions and their ordinary and extended uses. Sentences with odd numbers give the ordinary use and those with even numbers give the extended use of the preposition concerned.

1. She is going *to* the post office.
2. Have you replied *to* her letter?
3. Try to meet me *at* the gate.
4. She is good *at* translation.
5. We drove away *from* the town.
6. Don't draw any conclusions *from* his public speeches.
7. Put the book *on* the table.
8. She spoke *on* the dangers of smoking.
9. He fell *off* the horse and broke his leg.
10. What you are saying is *off* the point.
11. He dived *into* the sea and drowned.
12. You'll get *into* trouble, if you challenge him.
13. The key is *in* the lock.
14. They fell *in* love.
15. She daily passes *by* my house.
16. You should stand *by* your old parents.

19. He filled the cup *with* milk.
20. If you are not *with* me, you are against me.
21. The thief could not climb *over* the wall.
22. Everyone laughed *over* the affair.
23. The cow was *under* the tree.
24. The road is *under* repair.
25. Our school is *beyond* the bridge.
26. Her beauty is *beyond* all praise.
27. The river Gomati flows *through* Lucknow.
28. She is passing *through* many hardships.

Here are a few examples of the important uses of more frequently used prepositions:

1. above = higher than; over (*above* can be used only when there is no contact). The birds were flying *above* the trees, (no contact between birds and trees).

2. across = from one side to the other (of) A new bridge is being built *across* the river.

3. after = later than; next; following in time or order
   (i) Meet me *after* 6 o' clock.
   (ii) She entered the room *after* her mother.

4. along = from one end to the other in a line next to the length of
   (i) They were walking *along* the road.
   (ii) Colourful trees grew *along* the road.

5. among = surrounded by; from person to person; one of
   (i) She built a house *among* the mountains.
   (ii) Divide the money *among* all of you.
   (iii) Count me *among* your followers.

6. at = used to show a point of time; used with something seen as a point in space; towards
   (i) He asked me to meet him *at* 2 o'clock.
   (ii) He asked me to meet him *at* the post office.
   (iii) He threw the ball *at* me.

7. before = in front of; earlier than; in a more important position than
   (i) The thief was brought *before* the magistrate.
   (ii) She returned home *before* 2 o'clock.
   (iii) You should always try to put reason *before* emotion.

8. behind = at the back of; supporting; inferior to
   (i) She stood *behind* her husband.
   (ii) When in trouble, her friends were always *behind* her.

(iii) Because of illness Raju is *behind* the rest of the class in English.

9. below = lower than; lower in amount, rank, etc. than
    (i) The picture hung just *below* the window.
    (ii) Children *below* the age of 5 are not admitted here.
    (iii) A Captain is *below* a General.

10. between = used generally for two reference points to show position or connection or division
    (i) She sat *between* her husband and her father.
    (ii) You can meet him *between* five and six o'clock.
    (iii) She divided the cake *between* her two children.
    (Normally between is used for two, but there are one or two exceptions: We shall share the bill *between* the three of us *or* Rajasthan lies *between* Haryana, Gujarat and U.P.)

11. by = near; beside; by way of; past; by means of; used to show the agent of the action
    (i) When I saw her she was standing *by* the window.
    (ii) Due to urgent work she had to leave *by* the first train.
    (iii) She goes *by* my house every day.
    (iv) *Meghdoot* was written *by* Kalidas.

12. for = used to show a receiver of something; on behalf of; in exchange for; in search of; towards; used for; in support of; during
    (i) She cooked the rice *for* her son.
    (ii) She signed the cheque *for* her husband.
    (iii) She gave me Rs. 10,000 *for* my car.
    (iv) Many Indians went to Canada *for* good jobs.
    (v) The ship sailed *for* Madras last Sunday.
    (vi) This house is *for* living.
    (vii) Most legislators were *for* the Chief Minister and very few against him. .
    (viii) She lived in Bombay *for* two years.

13. from = used to show a starting point in time or in place or in order or position; sent, given, supplied, produced, or provided by; based on; compared with; showing separation or distance
    (i) They worked *from* morning to night.
    (ii) Many birds come *from* Siberia.
    (iii) He rose *from* clerk to director of the company.
    (iv) These umbrellas are *from* Rs. 20.
    (v) Rice *from* Dehradun is sold in many shops.
    (vi) Bread is made *from* flour.

(vii)   She is different from her sister in character.

(viii)   No one noticed his absence *from* class.

(ix)   He lives five miles *from* the city centre.

14.   in = during a period of time; after a period of time; used before the names of towns, cities, countries etc; used to show a state or position

(i)   She answered all the questions *in* 30 minutes.

(ii)   The train will leave *in* two hours.

(iii)   Her sister lived *in* Bombay.

(iv)   He had a knife *in* his hand.

15.   into = to the inside of (shows motion or direction or change of condition)

(i)   She asked me to come *into* the garden.

(ii)   They threw the book *into* the fire.

(iii)   He wants to translate Shakespeare *into* Hindi.

(iv)   The rain changed *into* snow.

16.   in front of = in the position directly before; in the presence of

(i)   As the procession came out of the lane, the children ran *in front of* it.

(ii)   We saw a car standing *in front of* our house.

17.   of = belonging to; from; about; having

(i)   The wood *of* this table is quite old.

(ii)   Nepal is to the north *of* India.

(iii)   He spoke *of* the good times he had known as a young boy.

(iv)   She is a girl *of* much ability.

18.   on = on top of (touching the surface); used to show a general position; used to show a position in time; about

(i)   Can you see the cat *on* the roof?

(ii)   We were informed that the captain was *on* the ship.

(iii)   They were married *on* June 20.

(iv)   She gave a talk *on* socialism.

19.   over = above (without touching); above (touching); vertically above; about

(i)   A sign hung *over* the door.

(ii)   Grass is growing *over* the airport.

(iii)   There was a fan *over* the table.

(iv)   The quarrel was *over* division of property.

20.   since = from a point in past time till now; during the period after

(i)   I haven't seen her *since* last week.

(ii)   It is a long time *since* our last visit to Bombay.

21. through = in at one end and out at the other; by way of; by means of; as a result of
     (i) They passed *through* a big door.
     (ii) The thief came in *through* the open window.
     (iii) I bought this book *through* our teacher.
     (iv) They lost the war *through* bad organisation.

22. to = in the direction of; as far as; until; for the attention or possession of
     (i) She threw the ball *to* me.
     (ii) I walked *to* the foot of the mountain.
     (iii) He is busy from 2 o'clock *to* 4 o'clock.
     (iv) He sent a present *to* his wife.

23. under = lower than; vertically below; less than
     (i) There is a black spot *under* her left eye.
     (ii) He sat *under* the fan.
     (iii) He is *under* 10.

24. with = by means of; in the possession of; in the company of
     (i) She writes *with* an old pen.
     (ii) I left my luggage *with* the station master.
     (iii) She went to America *with* her husband.

Though we are going to discuss the Verb Phrase (VP) in greater detail a little later, it may be stated here that the basic structure of a VP is one or more Auxiliary elements (Aux) and the Main Verb (MV). Here are a few examples, using the verb *write*:

wrote	— MV
might write	— Aux MV
had written	— Aux.MV
was writing	— Aux MV
has written	— Aux MV
might have written	— Aux Aux MV
might be writing	— Aux Aux MV
might be written	— Aux Aux MV
had been writing	— Aux Aux MV
had been written	— Aux Aux MV
was being written	— Aux Aux MV
might have been writing	— Aux Aux Aux MV
might have been written	— Aux Aux Aux MV
might be being written	— Aux Aux Aux MV
had been being written	— Aux Aux Aux MV
might have been being written	— Aux Aux Aux Aux MV

Let us now talk a little more about the Noun Phrase (NP) and the Verb Phrase (VP).

Noun Phrase

As we have seen, the basic structure of the Noun Phrase is (M) H (Q). Among the elements which function as modifiers (M), the following are the most frequent:

Determiners — (a finite set of words which are so called because they determine or limit the noun that follows) (a, the, this, your, many, every, etc.)

Numerals — (three, thirty, first, etc.)

Adjectives — (good, green, weakest, Indian, etc.)

Genitive Noun — (Ram's, India's, girl's, year's, etc.)

Other Nouns — (*diamond* as in diamond ring, *garden* as in garden umbrella, etc.)

Out of these, Determiners, as stated earlier, are a limited set of words. The following table lists the important Determiners according to the kind(s) of noun(s) they go with:

Any kind of Noun	Uncountable Nouns or Countable Singular Nouns	Countable Singular Nouns	Uncountable Nouns	Uncountable Nouns or Countable Plural Nouns	Plural Nouns
the	this	a	much	some	these
my	that	an	little	more	those
your		each	a little	most	many
her		every	a good deal of	all (the)	few
his		either	a great deal of	a lot of	a few
its		neither		lots of	several
our		one		other	two,
their		another		enough	three, etc
which					both (the)
what					
whose					
whichever					
no					
some					
any					

1. *Before any Noun*

Many of these words have other functions besides that of noun determiner. *His*, if said with medium or loud stress, can function as a pronoun:

I have mine and he has *his*.

Her is also the object form of the personal pronoun referring to female beings:

I can *see* her.

The interrogative set may function as pronouns, with no noun following them:

I don't know *which*.

2. Before Singular Countable Nouns

When *either* and *neither* are used as noun determiners, they are not associated with the words *or* and *nor*, as they are when they are used as coordinating conjunctions:

I don't like *either* book.

Neither book has the information I need.

As noun determiners, *either* and *neither* are usually spoken with medium or loud stress.

3. Before Uncountable Nouns

Much as a noun determiner is used only before uncountable nouns; in informal speech it is used only in negative sentences or in affirmative questions which expect a negative answer:

We don't have *much* sugar left in the bowl.

Is there *much* sugar left? (Expected answer: No.)

In affirmative sentences, *much* is used only in formal style:

Much work remains to be done.

Little and a *little* are noun determiners expressing quantity before uncountable nouns. *Little* is negative in its meaning, while *a little* is positive:

There's *little* sugar left, (not very much)

There's a *little* sugar left, (some, though not a great deal)

When *little* and a *little* are used before countable nouns, they refer to size:

Little girls like to play with dolls.

They have a *little* daughter about three years old.

A *good deal* of and *a great deal of* are expressions of quantity occurring before uncountable nouns only. In negative contexts, *a great deal of* is preferred:

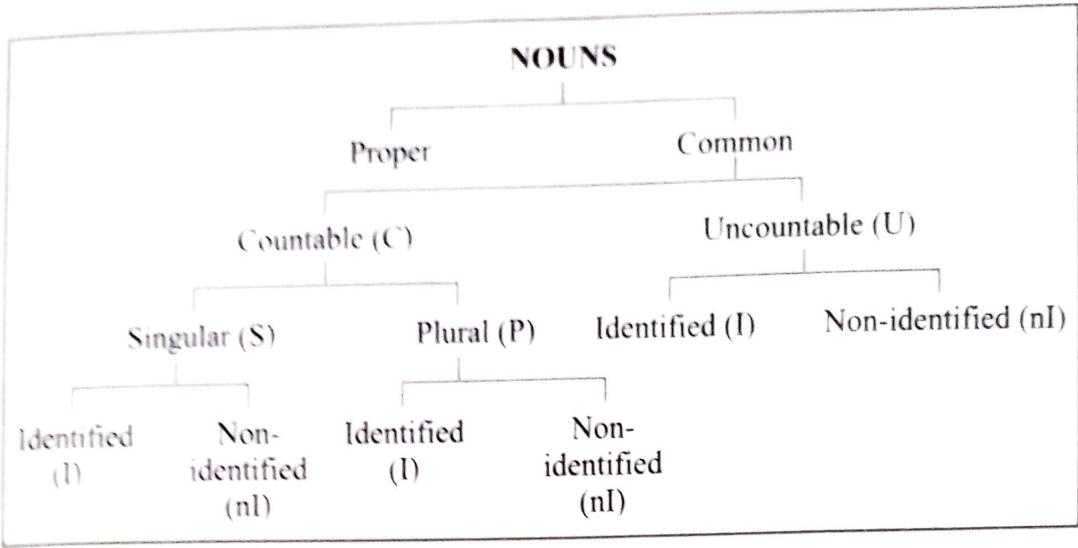They have spent *a great deal* (or *a good deal*) of money.

They don't have *a great deal of* money.

4. Before Uncountable or Singular Countable Nouns

Some and *any* are expressions of quantity when spoken with weak stress. *Some* is used in affirmative contexts and *any* in negative contexts and in questions:

There's *some* sugar in the bowl.

There isn't *any* sugar in the bowl.

NOUNS

```
                              NOUNS
                    ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
                  Proper                         Common
              ┌─────┴─────┐                  ┌──────┴──────┐
        Countable (C)                  Uncountable (U)
      ┌──────┴──────┐              ┌───────┴───────┐
  Singular (S)   Plural (P)   Identified (I)   Non-identified (nI)
  ┌────┴────┐    ┌────┴────┐
Identified  Non-   Identified  Non-
 (I)      identified  (I)   identified
          (nI)              (nI)
```

We can interpret it thus:

Nouns are either Proper (Jaipur, John) or Common (table, chair, money, milk). (Articles can be used only before common nouns.) Common nouns are either Countable (a noun before which *one, two, three*, etc can be used as *table, house, dog*) or Uncountable (a noun before which *one, two, three*, etc cannot be used as *milk, rice, honesty*, etc.). Countable nouns can be either Singular or Plural. Further, all the three types of Common nouns – Countable Singular, Countable Plural and Uncountable – can be either Identified or Non-identified.

Identification can be done in one of the following ways:

1. *Previous Mention*

   I bought a pen and a pencil. The pencil was more expensive than the pen. (The second sentence refers to the pen and the pencil mentioned in the first sentence and therefore they are Identified).

2. *Description*

   The police arrested the man who had stolen the Mayor's car.

3. *Uniqueness*

   He was looking at the sun.
   He is the tallest boy in the class.

4. *Class Reference*

   The dog is a faithful animal.
   (Here *the dog* stands for the class of dogs.)
   Everyone should help the blind.

5. *Context* (Shared knowledge between the interlocutors)
   (Situation: the dining room)
   Please pass me the salt.
   (Situation: a house with a mango tree in it)
   Guest: When did you plant the mango tree?

Indefinite Article

such a ...   what a ...

noise, headache, fever, cold

Uncertainty about a name

There's a Ms Saxena waiting for you.

Amounts

a few days, a bit of brown sugar

one example of action: I'm going to cook a meal.

Two uses: classifying e.g. A tiger is a dangerous animal.

specifying e.g. Yesterday, I saw a tiger.

Generalisations

Man is mortal

Men are mortal   – All men

A dog is a faithful animal   – classifying use of a/an

The dog is a faithful animal   – class identification

The first sentence can be explained by the formula

ULS   – Unlimited Stuff (not limited by time or space)

AI   – Abstract Ideas also take zero article.

(Please remember that all nouns can be identified.)

The constructions that occur at Q (as qualifiers) in a Noun Phrase are:

1. Prepositional Phrases:
   The best girl (in the class)
2. Relative Clauses:
   A girl (whom I admire)
3. Adverbs:
   The girl (upstairs)

Verb Phrase (VP)

The two parts of the Verb Phrase: the Auxiliary and the Main Verb have been mentioned earlier. As was seen in the case of the sentence types listed earlier, the complete Verb Phrase has elements in addition to the Main Verb and in most cases these elements are obligatory, i.e. without them the sentence would not be complete. It is, therefore, more appropriate to say that the Verb Phrase consists of Auxiliary and the Main Verb Phrase (MVP) which would include both the Main Verb and the obligatory elements after it. Thus:

$$VP \longrightarrow Aux + MVP$$

The Auxiliary part has three components: Tense, Modality and Aspect.

Tense is one of the two forms that an English verb uses to indicate time e.g. walk-walked; eat-ate.

   Modality is the way in which a speaker expresses his attitude towards a situation. In English this is usually done by using Modal auxiliaries like *can, may, shall, will, must* and their past tense forms. These attitudes include such concepts as ability, possibility, probability, permission, obligation, necessity, etc. For example, *can* in the sentence *She can swim* denotes ability, and *may* in *It may rain tonight* denotes probability or likelihood.

   The term *Aspect* stands for the relationship between an activity and the passage of time, which may be either of *incompleteness* or of *current relevance*. Current relevance always implies two points of time. What happens at one point of time has relevance (result/effect) at another point of time. These two aspects (traditionally called continuous and perfect) combine with features of Tense and Modality in the English Verb Phrase. Here are examples of the two aspects:

   I have read the newspaper.
   I had read the newspaper.   }——   *Perfect Aspect*
                                          (current relevance)

   I will have read the newspaper, etc.

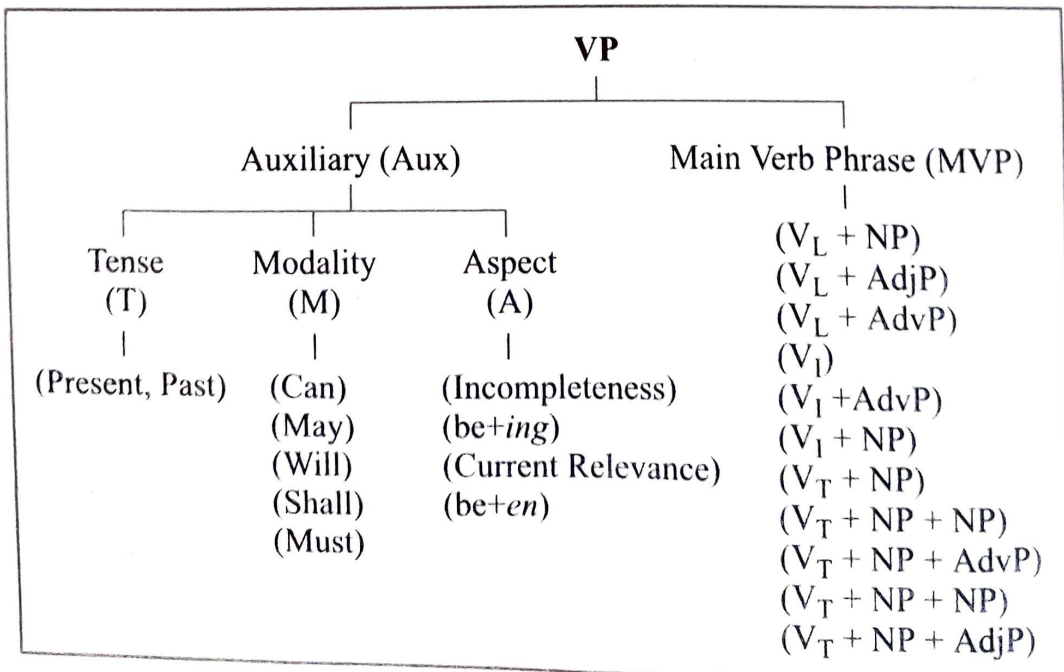   I am reading the newspaper.
   I was reading the newspaper. }——   *Continuous Aspect*
                                          (inco-mpleteness)

   I will be reading the newspaper, etc.

   Thus the structure of the Verb Phrase can be represented as shown in the table below:

VP

Auxiliary (Aux)			Main Verb Phrase (MVP)
Tense (T)	Modality (M)	Aspect (A)	$(V_L + NP)$
			$(V_L + AdjP)$
			$(V_L + AdvP)$
(Present, Past)	(Can)	(Incompleteness)	(V_1)
	(May)	(be+*ing*)	$(V_1 + AdvP)$
	(Will)	(Current Relevance)	$(V_1 + NP)$
	(Shall)	(be+*en*)	$(V_T + NP)$
	(Must)		$(V_T + NP + NP)$
			$(V_T + NP + AdvP)$
			$(V_T + NP + NP)$
			$(V_T + NP + AdjP)$

It is thus obvious that in traditional terms what is called Tense is a mixture of all the three elements of the Auxiliary, viz., Tense, Modality and Aspect. For example, in the Verb Phrase *may have been writing* we have all the three elements and yet according to common grammar the above phrase will be labelled as present perfect continuous tense. Its true analysis will be:
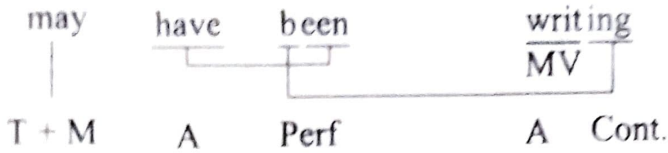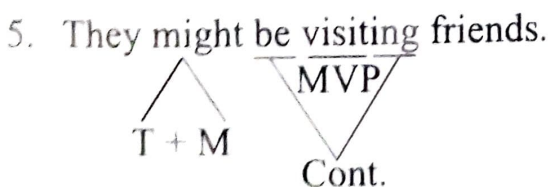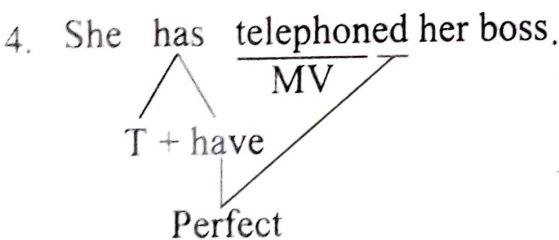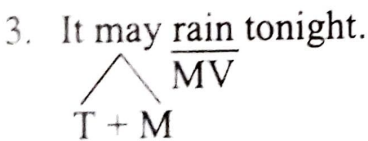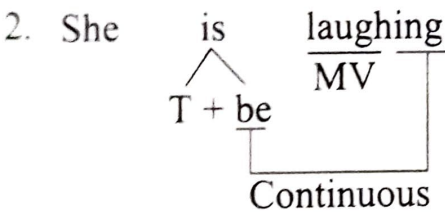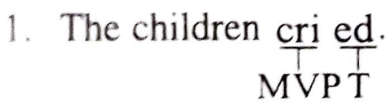

T means tense,

A means aspect. (Perfect is current)

From the above it is clear that it is possible to have both the Perfect and the Continuous Aspects in the same Verb Phrase.

Given below are the diagrammatic analyses of some of the typical Verb Phrases:

1. The children cri ed.

2. She is laughing

3. It may rain tonight.

4. She has telephoned her boss.

5. They might be visiting friends.

A more pragmatic approach to the study of Verbs and Verb Phrases may be the following.

1. She *laughed*.
2. She *is laughing*.
3. She *has been laughing*.
4. She *may have been laughing*.

These are four instances of the verb phrase.

C_{OADV} means adverbial object complement. C_{ON} means noun object complement. C_{OADJ} means adjectival object complement. A complement does three things:

The above five angles enable us to analyse all verb phrases:

1. She laughed.

   M   F

2. She is laughing.

   be + F   M /continuous

3. She   has   been   laughing.

   have + F   perfect continuous

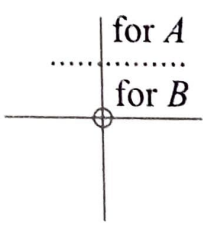4. She may have been laughing.

   M + F   perfect continuous

Notes:

1. M = Main; F = Finite; M in fourth sentence = Modality
2. The tense in each sentence is <u>Present</u>, though in the fourth sentence it indicates past time. There is no one-to-one correspondence between tense and time in English.

Before ending this discussion on the Verb Phrase it may be useful to describe the English tense system in some detail. A Tense is a form of the verb which shows time. Thus, there are only two tenses in English: The present and the past. But traditional grammarians came out with twelve so-called tenses. They did not recognize aspects of incompleteness and current relevance. Further, they confused time and tense and considered 'future' also as a tense.

We will, therefore, analyse all the twelve so-called tenses. Before we did that let us remind ourselves of the fact that there are two entities – *form* and *function*. *Function* comes first and then the *form*.

Present Simple

Form

1. First Finite form of the verb
2. If the subject is third person, singular number, |s| or |es| is added to the verb.

for A

for B

Function

A. – habit
   – profession
   – regular or repeated activities
   – general or universal
B. – immediate perception

1. There are three pronunciations
of the plural morpheme |s| |z| |ɪz|
a. If the last sound is voiceless it is |s|
If the last sound is voiced it is |z|
If the last sound is one of the
following |s| |z| |t| |dʒ| |ʃ| |ʒ|
it is |ɪz|

Present Continuous

Form	Function
be + -ing	incompleteness
	in the present

1. am with first person
singular subject
2. is with third person
singular subject
3. are in all other cases

Present Perfect

Form	Function
have/has + -en	current relevance
	in the present

1. has if the subject
is third person,
singular
2. have in all other cases

Present Perfect Continuous

Form	Function
has/have + -en	incompleteness
be + -ing	in the present
has/have been -ing	

1. has with third person
singular subject
2. have in all other cases

Past Simple

Form	Function
-ed	Pastness

Past Perfect

Form

Pre-past Past

had + -en
(past-perfect is used for
the pre-past)

Function
currrent relevance
in the past

Past Perfect Continuous

Form

Pre-past Past

Function
currrent relevance
and incompleteness
in the past

Future Simple

Form
shall/will
plus first non-finite
form of the verb

Function
Futurity

Future Continuous

Form
well/shall
plus be + -ing

1. shall with the first
   person
2. will with the second
   and third persons

Function
incompleteness
in the future

Future Perfect

Form
will/shall
plus have + -en

Function
current relevance
in the future

Future Perfect Continuous

Form

Function
current relevance
in the future plus
incompleteness

Note: ∿ denotes imcompleteness

In modern English there is hardly any distinction between *shall* and *will* except in judicial and legal pronouncements where *shall* is used for something mandatory. Whenever intention is involved, *going to* is the preferred form. However, *going to* also shows possibility or likelihood as in *It is going to rain.*

So far we have been discussing the grammar of the simple sentence. It is a basic type of sentence which is always a statement, affirmative, active, and has only one main verb. In addition, it has a fixed word order according to which the elements are arranged in the following sequence:

Subject	Verb	Object	Complement	Adverbial (Adjunct)
S	V	O	C	A

For proficient use of a language, however, one has to go beyond the simple sentence types. This is not a difficult thing to do because all non-simple or non-basic sentences are merely transformations of the basic types. Therefore, all that one has to do is to learn the ways of transforming basic into non-basic types of sentences.

We are first going to take up the most important transformations.

Statement into Question

For learning question transformation the knowledge of the following special verbs is important: *is, am, are, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, shall, should, will, would, can, could, may, might, must, dare (to), need (to), ought (to), used (to).*

There are two main types of questions: *Wh-* questions (those which begin with words like *when, where, which, who, how*) and *Yes-No* questions (those which can be answered either by saying *yes* or *no*).

The special verbs listed above are used for forming *Yes-No* questions. The word order of such a question requires that the special verb should be placed first, followed by the subject and everything else afterwards:

Are you going to Delhi?
May we go now?
Has she written to you?
Do children dream like adults?

In the case of *Wh-* questions, the *Wh-* word comes first. It is followed by the verb (the auxiliary verb, if there is one, comes first) and then by the subject. The subject-verb inversion is necessary in *Wh-* questions, except when the *Wh-* word itself is the subject:

There is inversion in all other cases:

> Which doors have you painted?
> When will she return?
> How did you do it?

Tag Questions

These are questions added to the end of a statement. They ask for confirmation of the truth of the statement. If the statement is positive, the answer expected is 'Yes'. It is 'No' if the statement is negative.

The following rules are usually observed in forming tag questions:

1. If the statement is positive, the tag question is negative, and vice versa.

2. If any one of the 24 special verbs occurs in the statement, it is repeated in the tag question. Otherwise, *do, does* or *did* is used.
   Here are a few examples:

> They were quarrelling, weren't they?
> She teaches English, doesn't she?
> They sold the house, didn't they?
> He shouldn't sleep, should he?
> They could not answer your question, could they?
> It is becoming intolerable, isn't it?
> He will come, won't he?

Affirmative into Negative

If the affirmative sentence has any one of the 24 special verbs, the negative is formed merely by the addition of *not* after the special verb:

> They might refuse to answer.
> They might not refuse to answer.
> He will issue a public statement.
> He will not issue a public statement.
> We ought to help beggars.
> We ought not to help beggars.

In the case of sentences having other than these special verbs, *does* or *did* is used before *not*:

> The police rescued the girl.
> The police did not rescue the girl.
> They like pop music.
> They do not like pop music.
> She teaches history.
> She does not teach history.

Active into Passive

The structure of an active sentence is: $NP_1 + V_T + NP_2$
(NP = Noun Phrase: V_T = Transitive Verb).

The passive sentence has the following structure:

$NP_2 + be + V_{en} + by + NP_1$

(be = the proper form of 'be', i.e. *be, being, is, am, are, was, were;* V_{en} = the third form of the verb)

Here is an example:

She wrote a letter.	(Active)
NP_1 V_T NP_2	
A letter was written by her.	(Passive)
NP_2 be V_{en} NP_1	

The following points must be noted:

(a) In the passive construction, NP takes up the object position and therefore it must take the object form (*he, she, I, we, they become him, her, me, us, them,* respectively).

(b) The tense and number of the *be* form in the passive are decided according to the tense of the verb and the number of NP_2 in the active sentence.

Unless the mention of the agent represented by NP_1 is necessary, the 'by + NP_1' are not included in the passive sentence:

Someone has broken the window.	(Active)
NP_1 V_T NP_2	
The window has been broken	(Passive)
NP be $+V_{en}$	

Given below is a scientific account of the passive transformation. Every active sentence has the following structure:

NP_1 V_T NP_2

The changes required for passivisation are as follows.

Examples

| 1a | NP_2 V_T NP_1 | 1a | Transpose the NPs. (Take NP_1 to the position of NP_2 and vice versa). |
| 1b | I-me; we-us; you-you; he-him; she-her; it-it; they-them | 1b | Change the case where necessary (in the case of pronouns). |

2. The general rule of passivisation is to be applied: be + -en [be has eight forms: be, being, been; is am, are; was, were]

3a She likes <u>rich colours</u>.
NP₁   NP₂
Rich colours are liked
by her.

3a If V_T is ordinary, use *is* or *am* or *are* or *was* or *were* before the -en form.

3b <u>They</u> killed <u>many snakes</u>.
NP₁   NP₂
Many snakes were killed
by them.

3b The choice out of the above five forms is made by combining the tense of V_T and the number of NP₂.

3c <u>She</u> can write <u>letters</u>.
NP₁   NP₂
Letters can be written
by her.

3c If the V_T contains a special verb *be* is added to the special verb in passivisation.

3d <u>She</u> was flying <u>kites</u>
NP₁   NP₂
Kites were being flown
by her.

3d If the V_T has -ing in it, *being* is added to the finite verb in passivisation.

3e <u>Monkeys</u> have broken
    NP₁
    <u>the glass</u>.
    NP₂
The glass has been broken
by the monkeys.

3e If the V_T has -en in it, *been* is added to the finite verb in passivisation.

It is wrong to think that active and passive constructions are interchangeable. It is the context and the situation which determine the use of one or the other.

The main situations in which the passive is used are as follows.
(i) When we do not know who performed the action:
    (a) This clock *was made* in Switzerland.
    (b) Our house *was constructed* in 1969.
(ii) When it is thought undesirable or unnecessary to mention the performer of the action:
    (a) She *was given* some wrong advice when she first joined college.
    (b) He *was promised* promotion after completing the training period.

(iii) When we wish to emphasise the 'receiver' rather than the 'performer' of the action:
  (a) Nehru *was sent* to England for studying law.
  (b) The reply *was received* after a month,

(iv) In situations of social and historical interest:
  (a) 'Meghdoot' *was written* by Kalidas.
  (b) Penicillin *was discovered* by Sir Alexander Fleming,

(v) When the active subject is self-evident from the context:
  (a) Dr. Rajendra Prasad *was awarded* 'Bharat Ratna'.
  (b) Dr. Homi J. Bhabha *was appointed* Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.

(vi) For describing scientific processes (where objectivity is needed):
  (a) Various types of bit *are used*, according to the nature of the rock being drilled.
  (b) To make a hole in the hardest rocks two or more cutters *are set* in the head of the bit.

(vii) In newspaper reports:
  (a) Over two hundred people were *killed* in a plane crash yesterday.
  (b) The Yamuna *was expected* to cross the danger mark – 672 ft – early on Sunday.

It is rare to mention the performer in the passive construction. Only in type (iv) above is the performer generally mentioned.

More than One Main Verb

A sentence which has two or more main verbs is either complex or compound. Usually complex and compound sentences are formed with the help of *conjunctions*. A complex sentence has, besides the main clause, one or more subordinate clauses. A compound sentence has more than one independent clause which are coordinate. While coordinate clauses are joined together by coordinating conjunctions (like *and, or, so, but*), the main clause and the subordinate clause(s) are joined together by subordinating conjunctions (like *after, although, as, because, before, if, however, since, that, till, unless, until, while*).

Here are a few examples of complex and compound sentences:

Complex Sentences

Though she was ill, she came to the college.
He disappeared before I could talk to him.
She sent word that she was going to America.
There can be no compromise unless you radically change.

Compound Sentences

Sudha teaches history and Sheila teaches music.

You can go to a hill station or go to a bird sanctuary.

They played many tunes but did not get any applause.

Conditional Sentences

The usual structure of a conditional sentence is: If *P* then *Q*.

It can take three important forms depending upon the kind of condition sought to be stated:

1. If I go to Bombay I will meet the sheriff.
2. If I went to Bombay I would meet the sheriff.
3. If I had gone to Bombay I would have met the sheriff.

Sentences 1 and 2 refer to future time, 3 to past time. Sentence 1 states an 'open' condition. The condition has an almost 50-50 chance of being fulfilled. Sentence 2 states an 'unreal' or 'hypothetical' condition. The speaker considers the possibility of the condition being fulfilled, remote. Sentence 3 states a 'rejected' condition. It was just not fulfilled.

Indirect Speech

It is a style used to tell what somebody said without repeating the actual words. It is also called Reported Speech since someone reports someone else's, or one's own speech:

A to B:　I'm happy you've passed.

B to C:　A said (that) he was happy I had passed.

　　　　　A told me (that) he was happy I had passed.

Depending upon the purpose of the original speaker, the reporter can use verbs like *ask, request, suggest, advise, warn, order* in the indirect speech. Generally, in reporting past events demonstrative adjectives (this, these) and adverbs of time and place (now, here, etc.) are changed into their related forms showing distance of reference, time and place (that, those, then, there, etc.). Further, all personal pronouns (I, you, we, etc.) and possessives (my, yours, etc.) are changed into third person (he, she, they, his, her, hers, etc.). Also, if the reporting verb is in the past tense, the verbs in the reported speech are also changed into past tense forms:

A to B:　I know I have failed.

B to C:　A told me (that) he knew he had failed.

Reporting the two types of question (*wh-* and *yes-no*) requires a somewhat different treatment:

A to B	Where do you live?
B to C	A asked me where I lived.
A to B	Are you a vegetarian?
B to C	A asked me if I was a vegetarian.

(The subject-verb inversion of the original question is undone in the indirect speech).

The most important thing to remember in changing Direct into Indirect Speech, however, is that *the changes effected are situational, not mechanical*.

Sentences Beginning with 'It'

1. Sentences showing time, weather and distance:
    (a) It is 7 o'clock.
    (b) It is hot.
    (c) It is 10 miles from here.
2. Certain sentences used in colloquial and informal English:
    (a) It is true that she is charming. (informal)
        That she is charming is true. (formal)
    (b) It is a mystery how she got that idea. (informal)
        How she got that idea is a mystery. (formal)
    (c) It is doubtful whether she will come tonight. (informal)
        Whether she will come tonight is doubtful. (formal)
3. Sentences which have verbs like *happen, seem, appear* in them and which cannot begin with a *that*-clause.
    It happened that she was not at home.
    It seems that the train is late.
    It appears that she is not a dancer.

Another non-basic type of sentence frequently used is the one beginning with *there*:

    There is a book on the table.
    There are some people in the room.
    There are many Indians in Africa.

In such sentences the verb comes before the subject and the grammatical number of the former must be the same as that of the latter.

► Exercises ◄

1. *Change the following sentences into their corresponding negatives and questions.*
    1. The judge held the prisoner guilty.
    2. Ram resembles his father.