



Help with sentence construction: rules and examples

To make a sentence you need to be aware of the following three points:

1. A sentence is a group of words that makes sense on its own.

Cheese, car, house, table on Tuesday.

This isn't a sentence - it doesn't make sense.

I parked my car next to my house.

This is a sentence. You can understand what it means. It makes sense on its own.

2. When writing, you must use the correct punctuation.

Correct punctuation will show the reader where the sentences begin and end.

A sentence must:

- Begin with a capital letter.
- End with a full stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!).

NOTE: People sometimes confuse the punctuation to use at the end of a sentence. You can use commas (,), colons (:) or semicolons (;) in your writing, but they should never be used instead of a full-stop.

3. A sentence should always include a verb and a subject.

A sentence must contain:

- A verb - this is often a 'doing' word but it can also be a 'state':
eg like, is, cooking, walked, need.
- A subject - this is the person, or the thing, that is doing the verb:
eg I, Beppe, Tuesday, dog, you, table, the weather.

Examples of sentences showing **verbs** (highlighted + underlined) and **subjects** (highlighted):

Last week **Peggy redecorated** the pub.

Are you hungry yet?

Tuesday was very rainy and cold.

If the sentence is an instruction or a request, you sometimes don't need a subject:

Be quiet.

Please **sit** down.

More information about sentences:

Sentences can be short, or long: there's no correct number of words it should be. The length of the sentence depends on what you want to say and the effect you want to achieve.

NOTE: If your sentences go on for many lines, check you haven't put several sentences together as one sentence.

Remember: you don't always need to write in sentences, it depends on what you're writing. For example, a shopping list doesn't need sentences but a job application does.