

NARRATOR: The basic sentence. A sentence is the basic unit of written communication. A complete sentence in formal English has a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought.

The subject is the noun or pronoun that is doing the main action in a sentence, and the verb is the action being done. Sarah painted. In this sentence, the subject is Sarah and the verb is painted.

Although this is technically a complete sentence, writers usually give more information in their sentences. One of the most basic ways to add information to a sentence with an action verb is with direct and indirect objects. Sarah painted a picture. The action verb, painted, now has a direct object, picture, which answers the question, what did Sarah paint? She painted a picture.

Many action verbs can also take an indirect object, which is an indirect recipient of the action. Sarah painted me a picture. The verb, painted, now has an indirect object, me. For whom did Sarah paint the picture? For me.

Because linking verbs do not indicate an action being done, they do not take objects. Instead, a linking verb connects the subject of the sentence to an adjective or a noun that describes or renames it. Sarah feels tired. The linking verb, feels, connects the subject, Sarah, to the adjective, tired.

How does Sarah feel? Tired.

Sarah is an artist. The linking verb, is, connects the subject, Sarah, to the noun, artist. What is Sarah? An artist.

These sentence foundations can be expanded on in countless ways, but one of the basic patterns must always be in place. For more details on correctly forming sentences, see the other video modules on grammar, punctuation, and style. For now, remember. If you understand the basic sentence patterns and use them correctly, you will be a stronger writer.

