Sentence Base

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought.

A sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

The subject names the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about.

The predicate informs the reader about the subject and contains the verb.

Subject  Predicate
Ex:  My father  lives in Colorado.

Sometimes, a subordinating conjunction will prevent a clause that contains both a subject and a predicate from actually standing alone as a sentence.

Subject  Predicate
Ex:  Since my father lives in Colorado...

This is not a complete sentence because the subject “my father” and the predicate “lives in Colorado” are, in grammatical terms, functioning as a noun phrase together, which means “Since my father lives in Colorado” does not contain an active predicate.

Sometimes a sentence will need a complement to sound complete. The four types of complements are direct objects, indirect objects, predicate nominatives, and predicate adjectives.

The direct object is a noun or a pronoun that is the target of the verb. To locate a direct object, ask the question “What?” or “Whom?” after encountering the verb.

Ex:  The cat drank the water.
(The cat drank what?)

The indirect object answers “To whom?,” “For whom?,” “To what?,” or “For what?” about the verb.

Ex:  Fred bought his girlfriend a diamond ring / Fred bought a diamond ring for his girlfriend. (Fred bought a diamond ring for whom?)

The predicate nominative is a noun or a pronoun that follows a linking verb (which is typically a form of “be”) and identifies, renames, or explains the subject.

Ex:  Jesus is Lord.
Karen is a dentist.

The predicate adjective is an adjective that identifies, renames, or explains the subject.

Ex:  This movie is boring.