

Verb patterns and structures

English sentences follow certain patterns. In this section we will first consider some of the commonest verb patterns and then some of the other important structures, both literary and conversational.

We have already learned that a sentence consists of two main parts – the subject and the predicate. The subject must contain a noun or a pronoun. It may also contain other words like articles (a/an and the), possessives (my, your etc.) or demonstratives (this, that, these and those). The predicate must contain a verb. Sometimes the subject is omitted and then we get one-word sentences.

Stop. Who goes there?

Listen. I want to tell you something.

Then there are sentences of two words – they just consist of a noun and an intransitive verb.

Examples are:

Time flies. (Subject – time; verb – flies)

Water boils. (Subject – water; verb – boils)

Dogs bark. (Subject – dogs; verb – bark)

But we can't get far with short sentences of this kind, so we will have to construct more elaborate sentence patterns.

Sentence pattern 1

Subject	Intransitive verb + adverb
Granny	is coming on Monday.
A gentle breeze	was blowing across the meadow.
The children	are playing upstairs.
The sun	has already risen.

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The storm	has at last subsided.
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Notes

Adverbs are words that provide information about the time, manner or place of the activity mentioned by the verb. Adverbs may also indicate the frequency with which an action is done. Examples are: *carefully, eagerly, anxiously* (manner), *yesterday, soon, now, then, always* (time and frequency), *there, here, upstairs, somewhere* (place).