# TYPES OF SENTENCES

**By the end of this lesson you should be able to:**

* Identify the four different types of sentences.
* Write a declarative, interrogative, imperative and an exclamatory sentence.

**Introduction**

A sentence is a group of words that are arranged correctly in order to express a complete statement or idea.

**REMEMBER:** A complete statement or idea makes sense on its own. At a bare minimum, a sentence must have a subject (a person or thing that is being or doing something), and a predicate (something being done by the subject, or information about what the subject is / was / will be).

The subject of the sentence can be stated, or it can be “understood” – i.e. not stated explicitly, but able to be inferred from the context. This is the case with commands: “Be on time for the meeting” has the *implied* subject, “you”. In other words it is implied that “**YOU** must be on time for the meeting”.

But the statement, “Always comes to class late” is not a sentence because it really does not have a subject, and we can only guess who the subject might be. Here we are left asking ourselves, who always comes to class late?

A sentence thus expresses a **complete thought**. We do not have to ask questions to fully understand the statement.

It is important to remember that a sentence must:

1. Begin with a *capital* letter. For example: **The** people are becoming restless.
2. End with a *full stop, question mark or exclamation*. For example: Where is the library**?**

But don’t be fooled! Not every statement that starts with a capital letter and ends with an appropriate punctuation mark is a sentence. People often write fragments of sentences by mistake. Such a statement might look like a sentence at first glance, but when you read it carefully, it is lacking a subject or a predicate, or it expresses an **incomplete thought**. You need to check your own writing vigilantly to make sure that you ALWAYS write full (complete) sentences.

**Types of sentences**

There are four main types of sentences and each of them has a particular purpose.

1. ***Declarative Sentence*** – this type of sentence expresses a statement or fact and ends with a full stop.

Example: Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years.

1. ***Interrogative Sentence*** – its purpose is to ask a question. An interrogative sentence ends with a question mark if it is used to ask a direct question. It can also end with a full stop if it is used to ask an indirect question.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Example: Who is the President of South Africa? [Direct question]

He asked who the President of South Africa is. [Indirect question]

1. ***Imperative Sentence*** – it is used to give commands and requests, and ends with a full stop.

Example: Pay your taxes on time. [Giving a command]

Please ensure that your tax is paid on time. [Making a request]

1. ***Exclamatory Sentence*** – this type of sentence is used to express emotion. It ends with an exclamation mark.

Example: What a peaceful country we live in!

. ? ! .

Here are some useful questions you can ask to determine whether a group of words make a sentence.

* Do the words express a *complete thought* and do they make sense?
* Does the group of words begin with a capital letter?
* Does the group of words end with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark?

**Activity 1**

For each of the topics below, write 4 sentences, 1 for each type of sentence:

1. **Elections**

1. **Democracy**

1. **Government**

1. For more information on Interrogative Sentences refer to the lesson plan on Question marks. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)