

**Lecture One  
Basic Sentence Patterns  
in English  
The verb Be and linking verbs  
(Patterns 1+2+3+4+5)**

The speakers of any language do not speak by stringing words together randomly. They arrange their words carefully according to certain rules related to their language. The structure of English sentence can be classified according to form ( noun, verb , adj , etc. ...) or according to function ( subject , verb, direct object, etc....) . Stageberg classifies sentence structure according to form. He mentions nine basic sentence patterns in English . **Our purpose is to examine these basic sentence patterns with examples and to show the differences between some of these patterns in English and Arabic where required. The objectives of these three lectures are:**

- 1. To enable the students to produce grammatical and meaningful sentences.**
- 2. To help students write good paragraphs and essays by using different sentence patterns.**

Patterns 1+2+3 are related to the verb Be as the main verb in a sentence .

Patterns 4+5 are related to the Linking verbs (LV)

Pattern 6 is related to the intransitive verbs

Patterns 7+8+9 are related to the transitive verbs

It is to be mentioned that the numbers of patterns are just for classification , so they are not required to be memorized .

In the first three patterns the main verb is the verb Be .

Definitions of the verb Be and the linking verbs

The verb **Be** in English is the only verb that has **eight forms** : am, is, are, was, were, be, been , and being.

Some students make mistakes in producing ( writing and speaking) these patterns because the verb Be does not exist in Arabic in the same way that it is in English. Arabic has no present form for is, are, am :

زيد معلم.

الطالب مجتهد.

الاولاد في المدرسة.

But it has the past form for was and were:

كان الطالب في المدرسة.

Pattern 1 :	N	<b>Be</b>	Adj
	Huda	<b>is</b>	clever.
	They	<b>are</b>	happy.
	He	<b>was</b>	alone.
	The lecture	<b>may be</b>	interesting.

This pattern is used for description.

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Pattern 2 :    N                            Be                            Adv

The girl is here .

The game will be at three o'clock.

The students are in the class.

The verb **be** in this pattern means " be located or occur".

.....  
Pattern 3 :    N<sup>1</sup>    Be    N<sup>1</sup>

My friend is a doctor.

You will be good teachers.

He has been an honor student.

The two nouns in this pattern have the same referent . for example, in the example my friend and a doctor refer to the same person.

The meaning of **be** in this pattern is " be identified or classified as" .

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The patterns related to the linking verbs are 4 + 5

Linking verbs in English are : seem, appear, become, grow, remain, taste, look, feel, smell, sound, , get, continue, go, work, stand, run, and prove.

Pattern 4 : N LV Adj

The teacher looks sharp today.

The party may become lively.

Your sister may have seemed friendly.

.....

Pattern 5 : N<sup>1</sup> LV N<sup>1</sup>

They appeared good friends.

Ahmed seems a good teacher.

The cake tastes sweet.

Most of these verbs are used as a linking verb or as an ordinary verb ( transitive , intransitive , or both) as go, stand , run, prove, grow, work, get, look , continue, taste, feel , .... :

The well ran dry . ( linking verb)

Ahmed is running quickly. ( intransitive verb)

Ahmed runs his office well. ( transitive verb)

Notice that well in the first sentence is a noun **بئر** whereas in the last sentence is an adverb of manner which means *in a good manner*.

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The verb Be vs. Linking verb

The verb Be is a linking verb but it differs from the other linking verbs in forming yes / no question, tag question, and the negative :

Be in the pattern	N	Be	Adj
Linking verbs in the pattern	N	LV	Adj

Be

Affirmative : Jane is happy.

Yes / no question : Is Jane happy?

Tag question : Jane is happy, isn't she?

Negative statement: Jane is not happy.

Linking verbs:

Affirmative : Jane appears happy.

Yes/np question: Does Jane appear happy?

Tag question : Jane appears happy, doesn't he?

Negative: Jane does not appear happy.

The same distinction can be made between

	N <sup>1</sup>	be	N <sup>1</sup>
and	N <sup>1</sup>	LV	N <sup>1</sup>

The difference between **be** and the **linking verb** is that the verb **be** as a main verb is used to form yes/ no question, tag , question and negative. The **linking verb** needs the verb ( do) to form yes/ no question, tag question , and the negative.

**Lecture Two**  
**Basic Sentence Patterns**  
**in English**  
**The intransitive and transitive verbs**  
**(patterns 6+7)**

These patterns are related to the intransitive and transitive verbs:

The intransitive verb is the verb that does not take an object after it i.e. it is self-sufficient, whereas the transitive verb needs an object to complete its meaning.

The pattern of intransitive verb

6.     N       Intran. V

    The man    fished.

    The worker hammered .

The verb in this pattern is intransitive, i.e. one that is self-sufficient, in the sense that it can be used alone with its subject without an object.

**The intransitive verb may be modified by a single word or by a group of words (adverbs or adverbials) :**

The man fished early.

The man was fishing in the evening.

The man was fishing when we came.

Some intransitive verbs do not occur alone but take an adverb or adverbial as a modifier. Some examples are: lurk, lurch, sneak, lie, tamper, and live. It is to be noted that the verb live takes an adverbial modifier in three meanings:

He lives in Iraq. ( live = reside)

He lives on soy bean products. ( live= stay alive)

He lived in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (live= be alive)

If you are in doubt whether a word following the verb is a modifier of an intransitive verb ( adverb or adverbial) or a completer (an object) of a transitive verb, a substitution test settles the matter. If you can replace the noun by an object pronoun (him, her, it, or them) or by someone or something, the word is a completer of the verb (or object) and the verb is transitive. The following examples show the difference between the intransitive and transitive verbs:

1. The man hammered fast.
2. He hammered the nail.  
     He hammered it.  
     He hammered something.

You cannot use *it* instead of *fast* in the first sentence without changing the structural meaning, whereas in the second sentence you can use " He hammered it" or "He hammered something" without changing the structural meaning. Thus, the verb hammered in the first sentence is intransitive, whereas in the second sentence it is transitive.

7. N <sup>1</sup>	Trans. V	N <sup>2</sup>	
The student	bought	a book.	
She	drinks	milk	every morning.
She	speaks	English	well.
Zaid	met	his friend.	
Zaid	met	him.	

In this pattern the verb is completed by a noun (or a pronoun). We can replace the noun by an object pronoun, namely him, her, it, or them, depending on the noun being replaced. This noun, as shown by the superscript 2, does not have the same referent as the subject (N<sup>1</sup>). The

second noun is the direct object of the transitive verb and has the grammatical meaning of "undergoes of the action" or "that who or which is affected by the verb." The direct object can be identified by three criteria:

- a. It consists of a noun or a word group that is equivalent to a noun.
- b. It follows the subject plus the verb (or the verb phrase).
- c. It can, in most cases, be made the subject of a passive verb.

Most English verbs are both transitive and intransitive. A relatively small number of verbs are transitive only or intransitive only. For example, in the sentences

The ship vanished.

Everyone enjoyed the lecture.

The verb *vanish* is only intransitive, whereas the verb *enjoyed* is only transitive.

A transitive verb can have two forms: an active form and a passive one.

The active form is the one that is followed by the direct object. This active form can be changed into passive, as in:

1. The boy poured the coffee.
2. The coffee was poured (by the boy).

**Lecture Three**  
**Basic Sentence Patterns**  
**in English**  
**The intransitive and transitive verbs**  
**(patterns 8+9)**

These pattern are related to transitive verbs ( ditransitive and complex transitive):

Pattern 8:            N<sup>1</sup>            TrV            N<sup>2</sup>            N<sup>3</sup>  
                         The mother        bought        the girl        a dress.

The transitive verb in this pattern takes two objects ( ditransitive).

In this pattern there are some important points to be noticed:

1. The superscripts 1, 2, and 3 show that each of the three nouns has a different referent.
2. In this pattern, there are two objects after the transitive verb *bought* : *the girl* and *a dress*. These two objects are: (1) the indirect object *the girl* and the direct object *a dress*. If we omit the first object, the pattern becomes number 7, which has only the direct object *a dress* :

The mother bought a dress.

N<sup>1</sup>            TrV        N<sup>2</sup>

3. The indirect object may be replaced by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* or *for*, but occasionally a different one (*of* or *with*) :

*The mother bought a dress for the girl.*



- 1.a. The teacher gave the student a book.
  - b. The teacher gave a book to the student.
  
- 2.a. The man built his family a house.
  - b. The man built a house for his family.
- 3.a. The teacher asked the student a question.
  - b. The teacher asked a question of the student.
4. a. He played me a game of chess.
  - b. He played a game of chess with me.

4. The verbs that can be used in this pattern are listed in a restricted group. Some of them are: *bring, give, build, ask, find, make, tell, buy, write, send, play, teach, assign, feed, offer, throw, hand, pass, sell, and pay.*

5. A pattern 8 sentence may be changed into the passive in two ways, by making either the direct or the indirect object the subject of the passive verb. So, we can change the sentence *The mother bought the girl a dress* into two passives:

1. A dress was bought the girl by her mother.
  
2. The girl was bought a dress by her mother.

In these two sentences, one object becomes the subject and the other is retained after the verb, and it is called a retained object ( *the girl* in sentence 1 and *a dress* in sentence 2).

- Pattern 9: N<sup>1</sup> TrV N<sup>2</sup> plus One of the Following:
- a. N<sup>1</sup> TrV N<sup>2</sup> N<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Adj
  - c. Pronoun
  - d. Av (of place) uninflected
  - e. Verb, present participle ( ing form)
  - f. Verb, past participle ( ed form)
  - g. prepositional phrase
  - h. Inf phrase with to be.

a. N1 TrV N2 N2  
 The football team chose Zaid captain.

b. N1 TrV N2 Aj  
 The teachers considered Zaid brilliant.

c. N1 TrV N2 Pronoun  
 He thought the caller you.

d. N1 TrV N2 Av (of place), uninflected  
 They supposed him downstairs.

e. N1 Trv N2 Verb present participle  
 I imagined her eating.

f. N1 TrV N2 Verb, past participle  
 I believed him seated.

g. N1            TrV                            N2            Prep phrase  
They        considered                            her            in the way .

h. N1            TrV                            N2            Inf phrase with to **be**  
The teacher thought Zaid to be a good student.

The elements in the last two positions in each structure of pattern 9 may form a sentence with *be* as its main verb or as an auxiliary before a verb. The last two elements in the previous can be as follows:

- a. Zaid is captain
- b. Zaid is brilliant.
- c. The caller is you.
- d. He is downstairs.
- e. She is eating.
- f. He was seated.
- g. She is in the way.
- h. Zaid is a good student.

Some of the verbs that can be used in this pattern are: *choose, consider, think, suppose, imagine, believe, name, elect, select, appoint, designate, vote, make, declare, nominate, call, fancy, feel, keep, find, prove, label, and judge.*

Some sentences are ambiguous because they can be interpreted in two ways depending on the intention of the speaker/writer. For example the following sentence can be related to two patterns because it has two meanings:

Mary called **her mother**.

N<sup>1</sup>    TrV        N<sup>2</sup>

Mary called **her** mother.

N<sup>1</sup> Tr V N<sup>2</sup> N<sup>2</sup>

Some other examples are:

1. He found her a pig.
2. I am getting her socks.
3. He looked hard.
4. The man gave the library books.