

## Sentence Structure

1. In academic writing, sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop (.) or a question mark (?)
2. Each sentence must:  
be able to stand alone and make sense on its own.
3. Each sentence has:  
a **subject**: This is the person or thing that the sentence is about. And,  
a **predicate**: This is what is said about the subject.  
This part must have at least one **verb** (doing word).

Subject	Predicate
The book	<i>arrived</i> in the mail today.
He	<i>bought</i> a new car yesterday.
Mary and John	<i>went</i> on a camping holiday in the South Island.
Operators of machines	<i>should be given</i> further training.
The room	<i>had been cleaned</i> recently.
Moving house	<i>can be</i> very stressful.
Collecting wood for the fire	<i>took</i> a long time.
Looking after the animals	<i>was</i> Jane's responsibility.
Dancing	<i>is</i> good for the soul.

The above sentences are called **simple sentences**.

(They contain only one verb each). The verbs in the sentences above are in italics.

**Ask yourself these questions to determine whether a group of words is a sentence:**

1. Do the words make sense on their own?
2. Are the words a complete thought?
3. Does the sentence begin with a capital letter and end with either a full stop or a question mark?
4. Finally, ask yourself: Are the grammar and punctuation correct?

Adapted from:

Murphy, E. M. (1989). *Effective writing: Plain English at work*. Melbourne, Australia: Longman Cheshire.