

University of Tikrit

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Department of English



## **Basic sentence patterns 2**

Grammar

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## Basic sentence patterns

### 6. Pattern 6: N InV (= intransitive verb)

Example: Girls smile.

The verb in Pattern 6 is of the kind called intransitive. An intransitive verb is self-sufficient; it can stand alone with its subject.

- The sportsman *fished*.
- The sportsmen *were fishing*.

It can be modified by words and word groups known as adverbs and adverbials.

Examples:

The sportsmen *fished early*.

The sportsmen were fishing *in the stream*.

The sportsmen were fishing *when we drove up*.

But an intransitive verb is usually not completed by a noun or pronoun. For example, in

They finished late.

The subject of the verb in Pattern 6, and also in Patterns 7, 8, and 9 to follow, has the grammatical meaning of "performer of the action. Some intransitive verbs characteristically do not occur alone but take an adverbial modifier.

Examples: *lurk, sneak, lurch, sally, sidle, tamper, lie, live*. The last one, *live*, takes an adverbial modifier in three meanings: "reside" as in "He lives in Mexico"; "stay alive" as in "He lives on soy bean products"; "be alive" as in "He lived in the first half of the twentieth century." Also, intransitive verbs with a passive sense based on transitive verbs take an adverbial modifier, as in "Your car rides comfortably," and "Her book is selling well.

### 7. Pattern 7: N<sup>1</sup> TrV (=transitive verb) N<sup>2</sup>

The girl bought a dress.

In Pattern 7 the verb is completed by a noun (or pronoun), for which one can substitute *him, her, it* or *them*. This noun, as shown by the superscript 2, does not have the same referent as the subject. It is called the direct object of the verb

and has the grammatical meaning of "undergoer of the action" or "that affected by the verb."<sup>6</sup>

With two kinds of pronouns, however, the direct object does have the same referent as the subject. One is the set of *-self/-selves* pronouns, generally known as the reflexive pronouns. These occur as direct object in sentences like

She saw *herself*.

The lifeguards splashed *themselves*.

The other set consists of the reciprocal pronouns *each other* and *one another*, which function as direct objects in such sentences as

They found *each other*.

They fought *one another*.

A verb like those above that is completed by a direct object is called a transitive verb. A transitive verb contrasts with the intransitive verb of Pattern 6, which does not take a direct object.

**Examples:**

Intransitive verb: She sang beautifully.

Transitive verb: She sang a beautiful folk song.

As shown in the pair of examples above, most English verbs are both transitive and intransitive, and relatively few are transitive only or intransitive only.

**Examples:**

InV only: The ship had vanished.

TrV only: We enjoyed the party.

A transitive verb has two forms, which we call active and passive. The active form is the one that is followed by the direct object, which we have seen in Pattern 7. From this active form we can make the passive form. Here is an illustration:

**Active:** The waiter poured the coffee.

**Passive:** The coffee was poured (by the waiter).

In this process there are four things to notice:

1. The object of the active form becomes the subject of the passive form. This is shown above in the shift of *coffee*.
2. The passive is made up of a form of the verb *be* plus a past participle, as in *was poured*.
3. The subject of the active verb may be made the object of the preposition *by*, or it may be suppressed.
4. In the passive, two grammatical meanings are shifted around. The performer of the action, *waiter*, is now the object of the preposition, and the undergoer, *coffee*, is the subject.

### **8. Pattern 8: N<sup>1</sup> TrV N<sup>2</sup> N<sup>3</sup>**

The mother bought the girl a dress.

In Pattern 8 there are seven matters to be observed:

1. The superscripts 1, 2, and 3 indicate that each noun has a different referent; *mother*, *girl*, and *dress* are three separate entities.
2. We see two grammatical objects after the verb *bought*. These two objects are called, in order, the indirect and the direct object. If we omit the first one, the pattern becomes number 7 and *dress* is seen to be the direct object.
3. The indirect object may often be replaced by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* or *for*, or occasionally with a different preposition.

### **Examples:**

He sold *the student* a ticket.

He sold a ticket *to the student*.

He built *them* a playpen.

He built a playpen *for them*.

He played *me* a game of chess.

He played a game of chess *with me*.

He asked *her* a question.

He asked a question *of her*.

4. The verbs that can be used in Pattern 8 are in a restricted group. Some of the common ones  
are *give, make, find, tell, buy, write, send, ask, play, build, teach, assign, feed, of fer, throw, hand, pass, sell, pay*.
5. A Pattern 8 sentence may be transformed into the passive by making either the direct or the indirect object the subject of the passive verb:

A dress was bought the girl by her mother.

The girl was bought a dress by her mother.

### 9. Pattern 9: N<sup>1</sup> TrV N<sup>2</sup> plus one:

- a. N<sup>2</sup>
- b. Aj
- c. Pronoun
- d. Av (of place), uninflected
- e. Verb, present participle
- f. Verb, past participle
- g. Prep phrase
- h. Inf phrase with *to be*

Pattern 9 contains a choice of eight different forms in the final position. These are illustrated as follows:

- a. The basketball team chose Charlotte *captain*.
- b. He considered her *brilliant*.
- c. I thought the caller *you*.
- d. We supposed him *upstairs*.
- e. I imagined her *eating*.

- f. I believed him *seated*.
- g. We considered her *in the way*. (= bothersome)
- h. We thought Chico *to be a fine player*.

In this pattern the words in the last two positions imply an underlying sentence with *be* as its verb or auxiliary. This is suggested by the way the illustrative sentences above can be changed in form while preserving the same meaning:

- a. The basketball team chose Charlotte *to be captain*.<sup>8</sup>
- b. He considered her *to be brilliant*.  
He considered *that she was brilliant*.
- c. I thought the caller *to be you*.  
I thought *that the caller was you*.
- d. We supposed him *to be upstairs*.  
We supposed *that he was upstairs*.
- e. I imagined her *to be eating*.  
I imagined *that she was eating*.
- f. I believed him *to be seated*.  
I believed *that he was seated*.
- g. We considered her *to be in the way*.  
We considered *that she was in the way*.
- h. We thought Chico *to be a fine player*.  
We thought *that Chico was a fine player*.

#### References:

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