

## FORMAL CLASSIFICATION OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

### I. SYNTACTIC PART

**A. Statements:** Where the subject is almost always present and generally precedes the verb.

*I will buy a cake for her birthday.*  
*I won't buy a cake for her birthday.*

**B. Questions:**

**1. Operator in front of the subject:**

*Will you buy a cake for her birthday?*

**2. Initial position of the Wh- element:**

*Who will buy the cake for her birthday?*

**C. Commands:** Normally no overt (explicit) subject. The verb is in the imperative mood.

*Buy the cake for her birthday.*  
*Don't buy the cake for her birthday.*  
*Don't you buy the cake for her birthday.*

**D. Exclamations:** Phrases with *What/How* and other words. There is no inversion of the subject and the operator (Wh- word)

*What a noise they are making!*  
*How beautiful she looks!*

- Intonation is different in each sentence, and it can help express your feelings or your attitude towards the person or situation in question.

### II. SEMANTIC PART

#### FUNCTIONS OF DISCOURSE OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

**1. Statements:** Transmit/convey the information to somebody else.

**2. Questions:** People use questions to express a lack of information and when they request for it.

**3. Commands:** You instruct somebody to do something.

**4. Exclamations:** Primarily to express emotions or feelings.

However, we can find examples of sentences that vary in their form and function.

*I'd like a cup of coffee*

Form: statement

Function: A polite command

*Why don't you shout louder?*

Form: Question

Function: A strong command

*I wonder if you would kindly open the window*

Form: statement

Function: A extremely polite command

**III. Questions:** There are three major types

**1- Yes/No Type**

**2- Wh- Element Type**

**3- Alternative Type**

1- **Yes/No Type:** Usually, the operator is placed before the subject.

*Is Frank writing a book?*

*Has he got a car?*

*Did your brother arrive late? (In this case we use a new rule DO SUPPORT because we don't have an operator)*

**Tag questions:**

*She arrived here, didn't she?*

2- **Wh- element type:**

a- Q- element is first in the sentence.

b- The Q- word is the first component in the Q-element

*Where do you live?*

*What books did she get for the course?*

c- You have to do the inversion of the subject and the operator:

*Who is your teacher?*

If there is no operator, we apply DO SUPPORT:

*Do you live here?*

**Exceptions for rule c:**

*On what do you base your argument? OR What do you base your argument on?*

*At what are you aiming? OR What are you aiming at?*

*With whom is she going to? OR Whom is she going with?*

d- The wh- word can be the subject of the question:

*What happened?*

*Who wrote the article?*

**PRESUPPOSITIONS (assumption):** Every wh- question can be rewritten into a sentence.

*What do you study? I presuppose You study something*

*Where do you study? I presuppose You study somewhere*

*Who wrote the article? I presuppose Someone wrote the article*

3- **Alternative type:** It offers the listener a closed choice between two or more options? It is a mixture. It is not really a Yes-no question or a Wh- question.

*Would you like chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry ice-cream? (options are given)*

Wh question: *Which ice-cream would you like? Chocolate, vanilla or strawberry?*

IV. **Minor types of questions:** They are not less important. They are used in everyday language.

1- **Exclamatory questions:** Although they have the same order that questions have, they function and sound as exclamations. Intonation of exclamations.

*Am I hungry!*

*Can he swim!*

*"How on earth are you ever going to explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love?" (attributed to Albert Einstein)*

2- **Rhetorical questions:** They are strong statements that look like questions. They help the listener consider a message or viewpoint. A rhetorical question doesn't usually require an immediate answer, but it is meant to draw attention to and start a meaningful discussion on the matter.

**Yes/no type**

- + *Is that a reason for despair?* It means *Don't despair.*
- + *Can anyone doubt the wisdom of this decision?* It means *Don't doubt.*
- *Is no one going to defend me?* It means *Defend me!*

### **Wh- form**

*Who cares?* It means *I don't care!* (The answer is negative)

*Who knows?* It means *I don't know*

- 3- Echo question:** You repeat what was said or a part of it.

*I didn't like the meal. (You) didn't like it?*

*Martha is getting married. Martha married?*

*I know you love Martin. Me, Martin?*

### **V. Commands**

- **Without a subject (rough):**

*Jump!*

*Be reasonable!*

*Shut up!*

- **With a subject (very emphatic):**

*You be quiet*

*You mind your own business*

- **3<sup>rd</sup> person subject:**

*Somebody open the door*

*Everybody close the books*

*Anybody help me!*

- **Commands with let:**

*Let's have some beers.*

*Let us have some beers (very formal)*

*Let's go to the beach.*

*Let us get those boxes down for you.*

- **Negative commands**

#### **First case:**

*Don't jump!*

*Don't be reasonable!*

*Don't waste your time!*

#### **Second case:**

*Don't you be quiet!*

*Don't you mind your own business!*

#### **Third case:**

*Don't anybody close the door!*

*Don't anybody close the books!*

#### **Fourth case:**

*Let's not have some beers!*