

SECTION C - Syntax

1 Syntax

i **Syntax** is a technical word that means how we arrange words to make sense. It is to do with the rules of our language.

A. Put a tick in the box beside the groups of words that make sense, **a cross** for the ones that don't.

- Pretty the lamp is blue.
- Blue is pretty lamp the.
- The blue lamp is pretty.
- The lamp is blue pretty.



The words themselves all make sense. What stopped the **groups** of words from making sense was that they didn't follow the rules of **syntax**. These rules tell us what order the words should go in when we use them together. We learn these rules automatically as we learn to speak our own language. What is not quite so automatic is applying the rules of syntax in our writing of sentences.

2 Sentence

i A **sentence** is a group of words that makes sense on its own.

A. Tick the box if the group of words forms a complete sentence, **a cross** if not.

1. Although it is fine.
2. By five o'clock.
3. Singing loudly and out of tune.
4. I'm in the shower.
5. What is the time?
6. Turn on the light, please.

B. Rewrite these jumbled sentences so they make sense.

1. pounced the cat on bird the

2. plug don't that touch

3. is up computer the playing

4. in was wind the the the rippling water pool

5. go middle the we on January prefer in of holiday to



C. In each of the following groups of words there is a word missing. **Add a word** that will turn each into a sentence.

1. _____ is laughing. 2. She _____ two brothers.
3. Todd _____ happy. 4. _____ runs fast.



From the exercises you have just done you have seen that **all sentences** must have

- a **verb** – this can be a single word e.g. *is, was, have, walked* or a group of words e.g. *was doing, could have*
- a **subject** – the person or thing doing the action of the verb. For commands e.g. *Sit down! Put your things over there!*, the subject is understood to be you i.e. *[You] sit down!*

The words must also be arranged in an order that we recognise as making sense.



D. **Highlight the subject** and **underline the verb** in each of these short sentences. The first one has been done for you.

1. The **batsman** hit a six. 2. The **wind** had stopped. 3. The **sky** was pure blue.
4. The **bees** were buzzing. 5. Her **bracelet** was awesome. 6. The **dog** rolled on its back.
7. The **heater** warmed the room. 8. **He** was pleased. 9. **I** woke up suddenly.
10. The **crowd** was cheering. 11. (**You**) hold that! 12. **It** was really hot.



E. **Highlight the subjects** and **underline the verbs** in each of these longer sentences.

1. My **sister** liked her present but **I** really loved mine.
2. The **raindrops** got bigger and bigger and **I** got wetter and wetter.
3. Their new digital **camera** did not work as well as **they** had thought **it** would.
4. The **kids** were screaming and their **parents** were shouting.
5. The **Black Caps** did not play as well as **we** expected them to.



As you have seen from some of the previous examples, a sentence can be

- a statement – e.g. *The tui is a native of New Zealand*
- a question – e.g. *Where is that tui I can hear?*
- a command – e.g. *Put some food out for the tui.*
- an exclamation – e.g. *What a beautiful song the tui has!*



F. Say whether each of these sentences is a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation.

Write your answer on the line.

1. What awful weather we are having! _____
2. What kind of fish have you caught? _____
3. That chocolate cake is delicious. _____
4. How many days have you been away? _____
5. Put your wet coat over the chair. _____

