

Sentence Structure

- Sentences consist of two key elements: the **subject** and its **verb**.
- The **subject** is the main character of the sentence. It is a person, place, thing, or concept doing an action or being described. Every single sentence *must* have at least one subject.
- There are three main types of **verbs**: *active verbs*, *passive verbs*, and *linking verbs*.

Active Verbs

- An **active verb (AV)** expresses the **subject's (S)** action and often acts upon an **object (O)**, which is a person, place, thing, or concept.

Example:

S **AV** **O**
 Charlie wrote this paper.

Passive Verbs

- In contrast, a **passive verb (PV)** acts upon the **subject**. *Passive verbs* are easily recognizable because they are paired with "to be" verbs (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, and been).

Example:

S **PV**
 The **paper** *was written* by Charlie.

(Note: See the "Active Voice vs. Passive Voice" handout for more information on properly using active and passive verbs.)

Linking Verbs

- A **linking verb (LV)** connects the subject with either a **predicate noun (PN)** or **predicate adjective (PA)**.
- A predicate noun is a noun (a person, place, thing, or concept) that gives further detail about the sentence's subject.
- Similarly, a predicate adjective is a describing word that gives further detail about the sentence's subject.

Examples:

S **LV** **PN**
 Charlie is an expert writing coach.

S **LV** **PA**
 Charlie is brilliant.

(Note: Even though linking verbs are often "to be" verbs, they still count as active verbs rather than passive verbs. Remember, a passive verb combines a "to be" verb with another past tense verb while a linking verb is just a "to be" verb by itself. For more information, see our "Active vs. Passive Voice" handout.)