

40. WORD ORDER

Look at the order of the different parts of these sentences.

<i>Doctors</i>	<i>diagnose</i>	<i>patient's illnesses.</i>
<i>Nurses</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>responsible for taking care of patients.</i>
<i>Patients</i>	<i>complain</i>	<i>frequently.</i>
<i>They</i>	<i>complain</i>	<i>about the service in the hospital.</i>

Notice that all these sentences follow the same order.

Subject	Verb	Complement (what comes after the verb)
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Most sentences in English follow this **Subject - Verb - Complement** order.

If you follow this basic order when you write a sentence, your writing will be clearer.

There are a few exceptions to this basic order of sentences:

1. Questions

Helping Verb	Subject	Main Verb	Complement
<i>Do</i>	<i>hospitals</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>adequate sanitary conditions?</i>
<i>Are</i>	<i>hospitals</i>		<i>safe?</i>
<i>Have</i>	<i>hospitals</i>	<i>improved</i>	<i>infection control procedures?</i>

2. Requests/Commands

Subject (implied but not said)	Verb	Complement
(you)	<i>Turn</i>	<i>the light on please.</i>
(you)	<i>Hand</i>	<i>in your assignment on time.</i>

3. Sentences with *There is/There are* *

There	BE Verb	Subject	Complement
<i>There</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a problem</i>	<i>that need to be solved.</i>
<i>There</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>problems</i>	<i>that need to be solved.</i>

* Notice that in a sentence starting with *There is/There are*, *There* is not the subject. The subject comes after the verb. Make sure that the subject and the verb agree.

Common errors with word order

Error	Incorrect	Correct
Missing subject	<i>Is an important problem.</i>	<i>It is an important problem.</i>
Missing <i>There</i>	<i>In the country are many problems.</i>	<i>In the country, <u>there are</u> many problems.</i>
Question word order used in a statement	<i>The scientists do not know <u>why is</u> the disease spreading.</i>	<i>The scientists do not know <u>why</u> the disease is spreading.</i>