

## The Sentence

A sentence is a group of words that make complete sense on its own; for maximum readability it should have only one idea.

Every sentence contains two parts:

**subject**

**predicate**

The subject names or identifies the person, place, thing or idea that the sentence is about.

The predicate contains all the words that say something about the person, place, thing or idea identified by the subject.

A group of words cannot make complete sense unless it contains a subject and predicate.

Winston Churchill described the noble English sentence as:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Object</b>
Jim	wrote	the report

### Sentence length

Research shows that on **first** reading:

only **4 %** of readers understand a sentence of **27** words  
but **75 %** of readers understand a sentence of **18** words  
and **95 %** of readers understand a sentence of **8** words

You should therefore keep the majority of your sentences to fewer than 20 words.

Avoid writing a series of very short sentences.

*We went to Newcastle. We sprayed the Metro link. We were there for three days. The men did a good job.*

This sounds very abrupt and there is no flow of ideas.

Skilful writers vary their sentence length. If you have to write a long sentence, follow it with a shorter one.