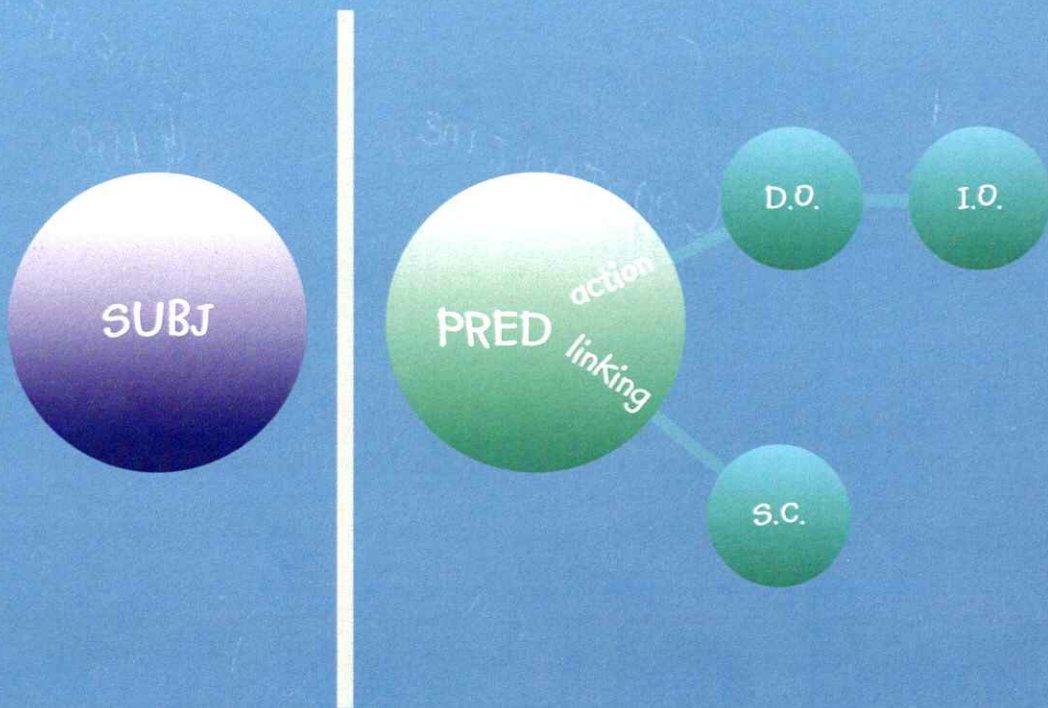


LEVEL TWO





The Parts of Sentence

Sentences do not occur in nature.

Words alone do not make a language. If I say “Bloom she pavement really hopping,” we know the words, but the words communicate nothing. Language is not random words; it is words arranged in a system of meaning. When words form meaning, we call that a **sentence**. A sentence is a group of words that contains a subject and its predicate and makes a complete thought. The word *sentence* comes from the Latin *sententia*, meaning way of thinking or opinion.

Sentences are *binary*; a sentence is a two-part thought. It is a group of words that contains a predicate about a subject, and in this group of words, the thought has been completed. In other words, a sentence is a finished idea. *Ebenezer shuddered* is a sentence, but *If Ebenezer shuddered* is not a sentence because we are still waiting for the thought to be completed. If Ebenezer shuddered, then what? Later we will reword this to say that a dependent clause is not a sentence.

Parts of Sentence: A sentence has main terms, and it has minor terms. The meaning flows through the main terms. We call these main terms the **parts of sentence**. When we study the parts of the sentence, we are studying the structure of thought itself. Sentences do not occur in nature; they are our thoughts expressed.

Hidden in the sentence is a thought’s secret pattern, and understanding our thought pattern gives us insight into the nature of clarity. In fact, understanding how sentences are thoughts can give us insight into several different levels of clarity, including clarity of **sentence**, clarity of **paragraph**, and clarity of **thesis**. What is this secret pattern? It is an elegant one. In order to say anything clearly, we must say two things. First, we must say **what we are talking about**, and second, we must say **what we are saying about it**. Each sentence must have these two things.

subject — predicate
what we are talking about — what we are saying about it

