

Writing focus: What is a sentence?

How many words are in the shortest English sentence? Except for one-word commands (*Sit!*), a complete sentence in English needs two words: a subject (a noun or pronoun) and a predicate (a verb) (*She sits*).

Of course, most English sentences are longer than just two words, but every sentence tells a complete thought. Groups of words that do not make complete sentences are called *phrases*.

If you need more information on complete sentences and phrases, see pages 85–87.

8 Work with a partner. Look at the following. Some of them could be sentences with the correct punctuation. Check (✓) the ones that could be sentences.

- a. housewives and young parents
- b. some retired people want to work
- c. earn some extra money
- d. meet new people
- e. volunteer jobs don't pay a salary
- f. an opportunity to learn new skills
- g. several part-time jobs

Language focus: Capital letters and final punctuation

Sentences in a paragraph ...

- start with a capital letter
Part-time jobs can be stressful.
- end with a period (.) question mark (?) or exclamation point (!)
Many students work as tutors.
How old were you when you got your first job?
I will never work in a restaurant again!

Note: Exclamation points are not as common in academic writing as they are in casual writing. Don't use them too often. Never use more than one exclamation point at the end of a sentence in academic writing.

The company offered me a part-time job!! = when writing to friends

The company offered me a part-time job. = when writing in school