Something was wrong in Texas in the summer of 1900. The heat wave was worse than anything anyone had ever seen. Even worse were the crickets. Crickets were everywhere—wall-to-wall crickets—in Waco, Texas, and no one could figure out why.

It was hot in Galveston, Texas, in September 1900. Then it started to rain. At first, the rain was a welcome relief from the heat. But it kept coming down, heavier and heavier. By Friday, September 7, anyone could see that a big storm was underway.

A young man named Isaac Cline was head of the Texas Weather Bureau, and he told people not to worry. He said there would be some wind and rain, but nothing the city could not handle. Although the waves in the ocean in the Gulf of Mexico looked dark and dangerous, Cline said it would be a mild storm.

But in Cuba, the weather experts were saying something very different. They warned that a big, dangerous storm was heading for the United States. They said that everyone along the Gulf Coast should be prepared. The trouble was, no one paid much attention to what the Cubans were saying. The United States had just won the Spanish-American War and had freed Cuba from Spain. The Americans did not believe that the Cuban weather experts knew more than the Americans, so they ignored the Cuban warnings.

Then the toads started appearing on the Galveston beaches. No one could remember seeing so many toads hopping on the sand. Something had driven them from their island homes, and now they swarmed onto the beaches. Some people became nervous because of the heat, the crickets, and now the toads. Something was definitely wrong.
Galveston was a big, booming city in 1900. It was the second-richest city in the United States. (The richest was Newport, Rhode Island.) Galveston was called the “New York of the Gulf.” About 38,000 people lived in big homes on wide streets.

Galveston was beautiful with its rosebushes; graceful palm trees; and white, pink, and red flowers called oleanders. It was both a seaside resort and a busy port. It seemed impossible that anything really bad could happen in such a lovely place.

On September 7, the rainfall was so heavy that Mr. Cline tried to calm the people of the city. On September 8, many people got up early to go to the beaches and watch the unusually high waves.

No one could remember seeing waves this big before. It was exciting! People screamed in delight as they outran the ever-growing waves. Water splashed into the streets of Galveston, and children made little boats from sticks and floated them in front of their homes. People collected things that washed up onto their front lawns. Some streets turned into shallow canals, and it was fun to watch.

Suddenly, a little beach house built on the sand crumbled and blew apart. The waves smashed it into firewood. The people watching on the beach were surprised but not frightened. The beach house was too close to the water. True, it had stood for a long time, but these waves were very big.

Slowly, the water flowing into the streets of the city got too deep. The children left their boats and ran to their homes, now a little afraid. At 10 AM, the Washington, DC Weather Bureau sent a telegram to Isaac Cline with some very bad news. The telegram said that a serious storm—possibly a deadly one—was hitting Galveston. Still, Isaac Cline said it was crazy to think that serious damage could be done to the city.

By noon, the winds were blowing at 30 miles per hour. Each hour after that, the wind speed grew in power. The rain was coming down on Galveston with great fury now. The Gulf of Mexico was flowing into the streets closest to the beach. The water was already three to four feet deep in some places. A few beach homes, battered by wind and waves, started to fall apart. The disaster had begun.
Part 1: What Is a Sentence?

Grammar in Context

Read the items in the list.

2. [Sentence] Something was wrong in Texas in the summer of 1900.
3. [Sentence] No one could remember seeing waves this big before.
4. [Not a sentence] were blowing at 30 miles an hour

What do you notice? Put a check [✓] next to the statements that are true about the sentences.

1. ______ A sentence is a complete thought or idea.
2. ______ A sentence has a subject (the topic of the sentence).
3. ______ A sentence has no capital letters.
4. ______ A sentence tells you something about the subject.
5. ______ A sentence has no punctuation at the end.

A sentence states a complete idea. It usually has a subject (the topic of the sentence) and a predicate (which tells you something about the subject). A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period (.), question mark (?), or exclamation point (!).

subject (what?)

Galveston was a big, booming city in 1900.

predicate (= what about Galveston?)
Discover the Grammar

Write S next to the statements that are sentences. Write NS next to the statements that are not sentences. For each one, circle the subject and underline the predicate.

Tip: If you can’t find a subject and a predicate, it’s probably not a sentence! The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. **S** Crickets were everywhere.

2. _____ Started to rain

3. _____ Isaac Cline was head of the Texas Weather Bureau.

4. _____ the ocean swells in the Gulf of Mexico

5. _____ People screamed in delight.

6. _____ The disaster had begun.

More Practice

Match each subject on the left with the best predicate on the right. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. _____ Galveston a. said that people shouldn't worry.

2. _____ Isaac Cline b. was smashed by the waves.

3. _____ Toads c. is in Texas.

4. _____ A small beach house d. was heading for the Gulf Coast.

5. _____ The Washington, DC e. appeared on the beaches.
   Weather Bureau

6. _____ A serious storm f. sent a telegram to Galveston.
Writing Practice

Imagine you lived in Galveston on September 7, 1900. Finish these sentences by writing a subject or predicate. You can find the information you need in the reading.

1. That summer, the weather _________________________________.
   
   \textit{(predicate: what was the weather like?)}

2. Today, the rain _________________________________.
   
   \textit{(predicate: what did the rain do?)}

3. A big storm _________________________________.
   
   \textit{(predicate: what was the storm doing?)}

4. _______________________ were warning about a dangerous storm.
   
   \textit{(subject: people in which country?)}

5. The United States had recently _________________________________.
   
   \textit{(predicate: what had the U.S. just won?)}

6. So, _______________________ did not believe the warnings.
   
   \textit{(subject: who didn’t believe the warnings?)}
Part 2: Sentence Types

Grammar in Context

Read the conversation between Isaac Cline and a citizen of Galveston before the storm of 1900.

What do you notice? Write the sentence number next to the sentence type. The first one has been done for you as an example.

a. _____ Statement
b. _____ Question
c. _____ Command or order
d. _____ Exclamation (sentence with strong emotion)

There are four basic types of sentences in English.
1. A **statement** (a declarative sentence) gives information. It has a subject and predicate, and ends with a period (.).
2. A **question** (an interrogative sentence) asks for information. It also has a subject and a predicate, but it starts with a verb or a *wh*-word. A question ends with a question mark (?).
3. An **exclamation** (an exclamatory sentence) is a statement with a very strong emotion—something exciting, surprising, scary, or funny. It has a subject and a predicate and ends with an exclamation point (!).
4. A **command** (an imperative sentence) gives an instruction or order. It usually does not have a subject, only a predicate starting with a verb. A command can end with a period (.) or an exclamation point (!) for a strong order.
Discover the Grammar

For each sentence, write S if it's a statement, Q if it's a question, C if it's a command, or E if it's an exclamation. Then circle the letter of the best explanation (a or b). The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. __ Q __ Is this a dangerous storm?
   a. The speaker knows the storm is dangerous.
   b. The speaker doesn’t know how dangerous the storm is.

2. _____ The waves are so big!
   a. The speaker thinks the waves are normal.
   b. The speaker is surprised by the waves.

3. _____ Be careful of the storm.
   a. The speaker is asking a question.
   b. The speaker is giving advice.

4. _____ The beach house has been destroyed.
   a. The speaker is giving information.
   b. The speaker is asking for information.

5. _____ Where are the toads?
   a. The speaker wants to know about the toads.
   b. The speaker knows about the toads.

6. _____ Get out of town!
   a. This is a command.
   b. This is an exclamation.
More Practice

Read this telegram from the Washington, DC Weather Bureau to Isaac Cline. Add the correct punctuation to each sentence.

1. We have some very bad news
2. Have you read the reports from China
3. Well they’re true
4. A serious storm is coming to Galveston
5. Find a safe place
6. Tell everyone to take cover
7. Why didn’t you take more precaution
8. We hope to hear from you soon
Writing Practice

Imagine you have a friend in Galveston. Write a telegram to your friend. Write four sentences: one statement, one question, one command, and one exclamation.

1. _______________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________
4. _______________________________________________________________

Complete this checklist about your sentences.

a. □ All sentences begin with a capital letter.
b. □ The statement ends with a period.
c. □ The question ends with a question mark.
d. □ The exclamation ends with an exclamation point or a period.
e. □ The command ends with a period.
f. □ The command doesn’t have a subject.
g. □ The question starts with a verb or wh- word.
h. □ The statement, question, and exclamation have a subject and a predicate.
Part 3: Parts of Speech

Grammar in Context

Read these sentences that summarize the reading passage.

Galveston was a big city in Texas. After a long, hot summer, it rained hard because a storm was coming from Cuba. Toads suddenly appeared on the beach. Crickets covered the ground. People were worried, and they were very scared.

We categorize words into parts of speech. Some examples have been done for you. Complete the chart with more words from the sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Pronouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city</td>
<td></td>
<td>rained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
<th>Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td></td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Conjunctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you notice? Fill in each blank with the name of a part of speech.

1. The subject of a sentence is usually a ________________ or a ________________.

2. The predicate of a sentence always contains a _________________.

Each word in English belongs to one or more parts of speech. To write or say a correct sentence, you need to choose the right parts of speech in the right order. These are the basic parts of speech.

- **Nouns** describe things, people, places, and ideas, for example: storm, Galveston, summer. The subject of a sentence is often a noun.

- **Pronouns** replace nouns when the reader understands what noun you mean (e.g. they = people) or when a sentence needs a subject (it was raining). Pronouns can be the subject of a sentence.

- **Verbs** describe actions or states (e.g., was, rain, appeared). The predicate of a sentence always contains at least one verb.

- **Adjectives** give more information about nouns (e.g., it was a hot summer).

- **Adverbs** give more information about all other parts of speech; they can tell you how, how often, or how much (e.g. it was raining hard; people were very scared).

- **Prepositions** tell you where something is (e.g., in Texas) or when something happened (e.g., after a hot summer).

- **Articles** are small words that are necessary with certain nouns. The most common articles are a, an, and the.

- **Conjunctions** join two words or sentences (e.g., because, and).
Discover the Grammar

Circle the letter that best answers each question.

1. Galeveston was a rich city in the state of Texas.
   How many nouns are in this sentence?
   a. 3
   b. 4

2. Isaac Cline worked at the Weather Bureau. He said there was no danger.
   What does he mean in this sentence?
   a. Isaac Cline
   b. The Weather Bureau

3. It was raining hard.
   What part of speech is hard in this sentence?
   a. adjective
   b. adverb

4. Isaac Cline needed to make a hard decision.
   What part of speech is hard in this sentence?
   a. adjective
   b. adverb

5. The waves smashed a beach house.
   What is the verb in this sentence?
   a. waves
   b. smashed

6. The Gulf of Mexico was flowing into the streets.
   What does the preposition into tell us?
   a. how much water was flowing
   b. where the water was flowing
7. The wind was blowing stronger.

What word does the adverb stronger describe?

a. wind
b. blowing

More Practice

Complete each sentence with the correct part of speech. The sentences are based on the information in the reading. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. The waves were very big.
   (adjective—describe the waves)

2. _________________________ played in the waves.
   (noun—who?)

3. It was _________________________ to play in the waves.
   (adjective—what did people feel?)

4. People _________________________ in delight as they played.
   (verb—what did they do?)

5. _________________________ were not scared at all.
   (pronoun—replace the noun)

6. The streets were filled _________________________ water.
   (preposition)

7. A small beach house blew apart _________________________
   (adverb—how fast did it happen?)

8. The people watching were surprised _________________________
   they were not frightened. (conjunction—meaning the opposite)