



## SENTENCE FUNCTIONS

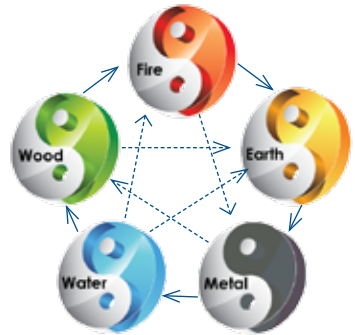
In English, there are four sentence functions that serve different purposes. Writers use declarative sentences to give information, imperative sentences to give instructions or commands, interrogative sentences to obtain information, and exclamatory sentences to express emotion. In academic writing, you will probably use more declarative sentences than any other. However, if you are writing a narrative or descriptive essay or a piece of creative writing, you will want to use sentences with a variety of functions since that will most closely replicate real life.

### 34a

#### Use declarative sentences to give information

Use declarative sentences that end with a period for statements that give information. Declarative sentences are the most common type of sentence function in English.

Declarative sentence → The Chinese zodiac has five elements.



### 34b

#### Use imperative sentences to give commands

Imperative sentences usually do not have a subject; they are used to give instructions or commands.

Imperative sentence → Tell me what zodiac sign I am.

Imperative sentence → Do not tell me that you forgot the answer.

Imperatives can also take the form of *let* plus a subject.

Imperative sentence → Let's talk about the Chinese zodiac.

The imperative sentence can include *you* or a third person subject, but these types of subjects are not used very often.

Imperative sentence → You should tell me the answer now.

Imperative sentence → The guilty party should stand up now.

Imperative sentences can also add a noun phrase that directly addresses the subject of the sentence.

→ You, tell me the answer now.

→ Those students at the back, tell me the answer now.

### 34c

## Use interrogative sentences to ask questions

To ask questions, use one of the six types of interrogative sentences, including yes/no questions, wh-questions, declarative questions, alternative questions, tag questions, and rhetorical questions.

A yes/no question begins with a verb and can be answered with a *yes* or *no* but can also be answered with other information as well.

Yes/No question → Should we mention that the Chinese zodiac is different from other zodiacs?

A wh-question starts with an interrogative word or phrase, usually *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, or *how*.

Wh-question → How many Chinese zodiac signs are there?

A declarative question is in the form of a declarative sentence but asks a question. These types of questions take the declarative form but usually end with a question mark.

Declarative question → The Chinese zodiac has five elements?

Alternative questions give a choice or choices.

Alternative question → Do you prefer to be called a boar or a pig?

Tag questions can attach to declarative or interrogative sentences, making the sentences into questions. If the sentence part is negative, the tag will be positive, and vice versa.

Tag question → You're a boar, aren't you?

Tag question → Tell me your sign, won't you?

Rhetorical questions are basically equal to forceful declarative statements. You do not reply to a rhetorical question.

Rhetorical question → Who could be happy being called a *pig*?

**34d****Use exclamatory sentences to show surprise**

Exclamatory sentences (sometimes called exclamatives) show surprise and end with an exclamation mark. They can begin with *what* or *how*.

Exclamatory sentence → What a strange name that is!

Exclamatory sentence → How strange that is!

These types of sentences can also look like a forceful declarative statement.

Exclamatory sentence → You're a Boar! Really!

**EXERCISE 1**

*Directions: Take the declarative sentence given, and revise it into the type of sentence given in the parentheses.*

*Example: In medicine, signs are different than symptoms. (yes/no question) → Did you know that in medicine signs are different than symptoms?*

1. A symptom is reported by a patient, and a sign is found by a doctor. (alternative question)
2. Fatigue is considered a symptom. (exclamatory sentence)
3. In an examination, a doctor looks for clinical signs. (declarative question)
4. Doctors make hypotheses, and they use signs to support their hypotheses. (Wh-question)
5. Reddening of the hands is considered a sign. (imperative sentence)