Statement, Command, Question or Exclamation? The Four Sentence Types in Year 1

A simple guide to help your child recognise the four main types of sentences they learn in Year 1: statements, questions, commands, and exclamations.

What are the four sentence types?

In Year 1 (the first year of primary school after Reception), children learn that sentences do different jobs. A statement tells us a fact, like 'The cat is black'. A question asks something, like 'Where is the cat?'. A command tells someone to do something, like 'Sit down'. An exclamation shows strong feeling, like 'What a big cat that is!'. Instead of just looking at the punctuation mark at the end, children are taught to look at how the sentence starts and how the words are put together to figure out what kind of sentence it is.

What happens in the classroom?

Teachers help children spot clues in the word order. For example, they might notice that many questions start with 'wh' words, such as Who, What, Where, or Why. They learn that commands often 'drop' the subject (the person the sentence is about) and start straight with an action word. For exclamations, they look for sentences starting with 'What' or 'How' that express surprise. A common activity is a sorting game, where children group different sentences together based on these clues before they check the punctuation mark at the end to see if they are right.

What this means for your child

Your child is learning to understand the function of a sentence—what it is actually doing. Some children find it confusing and think a sentence is a question just because it is long, or an exclamation just because it is loud. By focusing on the structure of the sentence first, your child builds a stronger foundation in grammar. This helps them not only in their writing but also in their reading comprehension, as they can better understand the tone and intent of the author.

Simple ways to help at home

You can make this a playful part of your day without any pressure or drilling. While you are chatting, you could play a quick game of 'What sentence is this?'. For example, if you say, 'Please put your shoes on,' you could ask if that was a statement or a command. You can also read a storybook together and spot 'wh' words at the start of questions. Keep it light and short; the goal is simply to notice these patterns in everyday language. If you are unsure what your child is working on, your child's teacher can give you more specific tips.

Common questions

Parents often ask if children must memorise the names of these sentence types immediately. The focus is usually on recognising the pattern first, and the labels (like 'exclamation') come second. You might also wonder if a sentence can be more than one type; while language is complex, at this stage, the National

Curriculum (the official guide for what is taught in English schools) focuses on these four distinct categories to help children build confidence in their writing.

Sources

- Department for Education, National Curriculum in England: Framework for Key Stage 1