Help with sentence construction: rules and examples

To make a sentence you need to be aware of the following three points:

1. **A sentence is a group of words that makes sense on its own.**
   - Cheese, car, house, table on Tuesday.
   - This isn’t a sentence - it doesn’t make sense.
   - I parked my car next to my house.
   - This is a sentence. You can understand what it means. It makes sense on its own.

2. **When writing, you must use the correct punctuation.**

   Correct punctuation will show the reader where the sentences begin and end.

   A sentence must:
   - Begin with a capital letter.
   - End with a full stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!).

   **NOTE:** People sometimes confuse the punctuation to use at the end of a sentence. You can use commas (,), colons (:), or semicolons (;) in your writing, but they should never be used instead of a full-stop.

3. **A sentence should always include a verb and a subject.**

   A sentence must contain:
   - A verb - this is often a ‘doing’ word but it can also be a ‘state’: eg like, is, cooking, walked, need.
   - A subject - this is the person, or the thing, that is doing the verb: eg I, Beppe, Tuesday, dog, you, table, the weather.

   Examples of sentences showing **verbs** (highlighted + underlined) and **subjects** (highlighted):
   - Last week Peggy **redecorated** the pub.
   - **Are you** hungry yet?
   - **Tuesday was** very rainy and cold.

   If the sentence is an instruction or a request, you sometimes don’t need a subject:
   - **Be** quiet.
   - Please **sit** down.

**More information about sentences:**

Sentences can be short, or long: there’s no correct number of words it should be. The length of the sentence depends on what you want to say and the effect you want to achieve.

**NOTE:** If your sentences go on for many lines, check you haven’t put several sentences together as one sentence.

Remember: you don’t always need to write in sentences, it depends on what you’re writing. For example, a shopping list doesn’t need sentences but a job application does.