

# ASL Topic-Comment Sentence Structure Rules

## Basic Topic-Comment Structure

- **Topic:** Sets up what you're talking about (often comes first).
- **Comment:** Provides information about the topic.
- **Example:** "CAT SLEEP" ("The cat is sleeping.")
- **Note:** Action signs should be placed at the end of the sentence.
  - **Example:** "BALL HE KICK" ("He kicked the ball.")

## Types of Questions

- **Yes/No Questions:**
  - Topic comes first, followed by a comment that seeks confirmation.
  - Raise eyebrows, lean forward slightly, and hold eye contact to show you're asking a Yes/No question.
  - **Example:** "YOU STUDENT YOU?" ("Are you a student?")
- **Wh- Questions:**
  - Topic comes first, followed by a comment that ends with a wh-question word.
  - Lower eyebrows, lean forward slightly, and hold eye contact for emphasis.
  - **Example:** "YOUR BOOK WHERE?" ("Where is your book?")
  - **Note:** Incorporate a closing signal when applicable.
  - **Example:** "YOU NAME WHAT YOU?" ("What is your name?")
- **Rhetorical Questions:**
  - Used to provide additional information or emphasize a point rather than to get an actual answer.
  - Raise eyebrows to indicate that the question is rhetorical.
  - **Example:** "MY FAVORITE FOOD WHAT? PIZZA" ("My favorite food? Pizza.")

## Introducing Time

- Time comes first, followed by the topic and then the comment. This helps establish the timeline for the action.
- **Example:** "YESTERDAY CAT SLEEP" ("The cat slept yesterday.")
- **Note:** Time signs such as TODAY, TOMORROW, YESTERDAY, EVERYDAY, days of the week, etc., should be signed first.
- **Example:** "TUESDAY THURSDAY EVENING PIANO I PRACTICE" ("I practice piano on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.")
- Number times are placed before time signs.
  - **Example:** "12:30 TOMORROW FRIEND I-MEET THERE RESTAURANT" ("I will meet a friend at the restaurant tomorrow at 12:30.")

## Using Descriptors

- **Descriptors** (like adjectives) often come before the topic to give more detail.
- **Example:** "BLACK CAR COLOR DRIVE I" ("I drive a black car.")

## Negation

- Add a negative sign after the topic or at the end of the comment. Shake your head to emphasize negation.
- **Example:** "HOMEWORK FINISH NOT I" ("I haven't finished my homework.")
- **Note:** Negating comments such as 'can't, don't, won't' are placed at the end.
  - **Example:** "BACKYARD WORK DON'T-WANT I" ("I don't want to work in the backyard.")

## Facial Expressions and Non-Manual Markers

- **Yes/No Questions:** Raised eyebrows.
- **Wh- Questions:** Lowered eyebrows.
- **Negation:** Headshake.
- **Topic-Comment Emphasis:** Nodding slightly to emphasize the topic.

## Shoulder Shifting for Conjunctions

- Shoulder shifting is used to indicate options or contrasts, such as 'and', 'or', or 'but'.
- Sign the conjunction during the shift in between the items.
- **Example:** "JACKET WANT BLACK (shift OR) BROWN WHICH YOU?" ("Do you want the black or brown jacket?")

## Examples:

- **Yes/No Question:** "YOU TIRED YOU?" ("Are you tired?")
- **Wh- Question:** "SCHOOL START WHEN?" ("When does school start?")
- **Rhetorical Question:** "MY COLOR FAVORITE WHAT? BLUE" ("My favorite color? Blue.")
- **Time Introduction:** "TOMORROW MEET FRIEND" ("I will meet a friend tomorrow.")
- **Descriptor:** "RED CAR DRIVE FAST" ("The red car is driving fast.")
- **Negation:** "THOSE-TWO LOOK-ALIKE NOT" ("Those two do not look alike.")
- **Yes/No Question:** "ICE CREAM LIKE YOU?" ("Do you like ice cream?")
- **Wh- Question:** "TEACHER NAME WHO?" ("What is the teacher's name?")
- **Rhetorical Question:** "I LOVE ASL? WHY BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGE" ("Why do I love ASL? It's a beautiful language.")
- **Time Introduction:** "NEXT-WEEK MOVIE WATCH I" ("I will watch a movie next week.")
- **Descriptor:** "BIG HOUSE COLOR WHITE LIVE I" ("I live in a big white house.")
- **Negation:** "I SWIM CAN'T" ("I can't swim.")