

# Syntax III

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College of Staten Island

# Quiz #4 Review

1. Identify the subject in the sentence “This rust old bicycle still works pretty well.”

“This rusty old bicycle.”

# Quiz #4 Review

2. Which of the following is true?

- If two words mean the same thing, they will have the same syntactic properties.
- Syntax and semantics are two words for the same thing.
- Expressions with similar meanings often have different syntactic properties.
- "Devour" and "eat" have the same syntactic properties.

# Quiz #4 Review

3. “\*Sally six potatoes roasted.” – Why is the previous sentence ungrammatical? Be sure to refer to a specific syntactic property by name.


sentence is formed as SOV which is ungrammatical in english. It should be SVO. the noun phrase "six potatoes" should be after the verb "roasted"

Word order- The verb roasted is supposed to come immediately after the subject, Sally.



# Quiz #4 Review

4. What does the verb “devour” require the co-occurrence of? Check all that apply.

- 
- A subject
  - An object
  - An indirect object
  - A prepositional phrase
  - None of the above

# Quiz #4 Review

5. “My friend hopes the Yankees win.” – Identify the argument(s) of the verb in the previous sentence.

The arguments for the verb "hopes" is: "My friend", "the Yankees win"

the yankees win is an argument of hopes, and my friend is an argument of hopes.

# Recap

- Syntactic properties include rules for word order and co-occurrence.
- Word order is often described in terms of subject, verb, and object. English has SVO word order.
- Word order rules differ from language to language.
- Some expressions (X) demand the presence of other expressions (Y). Y is an argument of X. If Y is not a subject, then it is also a complement of X.
- Adjuncts are like arguments, but are optional.
- Co-occurring expressions must agree.

Sally devoured an apple.  
Y X Y

The big beautiful tasty sandwich.

John eats a sandwich.  
\*John eat a sandwich.

I eat a sandwich.  
\*I eats a sandwich.

# Practice!

Now, let's bring it all together. Why are the following sentences ungrammatical?

- \*Sally the apple devours.
- \*Devours the apple.
- \*Sally devours.
- \*Sally devour the apple.
- \*I put the book.
- \*I put on the bookshelf.
- \*Put I the book on the bookshelf.
- \*I put the on the bookshelf.



# Syntactic Constituents

- Last week, we talked about word order.
- In addition to SVO word order, we noted that some words aren't subjects, objects, or verbs, and their order matters, too.

John ate the sandwich.

\*John ate sandwich the.

Sally finally met with that bird.

\*Sally finally met that bird with.

But why is it that 'the' must precede the noun?

And why is it that 'with' has to come before 'that bird'?

'the sandwich' is a **syntactic constituent**.

'with that bird' is a **syntactic constituent**.

Word order is important within constituents, just like it is within sentences.

# Syntactic Constituents

- Certain groups of expressions form a **syntactic constituent**.
- The words in a constituent go together.
- One example: *an apple* is a constituent in *Sally devoured an apple*. Remember, *an apple* is a two-word expression that works as the complement of *devoured*.
- Another example: *in July* is a constituent in *Sally went to France in July*.
- The words in these constituents go together:
  - \* *Sally devoured apple*      \* *Sally devoured an*
  - \* *Sally went to France July*    \* *Sally went to France in*

# Syntactic Constituents

- Sentences are constructed out of constituents, which are themselves constructed of smaller expressions.

[The tall man] saw [the big cat]



*The tall man and the big cat are both constituents.*

- Constituents often contain smaller constituents.

[The tall man] saw [[the lion] from Africa]

*The tall man, the lion, and the lion from Africa are all constituents. the lion is a constituent within another constituent, the lion from Africa.*

# Constituency Tests

- To identify whether something is a constituent, we can perform a **constituency test**. We'll discuss three:
  1. Answers to questions
  2. Clefting
  3. Pro-form Substitution



# Constituency Tests>Answers to Questions

- To figure out if something (X) is a constituent of a given sentence, try to think of a question about the sentence that X can serve as the answer to.

*The tall man saw the big cat.*

Who saw the big cat?

The tall man. *The tall man* is a constituent.

What did the tall man see?

The big cat. *The big cat* is a constituent.



# Constituency Tests > Answers to Questions

*The cat was sleeping on the desk.*

*Remember:* Try to come up with a question about the sentence that the expression can serve as the answer to.

Is *on the desk* a constituent?

Yes, *on the desk* is a constituent.

Where was the cat sleeping?

On the desk.

Is *sleeping on the desk* a constituent?

Yes, *sleeping on the desk* is a constituent.

What was the cat doing?

Sleeping on the desk.

Is *the cat* a constituent?

Yes, *the cat* is a constituent.

Who was sleeping on the desk?

The cat.

Is *sleeping on* a constituent?

No, *sleeping on* is not a constituent.

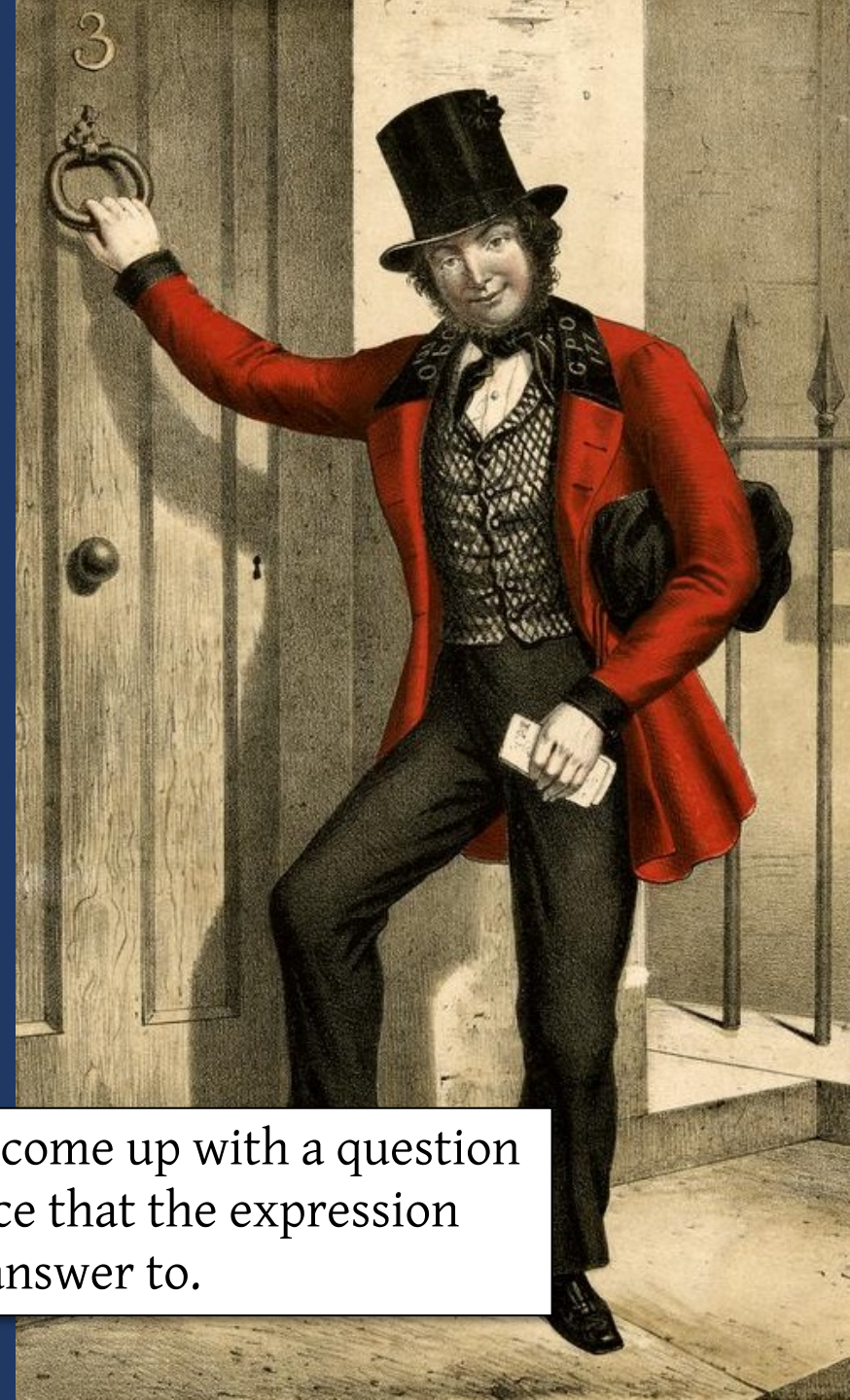
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# Practice

*This strange man is knocking at my door.*

- Is *this strange man* a constituent?
- Is *man is knocking* a constituent?
- Is *at my door* a constituent?
- Is *my door* a constituent?
- Is *knocking at* a constituent?
- Is *my door* a constituent?

*Remember:* Try to come up with a question about the sentence that the expression can serve as the answer to.





# Practice

*Old King Cole throws a wild party.*

- Is *Old King Cole* a constituent?
- Is *a wild party* a constituent?
- Is *a wild* a constituent?
- Is *throws a wild party* a constituent?
- Is *Cole throws a* constituent?



*Remember:* Try to come up with a question about the sentence that the expression can serve as the answer to.

# Constituency Tests > Cleft Test

- Construct a **cleft**, where some constituent is moved to the left. The cleft typically has the structure *It was X that Y*. If the cleft is grammatical, X is a constituent.

*The dog was eating from his bowl.*

Is *his bowl* a constituent?

Yes. The cleft is grammatical.

*It was his bowl that the dog was eating from.*

# Constituency Tests > Cleft Test

*The cat was sleeping on the desk.*

Is *on the desk* a constituent? Yes!

It was on the desk that the cat was sleeping.

Is *the cat* a constituent? Yes!

It was the cat that was sleeping on the desk.

Is *on the* a constituent? Nope!

\*It was on the that the cat was sleeping desk.

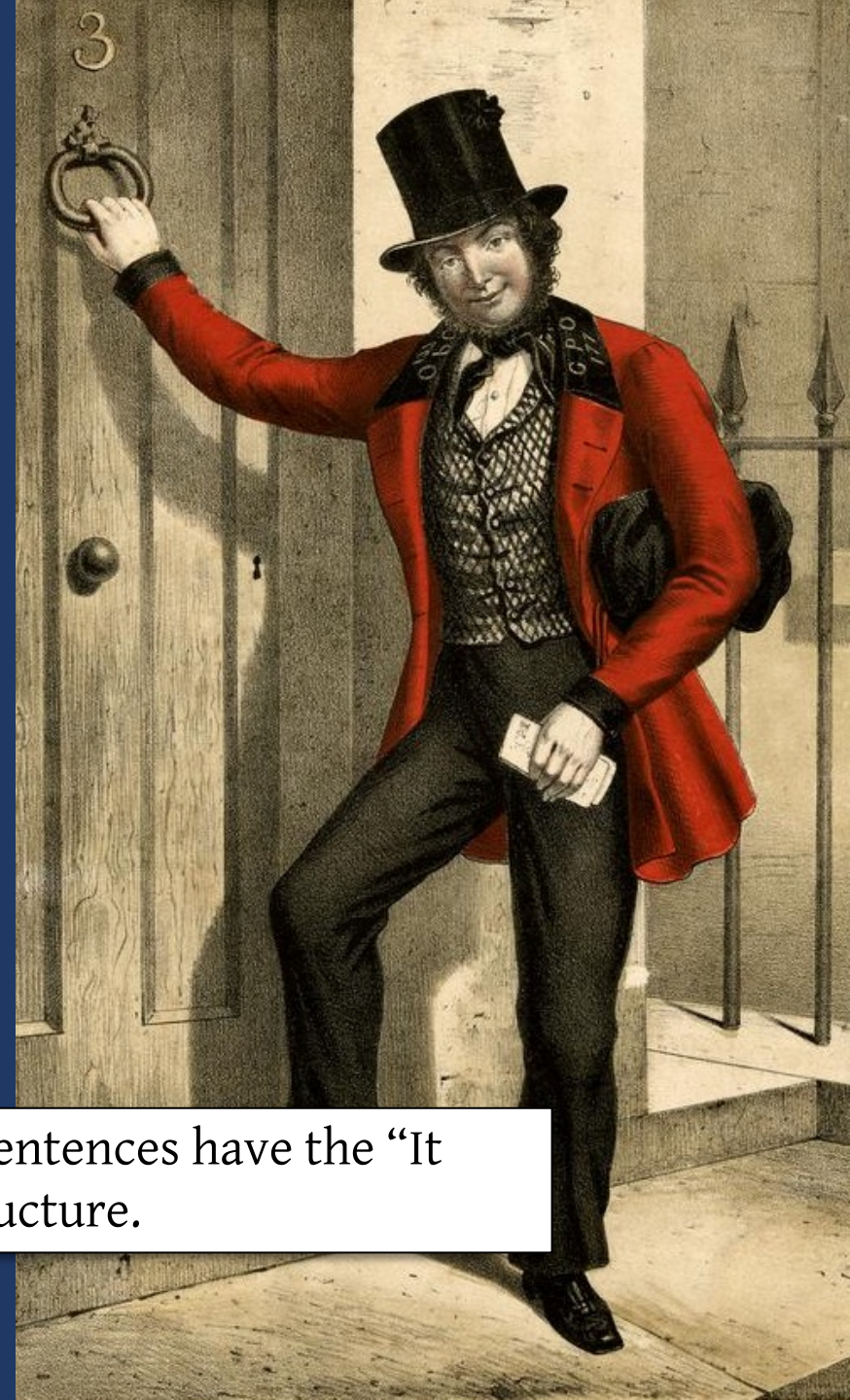


# Practice

*That Edwardian gentleman returned last Tuesday.*

- Is *that Edwardian gentleman* a constituent?
- Is *returned last* a constituent?
- Is *last Tuesday* a constituent?
- Is *gentleman returned* a constituent?
- Is *that Edwardian* a constituent?

Remember: Cleft sentences have the “It was X that Y” structure.





# Practice

*The musicians loved Old King Cole.*

- Is *Old King Cole* a constituent?
- Is *the musicians* a constituent?
- Is *musicians loved* a constituent?
- Is *King Cole* a constituent?

Remember: Cleft sentences have the “It was X that Y” structure.





# Constituency Tests>Pro-form substitutions

- Can you replace the expression with a single word and get a grammatical sentence? If so, it's a constituent.
- Pro-forms include pronouns (he/him, she/her, it, they/them, one, that), as well as *do*, *be*, *have* and *there*, *then*, and *such*.

*The girl was sitting on the chair.*

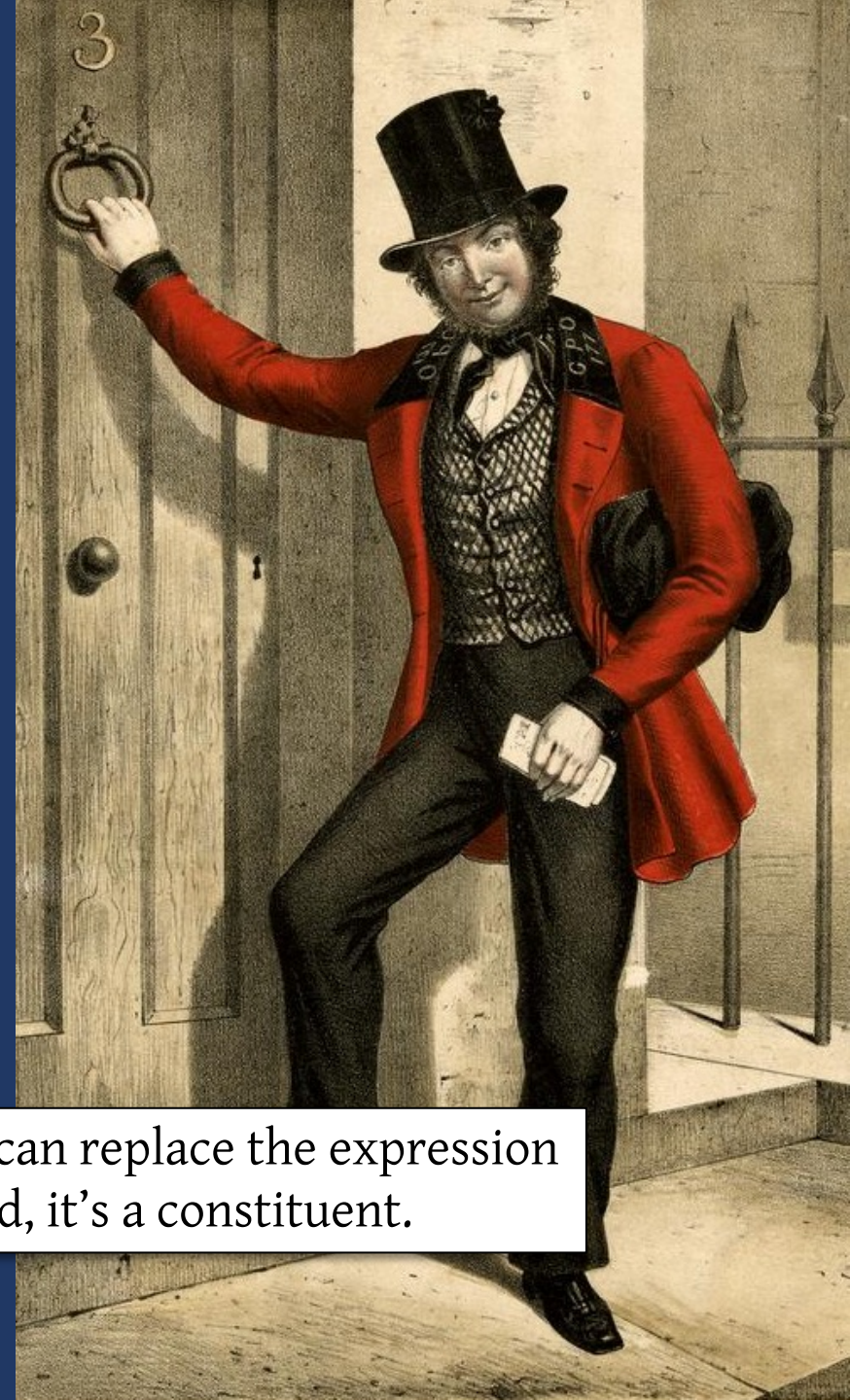
- She was sitting on the chair. = 'the girl' is a constituent
- The girl was sitting there. = 'on the chair' is a constituent
- The girl was sitting on that. = 'the chair' is a constituent

# Practice

*That weird guy is standing on the sidewalk!*

- Is *that weird guy* a constituent?
- Is *weird guy* a constituent?
- Is *on the sidewalk* a constituent?
- Is *the sidewalk* a constituent?
- Is *is standing* a constituent?

*Remember: If you can replace the expression with a single word, it's a constituent.*



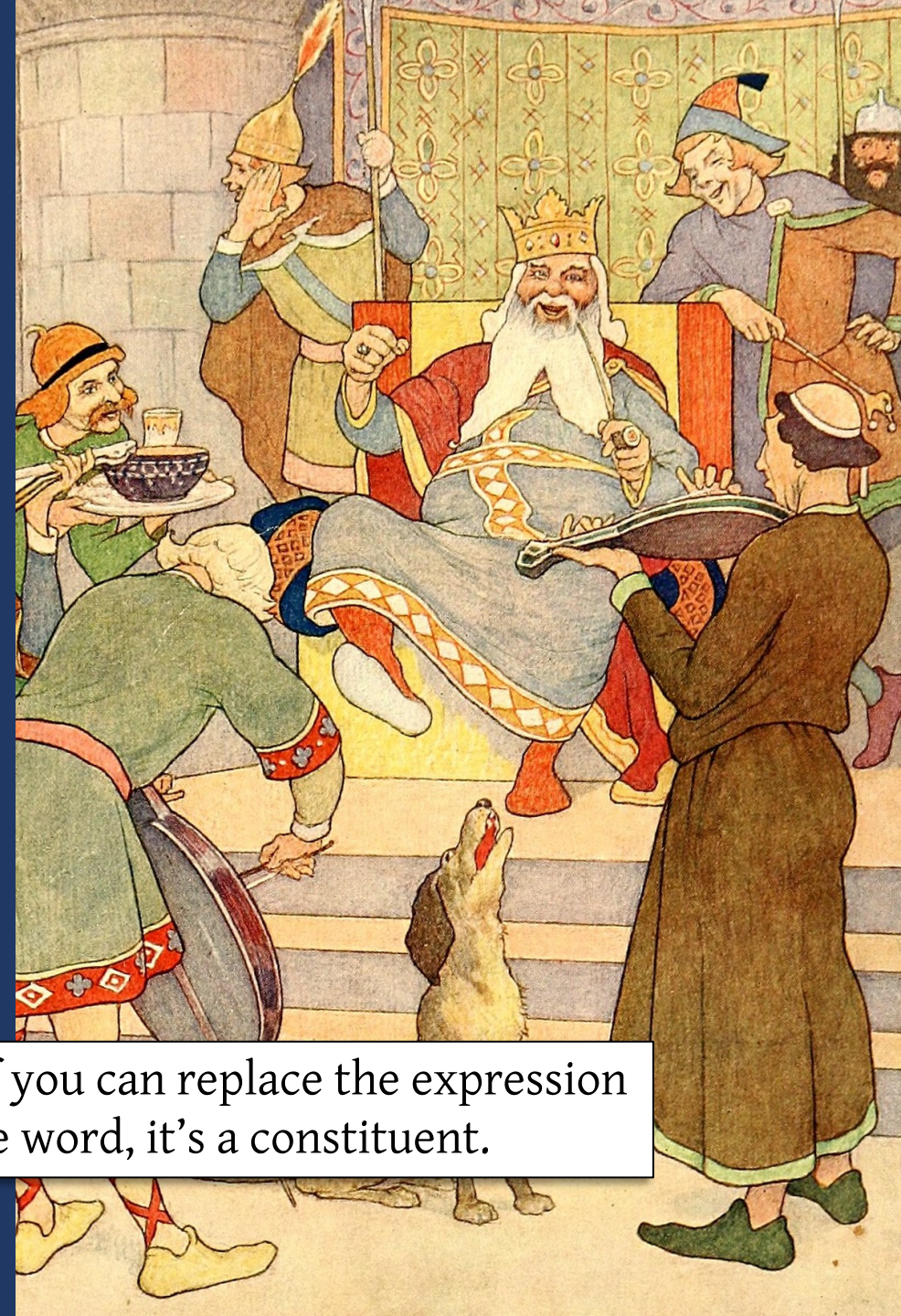


# Practice

*Old King Cole danced on his throne in the banquet hall.*

- Is *Old King Cole* a constituent?
- Is *on his throne* a constituent?
- Is *in the banquet hall* a constituent?
- Is *his throne* a constituent?
- Is *danced on* a constituent?

Remember: If you can replace the expression with a single word, it's a constituent.



# Syntactic Categories

- Each constituent belongs to a particular syntactic category.
- Last week, we talked about co-occurrence.
- It is a syntactic property of some words to demand the co-occurrence of other words or expressions.

*devoured* demands a complement

*wondered* demands a complement

- But *wondered* and *devoured* take different types of complements.

Sally devoured an apple.

\*Sally wondered an apple.

Sally wondered about Bob.

\*Sally devoured about Bob.

# Syntactic Categories

- Words want complements that belong to specific syntactic categories.
- *Devoured* needs a noun-phrase (NP) complement.
- An NP can be replaced by a pronoun – or by any other NP.

Sally devoured a rollercoaster.

Sentences that are syntactically correct but semantically nonsensical take advantage of this fact.

- Verbs that require an NP complement are **transitive verbs**.

# Syntactic Categories

- *Thinks* takes a whole sentence as a complement.

'that' is called a **complementizer** here. It's optional.



Sally thinks that candy is tasty.

# Syntactic Categories

- *Thinks* takes a whole sentence as a complement.

Sally thinks the tall man saw the big cat.

# Syntactic Categories

- You're not expected to memorize all of the syntactic categories.
- Given the following:

John likes school.

\*John likes.

You should be able to say (a) 'likes' needs a complement, and (b) that complement has to be an NP.



# Practice

*The king sliced the pie.*

*\*The king sliced.*

- What can we tell about the syntactic properties of *sliced*?

*The baker hates birds.*

*\*The baker hates.*

- What can we tell about the syntactic properties of *hates*?





# Practice

*Jack hopes the giant won't find him.*

*\*Jack hopes.*

*\*Jack hopes the giant won't find.*

- What can we tell about the syntactic properties of *hopes*?
- What can we tell about the syntactic properties of *find*?



# Review

- Sentences contain syntactic constituents.
- You can identify a syntactic constituent by using a constituency test: answers to questions, the cleft test, and pro-form substitutions.
- Each constituent belongs to a particular syntactic category.

In *I saw the apple*, 'the apple' is a constituent, and it is an NP.

- Words call for complements of a particular syntactic category.

*Devour* and *carve* call for a complement, which must be an NP.

For example: *I devour the apple; I carve the bread*

# For next class...

- Quiz 5 shared tonight! It will be due by 6:30pm on 28 April.
- Read pp.529–537 in the text, posted on our Readings page now.