

Statements

I. Basic word order patterns

II. Sentences with two or more adverbs

III. Mistakes caused by direct translation from Czech

I. Basic word order patterns

In English the **word order** is relatively **fixed**. While in Czech the relationships between words are expressed by endings, in English they are expressed by the position of the words in the sentence.

1.

Subject (S)	Verb (V)	Object (O)/Complement	Adverb (A)
I	met	him	at the conference.
One student	was	absent	yesterday.

2.a

Subject	Verb	Indirect object (IO)	Direct object (DO)	Adverb
We	will send	you/the Dean	a copy	tomorrow.

2.b

Subject	Verb	Direct object	Indirect object	Adverb
We	sent	it/a copy	to the Dean	a week ago.

Notes:

- **Type 2.a** is **more common** than Type 2b.

- **Type 2.b** is used when the **direct object** is much **shorter** than the indirect object (e.g. a personal pronoun):

They bought it for their department.

They sent the brochure to all who might be interested in their services.

Type 2.b is also used for **emphasis**:

We sent the copy to the Dean, not to the Rector.

II. Sentences with two or more adverbs

	Manner	Place	Time
It is dangerous to drive	fast	in the mountains	in winter

Notes:

Adverbs of place and time can also be placed **at the beginning of the statement**

- **to avoid the clumsy series** of three adverbs at the end:

In winter it is dangerous to drive fast in the mountains.

In the mountains it is dangerous to drive fast in winter.

- **to emphasize** either the place or the time:

At this University all undergraduates study English.

This week I have been very busy.

See also A Remedial Course in English Grammar: Adverbs (Position of adverbs)

III. Mistakes caused by direct translation from Czech

Wrong: O + V + S *This part of the report will write our partners.*
Right: S + V + O ***This part of the report will be written by our partners.***
 (passive construction + by)
 In Czech: Tuto část napíše **naši partneři**.
But: ***Our partners will write this part of the report.***
 In Czech: Naši partneři napíše **tuto část zprávy**.

Note: the new, important information is at the end of the sentence while words/phrases at the beginning refer to something that has been said before or is known from the situation.

Wrong: O + S + V + A *Such experiments we can do in our laboratory.*
Right: S + V + O + A ***We can do such experiments in our laboratory.***
 S + V + A ***Such experiments can be done in our laboratory.***

Wrong: A + V + S *In this picture is presented a simple operation.*
Right: A + S + V ***In this picture, a simple operation is presented.***
 S + V + A ***A simple operation is presented in this picture.***
 S + V + O ***This picture presents a simple operation.***

Wrong: S + V + IO + DO *We use for the description of such complicated computations special tables.*
Right: S + V + DO + IO ***We use special tables for the description of such complicated computations.***
 S + V + IO ***Special tables are used for the description of such complicated computations.***
 IO + S + V + DO ***For the description of such complicated computations we use special tables.***
 IO + S + V ***For the description of such complicated cases special tables are used.***

Note: If, however, the indirect object is not very long and is used to provide some additional information, it can be placed after the verb and separated from the rest of the sentence by commas:

*They developed, for their own use, **a special program**.*
(a special program = new, important information)
*They developed a special program **for their own use**.*
(for their own use = new, important information)

EXERCISE

Correct the word order in the following sentences using the different patterns described above (including both active and passive constructions; where there is no agent use “we”).

Think about the context in which you would use each of the different patterns.

1. The PhD programme they teach in English.

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2. For storing information are used low frequencies.

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3. The distribution you can see in this picture.

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4. This problem I'll deal with next year.

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5. These points we can discuss later.

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6. For the detection of this signal can be used this device.

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7. This work does the designer.

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8. I informed about this situation my supervisor.

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9. The Department of Mathematics prepared for school-leavers with insufficient knowledge of mathematics a special course.

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10. At that conference were presented our results.

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