Basic Sentence Structure

There are five basic patterns around which most English sentences are built.*   They are as follows:

Subject (noun): All sentences are about something or someone. The something or someone that the sentence is about is called the *subject* of the sentence.   A noun is a person, place or thing.

Verb (sometimes called *predicate*): contains information about the someone or something that is the subject.

S-V	Subject-Verb	John sleeps.
		Jill is eating.
		Jack will arrive next week.
S-V-O	Subject-Verb-Object	I like rice.
		She loves her job.
		He's eating an orange.
S-V-Adj	Subject-Verb-Adjective	He is funny.
		The workers are lazy.
		Karen seems angry.
S-V-Adv	Subject-Verb-Adverb	Jim is here.
		Flowers are everywhere.
		No one was there.
S-V-N	Subject-Verb-Noun	She is my mom.
		The men are doctors.
		Mr. Jones is the teacher.

At the heart of every English sentence is the Subject-Verb relationship. Other elements can be added to make a sentence more interesting, but they are not essential to its formation.

The following sentences are examples of the S-V pattern.

She sleeps.	Core sentence
She sleeps soundly.	An adverb is added to describe how she sleeps.
She sleeps on the sofa.	A prepositional phrase is added to tell where she sleeps.
She sleeps every afternoon.	A time expression is added to tell when she sleeps.
She is sleeping right now.	Verb tense is changed, but S-V relationship remains the same.
Mary will sleep later.	Subject is named and another tense is used.
The dogs are sleeping in the garage.	New subject may require a different form of the verb. (i.e. The subject "the dogs" is plural; you need the verb "are".)

When using a phrase, you need a comma after the phrase.

Although it's snowing, it's not very cold outside.

In the library, you need to be quiet.

When school starts, you have to drive slower.

Using the conjunctions "and", "or" or "but" requires two full sentences, joined by the conjunctions.

I like to read and I like to dance.

I like fish but I don't like squid.

I want to learn Spanish or I want to learn Italian.