

# The building blocks of language essay sample

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



Any discussion of human thought processes must include a discussion of language. Language is a foundation or building block of thinking. Language also has three building blocks. These building blocks provide structure and produce language. To produce language, one must build words using phonemes and morphemes, and then string those words into sentences using the rules of grammar; syntax and semantics.

The first building block is a phoneme. They are the most basic unit of speech; an individual sound. All languages use phonemes. English uses approximately forty. They can have distinctive features, voiced or unvoiced components. Phonemes are so basic that they do not have any meaning until put together.

The second building block is a morpheme. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of language, formed from a combination of phonemes. There are two types, content morphemes and function morphemes. Content morphemes hold the basic meaning of a word and function morphemes are prefixes and suffixes. Function morphemes add a little additional meaning to the word.

The final building block of language is grammar. Grammar is the rules of language that specify how phonemes, morphemes, words and phrases should be combined to meaningfully express thoughts. Grammar also governs how to use various classes of words and their inflections. Grammar is made up of syntax and semantics. Syntax is the grammatical rules that specify in what order the words and phrases should be arranged in a sentence to convey meaning. By the time one is able to read, his or her

syntactical sense is highly developed. This makes it sound like even sentences composed of unfit words makes sense because it follows proper syntax. Syntax is different in every language. For example, English speaking people say adjectives before nouns and many other languages say the adjective after the noun. Semantics are the meaning or study of meaning derived from morphemes, words and sentences. Semantics rely on a variety of factors such as word choice, context and whether the intent is literal or figurative.

Without these building blocks humans, of any language, would not be able to communicate with each other. These rules and units of speech are all important components to help express our thoughts, feelings and personal experiences through language, one less building block of thinking.