

CHAPTER IV: PARTICIPANT ROLES/THEMATIC ROLES

1/ The **AGENT** of a sentence is the **person** deliberately carrying out the action described.

e.g. **John** opened the door with a key. (John -> the AGENT)

2/ The **AFFECTED** participant is the **thing** (**not usually a person, although it may be**) upon which the action is carried out, in many cases the thing changed by the action in the most obvious way.

e.g. John opened the **door** with a key. (the door -> the AFFECTED)

3/ The **INSTRUMENT** is the **thing** (**hardly ever a person**) by means of which the action is carried out

e.g. John opened the door with a **key**. (the key-> the INSTRUMENT)

4/ The role of **LOCATION** is played by **any expression referring to the place** where the action described by a sentence takes place.

e.g. Caesar was assassinated in **Rome**. (Rome -> LOCATION)

5/ The **BENEFICIARY** is the **person** for whose benefit or to whose detriment the action described by the sentence is carried out. It is usually assumed that the Beneficiary, if mentioned, is distinct from both the Agent and the Affected.

e.g. The terrorists sent the Prime Minister a letter bomb.

AGENT

BENEFICIARY AFFECTED

6/ The **THEME**: is a THING or sometimes a PERSON often used after VERBS OF PERCEPTION or STATE VERBS

In an **active voice sentence**, the theme is typically the direct object of a verb.

e.g: Mary smelled the burning cake from the oven.
Experiencer Theme Location

We saw our former teacher in Paris.
Experiencer Theme Location

7/ The **SOURCE**: refers to the location from which someone or something originates

8/ The **GOAL**: refers to the location that serves or should serve as the destination.

e.g: The delegates left Mexico City (source) for Buenos Aires (goal).

The government (agent) took over a billion dollars (theme) from the poor (source)

9/ The **EXPERIENCER**: The experiencer is the one **who experiences a mental state or process** such as thinking, knowing, believing, understanding, seeing, hearing, fearing, hoping, being surprised etc.

e.g: The trooper hoped for a promotion.

Montaigne's words inspired the young poet.

They will see a huge bronze gates between two pillars.

More examples

1/ Mary put the new book on the shelf.

Agent Affected Location

2/ Charles built Emily a bookcase.

Agent Beneficiary Affected

3/ We removed the stones from the stove.

Agent Affected Source

4/ The climber finally reached the summit of the mountain.

Agent Goal Location

5/ Mary cut the cake with a knife.

Agent Affected Instrument

6/ The window was broken by Charlie.

Affected

Agent

7/ Mary smelled the burning cake from the oven.

Experiencer

Theme

Location

8/ We saw our former teacher in Paris.

Experiencer

Theme

Location

9/ Andrea sent the package to her mother.

Agent

Affected

Beneficiary

10/ Jane sliced the sausage with a knife.

Agent

Affected

Instrument

PRACTICE

Identify AGENTS, AFFECTED, BENEFICIARIES, INSTRUMENTS, LOCATIONS THEMES, SOURCES or GOALS in the following sentences:

- 1/ The workmen spoiled the carpet with their boots.
- 2/ My mother's Imari bowl was broken by a thief.
- 3/ Muriel dealt the cards carefully to each player.
- 4/ The tree was felled by a single blow from Paul's axe.
- 5/ Seymour sliced the salami with a knife.
- 6/ Harmish used a screwdriver to open the tin.
- 7/ Crippen dissolved the body with the acid.
- 8/ The dynamite blew the safe open.
- 9/ The hut was set alight by a vandals.
- 10/ Charles built Emily a mahogany bookcase.

- 11/ Sidney swatted the fly with his hat
- 12/ Keith gave Gill a replica of the Venus de Milo.
- 13/ I'm meeting Dick at Wavely Station.
- 14/ Tallahassee is humid in summer.
- 15/ Ruth knitted Bryan a sweater.
- 16/ Alan was sent a special offer from the Reader's Digest.
- 17/ Glen bought a micro-computer for his son at the electronic shop.
- 18/ Vacek blew up the tank with a hand grenade.
- 19/ John chased the ball to the bottom of the hill.
- 20/ Lucy put a log on the fire with the tongs.