

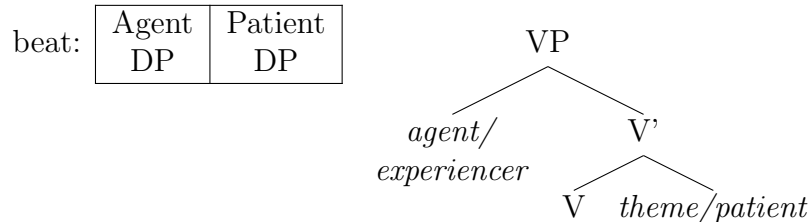
# Guide to Syntax

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## a. Theta criterion

Each verb has specific kinds of DPs or CPs or other elements that it requires. This information is stored in the lexicon. We show these in theta grids, like on the left, which map onto syntactic structure, on the right.



The **theta criterion** requires that each verb have each requirement met once *and only once* in the sentence.

## b. Case filter

The **case filter** requires that each DP have *case*. There are three cases in English, each obtained in three different ways:

- **Nominative case** – Given by the specifier of a *finite* TP. Thus, this is the case of subjects.
- **Accusative case** – Given by V to the complement of V (the object), but *only* a non-passive verb.
- **Prepositional case** – Given by a P to its complement.

## c. Feature checking

Features are purely formal things (we put them in brackets). In syntax, features must be “checked” by performing some kind of operation. Here are two features relevant to us.

- [+Q] – The [+Q] feature appears on C in all questions. The [+Q] feature requires T-to-C movement. When you move the T to C, this feature is “checked.”
- [+Wh] – The [+Wh] feature appears on C in content questions (those with a *what*, *where*, *who* or any other question word. This feature is “checked” when you move the question word to the specifier of CP.

## d. Affix attachment (hopping)

Auxiliaries take VPs as complements, but they require particular affixes on those verbs.

- **Perfect *have*** requires a verb in the participle/“-en” form. *I have **spoken**, I have **eaten**, etc.*
- **Progressive *be*** requires a verb with an *-ing* suffix. *I am **playing**, They are **laughing**, etc.*
- **Passive *be*** like perfect *have* requires the participle/“-en” form. The passive also removes the agent of the VP under it.

## e. EPP

The EPP (External Projection Principle) is a syntactic rule present in English that requires all specifiers of TP to have *something* in them. Colloquially this means “every sentence has a subject.” You can also think of the EPP as a “feature” in T that is “checked” by movement into spec TP.