

Understanding English Grammar Linguistic Problem of the Month, August 2011

Parse This!

by Tom Payne

The following sentence, though bizarre and deliberately confusing, is perfectly grammatical:

"The cheese the mouse the cat the dog the man the woman the children loved saw hugged chased caught ate was rotten."

Answer the following questions. In some cases, the answer may be "nothing in this sentence".

- a. What is the Subject of this sentence? (Give a single-word answer.)
- b. How many verbs are there in this sentence?
- c. What loved what?
- d. What saw what?
- e. What hugged what?
- f. What chased what?
- g. What caught what?
- i. What ate what?
- j. What was rotten?
- k. What is the main verb of this sentence?