Comprehension Questions: Classical versus Generative

(Some phonetic characters don't appear correctly in this reading.)

1 In classical/structuralist phonology the major goal was to find the units in a language that are able to ________ between different words and sentences.

2 They called these units ________________.

3 What are the different classical/structuralist ideas about what the phoneme is?

   NOTES:
   The phonetic level is very concrete. It deals with actual sounds and is discussed in terms of allophones.

   The phonemic (or phonological level) is more abstract, since it doesn't deal with actual sounds but groups of similar sounds, or sounds that have the same function, or sounds that belong to the same psychological concept. The unit here is the phoneme.

   The morphophonemic level is designed to deal with cases of allophomy (not allophony). Phonemes that normally contrast on the phonemic level no longer contrast when they are part of an allomorph of the same morpheme.

4 For classical/structuralists the phoneme was irreducible, but for generativists phonemes (and allophones) are made up of ________________.

5 In your own words complete the sentences.

   Phonetic specifiability means that a feature must ____________

   Universality means that features must be able to be used with ______________

   Binarity means that features must ____________-

   NOTES:
   In generative theory the phrase structure, up through the readjustment rules make sentences. Those sentences are passed onto the phonological component in the form of underlying representations (UR). The Ur is analogous to the structuralists phonemic level. It contains only phonemes. Rules transform the Ur to the phonetic representations that is analogous to structuralist's phonetic representation. Generativism collapses the phonemic and morphophonemic levels of representation into Ur, or can be though to eliminate the phonemic one.

   Don't worry about the Great Vowel Shift example.
6 In your own words, what is mixing levels?