
CHAPTER 13

The Parts of a Sentence

SUBJECT, PREDICATE, COMPLEMENT

As you study this chapter, you will become familiar with the structure of a sentence. You will learn to recognize what a sentence is and how its parts fit together to communicate a complete thought. This understanding of sentence structure will help you to speak and to write more effectively.

DIAGNOSTIC TEST

A. Identifying the Parts of a Sentence. Identify the italicized words in the following passage. Use the following abbreviations:

<i>s.</i> subject	<i>p.a.</i> predicate adjective
<i>v.</i> verb	<i>d.o.</i> direct object
<i>p.n.</i> predicate nominative	<i>i.o.</i> indirect object

EXAMPLE Raising money is hard (1) *work*.

1. *p.n.*

A carwash can be a good (1) *fund-raiser*. With that thought in mind, the freshman class (2) *planned* a carwash for last Saturday. On Saturday the sky did not look (3) *good*. In fact,

the weather report predicted (4) *thunderstorms*. Did (5) *any* of this deter us? No, we (6) *had* our carwash anyway. Our first customer, at 9 A.M., paid (7) *us* a compliment. She said that we were (8) *brave*. The rain began as she was speaking, and she saw our (9) *disappointment*. "Don't worry," she said, "There is (10) *nothing* like a rainwater rinse."

B. Identifying and Punctuating the Kinds of Sentences.

Copy the last word of each of the following sentences, and then give the correct mark of punctuation. Classify each sentence as imperative, declarative, interrogative, or exclamatory.

EXAMPLE 1. The zoo is a fascinating place

1. *place. declarative*

11. Have you been to the zoo recently
12. I usually go once a year
13. Why don't we go tomorrow
14. Bring your lunch, and be ready to spend the day
15. What a good time we'll have
16. What area do you want to visit first
17. The big cats are awe-inspiring, especially at feeding time
18. What clowns the sea lions are
19. Actually, I enjoy the entire zoo
20. Meet me at the front gate at 9 A.M

THE SENTENCE

Although you often use parts of sentences in casual conversation, you should use complete sentences in your writing.

13a. A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought.

For your own writing and proofreading, learn to distinguish between sentences and groups of words that are not sentences.

SENTENCE	We looked into the room.
NOT A SENTENCE	the room with the high ceiling
SENTENCE	The clerk was waiting by the door.
NOT A SENTENCE	waiting by the door
SENTENCE	Who has finished the test?
NOT A SENTENCE	after you have finished the test

If a group of words does not express a complete thought, it is a *fragment*, or piece of a sentence, not a sentence.

FRAGMENTS from August to November
 the president of our club
 doing well in school

These groups of words can become sentences only when the writer adds words to make the thoughts complete.

SENTENCES We play soccer from August to November.
 Florence was elected president of our club.
 Most of us are doing well in school.

EXERCISE 1. Identifying Sentences and Revising Fragments. Number your paper 1–10. If the word group is a sentence, write it with correct capitalization and punctuation. If the word group is a fragment, revise it by adding one word or more to make the thought complete, and write the sentence. As you revise, remember to begin the first word with a capital letter and to insert a mark of punctuation after the last word.

1. on Monday or later this week
2. patiently waiting for the mail carrier
3. will you be there tomorrow
4. four people in a small car
5. just yesterday I discovered
6. two strikes and no one on base
7. it runs smoothly
8. leaning far over the railing
9. give me a hand
10. all during the movie and then later at home

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

13b. A sentence consists of two parts: the *subject* and the *predicate*. The *subject* of the sentence is the part about which something is being said. The *predicate* is the part which says something about the subject.

In the following examples, the subjects are separated from the predicates by vertical lines.

Coyotes | were howling in the distance.

The telephone in the lobby | rang.

The woman in the red blouse | is my aunt.

As you see, the subject and the predicate may be only one word each, or they may be more than one word.

In the previous examples, the words to the left of the vertical line make up the *complete subject*. The words to the right of the vertical line make up the *complete predicate*. Often, however, the subject can be in the middle of or at the end of a sentence. Notice the complete subjects, which are in boldfaced type, in the following examples.

In dim light, will **this camera** take pictures?

On the table was a **silver vase**.

Does **Brian's car** have a tape deck?

EXERCISE 2. Identifying the Complete Subject. Number your paper 1–10. After the corresponding number on your paper, write the complete subject of each sentence.

1. The first repair job in space took place in 1984.
2. The Solar Maximum Mission satellite had made spectacular discoveries about solar flares.
3. Unfortunately, Solar Max blew three fuses.
4. James van Hoften and George Nelson, American astronauts, were assigned to repair the ailing satellite.
5. At first Nelson was unable to dock with the satellite.
6. A docking adapter on the front of his spacesuit failed to latch onto the special pin on the satellite.

7. The two astronauts were able to begin the repair job three days later.
8. Van Hoften removed the panel covering the electronics box.
9. He installed a new unit after removing the damaged box.
10. Is the eighteen-foot-tall satellite still in orbit?

EXERCISE 3. Writing Complete Predicates. Write complete predicates for the following complete subjects to make complete sentences.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. justice | 4. the woman next door |
| 2. some commercials | 5. one way to study |
| 3. the store on the corner | |

The Simple Subject

13c. The *simple subject* is the main word or group of words in the complete subject.

The simple subject is the most important word in the complete subject. This word names the person, place, thing, or idea being talked about.

EXAMPLE Their scientific discoveries made them famous.


Complete subject Their scientific discoveries

Simple subject discoveries

EXAMPLE The eloquent Martin Luther King, Jr., made many fine speeches.

Complete subject The eloquent Martin Luther King, Jr.

Simple subject Martin Luther King, Jr.

 **NOTE** Compound nouns, such as *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, in the example, are considered one noun.

From the examples above, you can see that the complete subject consists of the simple subject and all the words that belong

with it. Adjectives and prepositional phrases that modify the simple subject are included in the complete subject.

The term *subject*, when used in connection with the sentence, refers to the simple subject, unless otherwise indicated.

EXERCISE 4. Revising Sentence Fragments. Revise each of the following fragments by adding a complete subject. Underline each simple subject.

1. — was baying at the moon.
2. — can make the pizza.
3. — is needed for this recipe.
4. Was — the one who won the match?
5. — rose and soared out over the sea.
6. — stood on the stage singing.
7. — were late for their classes.
8. Over in the next town is — .
9. Buzzing around the room was — .
10. In the middle of the yard grew — .

The Simple Predicate

13d. The *simple predicate*, or *verb*, is the main word or group of words within the complete predicate.

The essential word (or words) in the complete predicate is always the simple predicate, usually referred to as the *verb*. The other words in the complete predicate may affect the meaning of the verb in various ways, often by making it more definite, but it is the verb that is essential in completing the statement.

EXAMPLE The ambulance raced out of the hospital drive and down the crowded street. [Complete predicate: *raced out of the hospital drive and down the crowded street*. Verb: *raced*]

The simple predicate may consist of a single verb or of a verb phrase. A verb phrase will be more than one word: *will sing*, *has been broken*, *may have been trying*, etc.

When you are asked to pick out the simple predicate in a sentence, be sure to include all parts of a verb phrase. In doing so, keep in mind the various helping verbs that are commonly used as parts of verb phrases: *shall, will, has, have, had, do, does, did, may, might, must, can, could, should, would, am, is, are, was, were, be, and been.*

Study the following examples, noticing the difference between the complete predicate and the verb.

EXAMPLE Mark could have accidentally taken my book.
Complete predicate could have accidentally taken my book.
Verb could have taken

EXAMPLE My aunt was sitting on the sofa.
Complete predicate was sitting on the sofa.
Verb was sitting

Throughout this book, the word *verb* will be used to refer to the simple predicate, unless otherwise indicated.

EXERCISE 5. Identifying Complete Predicate and Verb.

Make two columns on your paper. Label one of them *Complete predicate* and the other *Verb*. For each of the following sentences, write the complete predicates and the verbs in the appropriate columns. If you find a verb phrase, be sure to include all helping words.

1. Many writers' first novels are autobiographical.
2. *Look Homeward, Angel*, the first novel of Thomas Wolfe, was written about his early life in Asheville, North Carolina.
3. In the novel appear the people and scenes of Wolfe's youth.
4. His mother, father, and brother Ben will always be remembered because of Wolfe's book.
5. The boyhood home of Wolfe is still standing in Asheville.
6. The house and its furnishings are carefully described by Wolfe in *Look Homeward, Angel*.
7. A trip to the Asheville library supplies one with many facts about Wolfe.

8. In the library can be found all the newspaper clippings about Wolfe's life and works.
9. At first an outcast in Asheville, Wolfe was later revered by the town's citizens.
10. The whole town mourned the early death of its most famous son.

EXERCISE 6. Writing Complete Sentences by Revising Fragments. A sentence must have a subject and a predicate. Revise the following fragments, making each a complete sentence. Number your paper 1-5, and write each complete sentence after the proper number. Proofread for correct capitalization and end punctuation.

1. the trouble with my lunch period
2. the legs of the table
3. appeared deserted
4. my billionaire aunt from Detroit
5. thousands of screaming fans

REVIEW EXERCISE A. Distinguishing Between Fragments and Sentences; Identifying Subjects and Predicates. Number your paper 1-10. Label each word group *S* for sentence if it contains a subject and a predicate, or *F* for fragment if it does not contain both parts. Then copy the simple subject, underlining it once, and the simple predicate, underlining it twice. (Fragments will lack one or both parts.)

EXAMPLE 1. The talented musicians played well together.

1. *S* musicians played

1. The jazz sound filled the room.
2. Behind the other instruments was a gently tinkling piano.
3. The saxophonist, with lazy, lingering notes.
4. His friend, the bass player, lent a rich depth to the ensemble's music.
5. A female vocalist with a throaty voice.
6. Charmed the audience with her delivery.