

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

THE SUBJECT

The subject is the part of a sentence about which something is told or asked.

Ask yourself: Who or what did something?

Who or what is doing something?

Who or what will do something?

Example: The dog ate his food.

Who or what is doing something? **The dog. The dog** is the subject

Example: After the game, the Rockets shook hands with the other players.

Who or what is doing something? **The Rockets. The Rockets** is the subject

Sometimes you cannot ask the question “who or what is doing something?”

For example: Dogs are better pets than cats.

There is no one doing any action in this sentence.

Then ask yourself: Who or what is this sentence about?

What topic are we learning more about?

In this case, the sentence is about “dogs.” We are learning more about dogs- that they are better pets. **Dogs** is the subject.

For example: Unfortunately, the sweater is not on sale.

Again, no one is doing any action. So ask, what is this sentence about? What topic do we learn more about? The sweater- we learn that it is not on sale. **The sweater** is the subject.

Practice Exercise # 1: Underline the subject in the following examples.

1. The pelicans flew over the beach.

2. The children built a sandcastle.

3. Ben played chess.

4. Everyone watched the game.

5. The microwave is broken.

6. Malcolm is a very thoughtful person.

7. The seagull was white.

8. The moon shines down on the water.

9. The tire needed air.

10. Bart, Mike, and Jim went bowling.

SIMPLE AND COMPLETE SUBJECTS

The subject of a sentence is often more than one word. In the above example “sweater” is the subject. But if we change the sentence to say, “The blue cashmere sweater is not on sale” the subject is no longer just the sweater. The subject of the sentence includes any of the adjectives attached to the subject. In this case the subject is **blue cashmere sweater**.

The subject and all of the words attached to it are called the **complete subject**.

When the subject is more than one word, the main word is called the **simple subject**. This is the word that without which, the sentence would not make sense. In the above example, “sweater” is the simple subject. You can take out “blue” or “cashmere” and the sentence will still make sense. You cannot take out sweater. This is the simple subject.

IMPLIED SUBJECTS

Sometimes a subject is implied. This means that it is not stated.

For example: Eat your dinner.

Who or what did something? The sentence is really “You eat your dinner.” But we don’t always say the “you.” But since “you” are doing the action **you** is the **implied subject**.

Practice Exercise # 2: Underline the complete subject in the following examples. Circle the simple subject. If there is only a simple subject, just circle that. If the subject is implied, write the implied subject to the right of the sentence.

1. Eat your dinner!
2. Everyone felt uncomfortable after the event.
3. Mrs. Smith’s fourth period class made the decorations.
4. Watch out!
5. The four angry men chased after the criminal.
6. It is a classroom.
7. Yikes! How long until we leave?
8. My cousin Steve is sure that he saw the dog run towards the school.
9. My favorite book has always been *Little Women*.
10. Unfortunately, because of the storm, our family cannot leave yet.
11. I ran four miles yesterday.
12. Are you hungry?

THE PREDICATE

Once you have found the subject of the sentence you are able to find the predicate. In the subject you will find who or what is doing something, or who or what the sentence is about. **The predicate is what that person or thing is doing, or what new information we learn about that person or thing.**

The predicate is the part of speech that tells or asks something about the subject. To find the predicate, first find the subject using the steps you learned.

Then, ask yourself: What is _____ doing?

What is the sentence saying about _____ ?

What information do we learn about _____ ?

For example: The dog ate his food.

Subject: Who or what is doing something? The dog.

Predicate: What did the dog do? **Ate his food.** This is the predicate

For example: After the game, the Rockets shook hands with the other players.

Subject: Who or what is doing something? The Rockets

Predicate: What did the rockets do? **Shook hands with the other players.** This is the predicate

Sometimes you cannot ask the question “what is _____ doing?”

For example: Dogs are better pets than cats.

Subject: What is the sentence about? Dogs.

Predicate: Since there is no action in this sentence, we need to try another one of the questions.

Ask “What is the sentence saying about dogs? They are saying that dogs **are better pets than cats.** This is the predicate.

For example: Unfortunately, the sweater is not on sale.

Subject: What is this sentence about? The sweater

Predicate: Again, no one is doing any action.

So ask, “What new information do we learn about the sweater?” We learn that it **is not on sale.** This is the predicate

TIP: Notice that the predicate always starts with a verb. So to find the subject and the predicate, first find the verb of the sentence. Draw a line dividing the sentence before that verb. Then look to the left, what is there is the subject, minus any interjections. You can then use the steps above to find the predicate.

Practice Exercise #3: Circle the complete subject and underline the predicate.

1. A cute puppy wagged her tail.
2. Three big kids raced across the lawn.
3. Phil called his friend on the phone.

4. Everybody went to the beach.
5. The car stopped in front of the mailbox.
6. The creaky old door slammed shut.
7. The bird's feathers were yellow.
8. The sun shines across the ocean.
9. The carrot sticks were delicious.
10. James, Curtis, and Ed played miniature golf.
11. Yes, Pizza is my favorite food.
12. The paper bag was full of groceries.
13. Unfortunately, it will be closed by then.
14. The first person here will be given a bonus.
15. At the bottom of the sea you will find great treasures.
16. I heard this story from the captain of the vessel.
17. How bright the fall flowers make the field look!
18. Mr. Longfellow wrote a story about an Indian boy.
19. Can you tell the name of the Indian boy?
20. The rabbit went down the hill.
21. Where did you find those beautiful violets?
22. Now that we have finished, we can leave.
23. A timid little fellow asked a question.
24. The vessel was a magnificent five-master.
25. Who commanded the vessel?
26. The girl plays the piano well.