

The Parts of a Sentence: Subject and Predicate

A sentence expresses a complete thought. It consists of a **subject** that tells whom or what the sentence is about. It also consists of a **predicate** that tells what is done or what happens.

Subject (who or what)	Predicate (what is done or what happens)
The girls	watched television.
Some people	like cold weather.
Doug Henning	performs magic tricks.

Find the subjects and predicates. Draw a vertical line between the subject and the predicate in the following sentences.

Example: Everyone | laughed.

1. The President held a news conference.
2. Each contestant chose a number from the jar.
3. The audience cheered enthusiastically.
4. Joe enjoyed his first piano lesson.
5. She listened to the news on the radio.
6. The city council voted on the motion.
7. Barry cooked dinner.
8. Everyone wants peace.
9. Several writers worked on the manuscript.
10. The diplomats discussed the treaty.
11. The predicate tells something about the subject.
12. Susan locked the garage door.
13. Each skier wore a jacket with goose feather lining.
14. Bob groped in the dark for the switch.
15. The washing machine chugged noisily in the other room.
16. Lizzie's science teacher agreed with the test results.
17. I built my first motorized model car.
18. Many riders joined the bike hike.
19. That man asked some strange questions.
20. Anyone can play this game.

Simple Subjects and Predicates

In each sentence, there are key words that form the basic structure of the sentence. The key word in the subject of the sentence answers the question *who?* or *what?* It is called the **simple subject**.

The *girl with the long hair* | fell down.
(*girl* answers *who* fell down. It is the simple subject.)

The key word in the predicate of the sentence is called the **simple predicate**. It tells what is done or what happens. The simple predicate is always the **verb**.

The girl with the long hair | *fell* down.
(*fell* is the verb. It is the simple predicate. It tells what happened.)

Find the verbs and their simple subjects. In each sentence, underline the verb twice and its subject once.

Example: The dog barked loudly.

1. That old horse walks with a limp.
2. Leslie hooked a rug.
3. Seashells littered the beach.
4. Many people watched the Super Bowl.
5. Rain fell steadily all day long.
6. He remembered his old friend.
7. The quick, brown fox jumped over the fence.
8. Mr. George heard a funny story yesterday.
9. Stars twinkled brightly in the sky.
10. An experienced pilot landed the plane.
11. Some authors write very long novels.
12. Tom loves strawberries with whipped cream.
13. Three beautiful packages lay under the tree.
14. Our class discussed energy conservation.
15. Joan's uncle explained his hobby.
16. The coach called extra practices.
17. Our town has cable television.
18. Few teams in our league have strong pitchers.
19. The band marched in the Memorial Day parade.
20. Susie visited her next-door neighbors yesterday.



A Sour Experience

The **simple subject** names the person or the object the sentence is about, not including modifying words such as articles (a, an, the) or adjectives. The **simple predicate** tells what the subject is or what the subject does. It is a verb or a verb phrase minus any modifying words.

(simple subject) (simple predicate)

A happy kid munched on sour apples.

(simple subject) (simple predicate)

Mrs. Haggly is taking the apple trees away.

Read the story. Underline the simple subject and circle the simple predicate in each sentence.

The apple trees along Mrs. Haggly's driveway tempted us. From our own yard, we could smell the tartness in the crisp autumn air. Shiny green apples decorated the gnarled old trees. We strained our necks to see them better. Just the thought of biting into one of those apples made our mouths water uncontrollably.

Mrs. Haggly was our only problem. Everyone knew that she was dangerous. She had long wavy white hair and a crooked face. She bent over, using a cane for balance. Many people thought she might even be a witch.

One morning, we decided to make a run for the apples. Boy was that exciting! My brother ran first. I followed. Before we knew it, we had a handful of perfect, little, green apples. Back over the fence we went, quicker than ever! Exhausted and sweating beads of fear, we ate the green apples under the shade of our own tree. They were perfectly sour and delicious!

However, we paid the price for our adventure. Ohhh, did we ache! Our stomachs grew big like watermelons. We were sick all day. This story has a moral. Little green apples are sometimes wicked. Old ladies with canes are usually not.

Subjects in Unusual Order

Not all sentences are written with the subject placed before the verb. In the following sentences, the verb or part of the verb comes before the subject:

1. Inverted Sentences

v. s.

Beneath the table lay our large bulldog.

2. Questions

v. s. v. s. v.

Was the pizza good? Did you find your gloves?

3. Commands (The subject is *you* even though it isn't stated. *We say you is understood.*)

v. v.

Listen carefully. Follow the instructions.

(The subject *you* is understood.)

4. Sentences beginning with *there*. (*There is never the subject.*)

v. s.

There was a long line at the show.

v. s.

Is there enough food for everybody?

Find the subjects and verbs in sentences with unusual order. In each of the following sentences, underline the subject once and the verb twice. If the subject is not given, write it in parentheses after the sentence.

1. Under my plate was an envelope.
2. Over the boundary line rolled the ball.
3. Across the field marched the band.
4. Was Jerome there?
5. On the front page of the newspaper was my picture.
6. Is Doug Williams playing?
7. Has the rain stopped?
8. Does spring start on March 20?
9. Can fish really hear?
10. There are pickles and mustard in the cooler.
11. Turn left at the corner.
12. Cut the pattern out carefully.
13. Is there a telephone in the lobby?
14. In front of the door there stood a tall guard.
15. There was a change in the bus route.