

## PART 2: PARTS OF THE SENTENCE

**Sentences** consist of one or more words that are grouped in a meaningful way to express a thought. A sentence always expresses a complete thought, and it always has a **SUBJECT** and a **PREDICATE** (sometimes called a **VERB**). Schoolhouse Rock has a catchy video on this topic [here](#).

The **subject** indicates either who or what performs the action or else what the sentence is about.

The **predicate** or **verb** describes an action or occurrence, or else a state of being.

In the following example sentences, the subject is divided from the predicate by a vertical line.

Mr. Morton | had a cat.

The huge elephant | ran after his trainer.

My cousins | are very satisfied with their apartment.

In the following sentences, draw a vertical line to divide the subject from the predicate. The answers follow on the next page.

1. The yummy strawberry fell on the floor.
2. A library is a place with lots of books.
3. Our mothers and fathers don't like our boyfriends, unfortunately.
4. The tiger with the enormous claws howled and scratched ferociously.

## ANSWERS

1. The yummy strawberry | fell on the floor.
2. A library | is a place with lots of books.
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### *Command Sentences*

When the sentence is a command sentence, the subject is often not stated. For example, in the sentence "close the door", the subject is understood to be "you". Another way of saying this is that command sentences frequently consist only of a predicate. In the following example sentence, the understood subject is written in parenthesis and it's followed by a vertical line.

(You) | Stop the car!

In the following command sentences, draw a vertical line to divide the subject from the predicate and add the understood subject if necessary. The answers follow on the next page.

1. Stop kicking the back of my seat.
2. Michael, don't tease your sister.
3. Please tell me what is going on.
4. Sit!

## ANSWERS

1. (YOU) | Stop kicking the back of my seat.
2. Michael, | don't tease your sister.
3. (YOU) | Please tell me what is going on.
4. (YOU) | Sit!

### *Interrogative Sentences*

When a sentence asks a question, the normal word order changes. Instead of the subject coming first, the verb or part of the verb often comes first. For example, the sentence "The girl smiled" might change to "Did the girl smile": the subject is now surrounded by the verb. In the following example sentence, the subject is separated from the predicate on both sides by a vertical line.

Was | the boy | surprised by the party?

In the following sentences, draw vertical lines to divide the subject from the predicate. The answers follow on the next page.

1. Did Julian see a pink and purple polka-dotted elephant?
2. Are we going to the movies or the hockey game?
3. Do interrogative sentences drive you crazy?
4. May I postpone this assignment?
5. Were the tables and chairs all lined up in a row?

## **ANSWERS**

1. Did | Julian | see a pink and purple polka-dotted elephant?
2. Are | we | going to the movies or the hockey game?
3. Do | interrogative sentences | drive you crazy?
4. May | I | postpone this assignment?
5. Were | the tables and chairs | all lined up in a row?

## **TYPES OF PREDICATES**

The subjects of sentences are always nouns or pronouns, possibly decorated by some adjectives, adverbs, or prepositional phrases. The predicates of sentences are always verbs, possibly decorated by some adverbs or prepositional phrases. Predicates fall into four main categories, as follows.

- a) SUBJECT ACTION VERB
- b) SUBJECT ACTION VERB DIRECT OBJECT
- c) SUBJECT ACTION VERB DIRECT OBJECT INDIRECT OBJECT
- d) SUBJECT NON-ACTION VERB SUBJECTIVE COMPLEMENT

Here are examples of each of these four bare-bones sentence formats.

- a) The girl smiled.
- b) The girl opened the book.
- c) The girl gave the book to the boy.
- d) The girl was happy.

a) *SUBJECT AND ACTION VERB SENTENCES*

In the following example sentence, the subject is underlined with a wavy underline and the action verb is underlined with a solid underline.

The young baby gurgled happily.

Underline the subjects and action verbs in the following sentences appropriately. The answers follow.

1. The frog jumped over the handsome prince.
2. We play soccer very badly.
3. The boys and girls played outside.
4. The big red and blue bus stopped here.
5. They were flying very high.
6. Did the dairy farmer climb on the haystack?
7. Drive slowly and carefully.

**ANSWERS**

1. The frog jumped over the handsome prince.
2. The jumbo jet landed softly.
3. The boys and girls played outside.
4. The big red and blue bus stopped here.
5. They were flying very high.
6. Did the dairy farmer climb on the haystack?
7. (YOU) Drive slowly and carefully.

## B) SUBJECT, ACTION VERB, AND DIRECT OBJECT SENTENCES

Direct objects receive the action of the verb. For example, in the sentence “the boy bit the dog”, the boy is the subject and the dog is the direct object. In the sentence “the dog bit the boy”, the dog is the subject and the dog is the direct object. In the following example sentence, the subject is underlined with a wavy underline, the action verb is underlined with a solid underline, and the direct object is underlined with a broken underline.

The old lady will find a twenty-dollar bill.

Underline the subjects, the action verbs, and the direct objects in the following sentences appropriately. The answers follow.

1. Miss Brown teaches music.
2. The yellow sports car has a powerful engine.
3. Put that horrible sweater in the garbage.
4. Yesterday, the baker produced 200 apple pies.
5. Did you see the fantastic opera at the arts centre?

## ANSWERS

1. The old lady will find a twenty-dollar bill.
2. The yellow sports car has a powerful engine.
3. (YOU) Put that horrible sweater in the garbage.
4. Yesterday, the baker produced 200 apple pies.
5. Did you see the fantastic opera at the arts centre?

c) *SUBJECT, ACTION VERB, DIRECT OBJECT, AND INDIRECT OBJECT SENTENCES*

The indirect object answers the question *to whom?* or *for whom?* For example, in the sentence *I gave Mom a nice present*, it is Mom to whom the present was given. Notice that this type of indirect object comes before the direct object. Indirect objects can also be formulated using the words *to* or *for* (as in, *she got a nice present for Mom* and, in these cases, the indirect object is usually placed behind the direct object. Indirect objects are always nouns or pronouns. In the following example sentences, the subject is underlined with a wavy underline, the action verb is underlined with a solid underline, the direct object is underlined with a broken underline, and the indirect object is underlined with a dotted underline.

Trevor gave me his library book.

My aunt will do something for my mother.

Underline the subjects, the action verbs, the direct objects, and the indirect objects in the following sentences appropriately. The answers follow on the next page.

1. Mary gave her notes to her younger sister.
2. He gave her the present.
3. The farmer fed his cows hay and silage.
4. The dog was giving his owner a lick.
5. Did you offer the job to your cousin?
6. For goodness sakes, give the robbers the money right away!
7. Fred was doing something to the car engine.

## ANSWERS

1. Mary gave her notes to her younger sister.
2. He gave her the present.
3. The farmer fed his cows hay and silage.
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5. Did you offer the job to your cousin?
6. For goodness sakes, (YOU) give the robbers the money right away!
7. Fred was doing something to the car's engine.

### *d) SUBJECT, NON-ACTION VERB, AND SUBJECTIVE COMPLEMENT SENTENCES*

If the verb is a non-action verb (a verb of being), it is usually followed by a subjective complement. Subjective complements can be nouns, pronouns, or adjectives, and they complete or complement the subject by either renaming it or describing it. In the example sentence, the subject is underlined with a wavy underline, the non-action verb is underlined with a solid line, and the subjective complement is enclosed in a box.

This pineapple is enormous.

The lake was a calm pool.



Mark the subjects, the non-action verbs, and the subjective complements in the following sentences appropriately. The answers follow.

1. Some students were unhappy.
2. My spelling test should be correct.
3. Cars can be dangerous.
4. It seemed to be a beautifully decorated cake.
5. That speedy hockey player was a famous star.
6. My friends are becoming very proficient.
7. Your aunt and uncle don't seem mean.
8. Did the stew smell good?
9. Be the best.

## ANSWERS

1. Some students were unhappy.
2. My spelling test should be correct.
3. Cars can be dangerous.
4. It seemed to be a beautifully decorated cake.
5. That speedy hockey player was a famous star.
6. My friends are becoming very proficient.
7. Your aunt and uncle don't (| DO NOT) seem mean.
8. Did the stew smell good?
9. (YOU) Be the best.

## *Review of the Four Different Types of Predicates*

In the example sentences, the subject is underlined with a wavy underline, the verb is underlined with a solid line, the direct object is underlined with a broken underline, the indirect object is underlined with a dotted underline, and the subjective complement is enclosed in a box.

The bunnies frolicked on the lawn.

Graham kicked the football over the fence and into the woods.

Did the dance teachers give Juliet her new ballet shoes yesterday?

Those trees are beautiful in the early morning.

Mark the subjects, verbs, direct objects, indirect objects, and subjective complements in the following sentences appropriately. The answers follow on the next page.

1. Please don't break this door handle again.
2. The little angels picked a bunch of violets for their mother.
3. Does the meringue look cooked yet?
4. Lisa is a very nice name.
5. Give it to me right now.
6. Did Eric really throw his telephone into the garbage pail?
7. All of the children seemed happy at the news.
8. The servants stacked the tables and chairs in the corner.
9. My aunt and uncle threw a party for their children in October.
10. Those kangaroos must have been jumping very high.

## ANSWERS

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