
Parts of sentence

Jim Hlavac
Arts Academic Language & Learning
Unit
Menzies Building 5th Floor, South Wing
Room S 518
9905 5280
Jim.Hlavac@arts.monash.edu.au

What is a subject?

- The **subject** of a sentence is the person or thing about which an assertion is made or a question is asked . Subjects can either be "simple" (composed of a single pronoun, noun or noun phrase), "compound" or "complex".

Simple subjects

- **Christine** looked in the mirror.
In this example, "Christine" is the subject because the sentence asserts that she looked in the mirror.
 - **The scientist** was correct in her prediction.
In this example, "the scientist" is the subject because the sentence asserts that she made a correct prediction.
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What is a complex subject?

A **complex subject** consists of a noun phrase and any words, phrases or clauses that modify it.

- The man who had followed us inside walked over to the telephone.

central noun - man

complex subject - the man who had followed us inside

- The superior performance of La Traviata pleased the wealthy audience.

central noun - performance

complex subject - the superior performance of La Traviata

What is a compound subject?

A **compound subject** consists of two or more noun phrases (and their modifiers if any) joined together with a coordinating conjunction.

- The man and the woman walked over to the telephone.

The **compound subject** here is the whole phrase, "the man and the woman."

- Neither the superior performance of La Traviata nor the excellent wine at intermission pleased the wealthy audience.

Again, the whole phrase, "neither the superior performance of La Traviata nor the excellent wine at intermission," is the subject. The phrase answers the question, "What pleased the wealthy audience?"

More compound subjects

- Team **pennants**, rock **posters** and family **photographs** covered the boy's bedroom walls.
- Her **uncle** and **she** walked slowly through the Aboriginal art gallery and admired the dot paintings exhibited there.

Find the subject!

- His terror of spiders kept him out of the dark basement.
- There will be three concerts in the arts centre tonight.
- Would you willingly exchange half your intelligence for one million dollars?
- Despite the storm's destructiveness, the ship, with its crew of amateurs, might have survived in more experienced hands.
- After the movie, Emma and her brother bought a birthday present for their mother.

What is a predicate?

The **predicate** is the part of the sentence which makes a statement or asks a question. The predicate always contains a verb.

- **Mary paints.**
This is an example of a sentence with only a subject and a verb. The **predicate** of this sentence is "paints", since the subject is never part of the predicate, and "Mary" is the subject.
- **Mary paints portraits of Sue.**
The **predicate** of this sentence is "paints portraits of Sue" since the predicate includes objects or complements and their modifiers.
- **Mary is painting a portrait of Sue.**
The **predicate** of this sentence is "is painting a portrait of Sue" since the predicate includes any auxiliary verbs or modifiers of the verb.

Simple predicate

- A **piece** of pepperoni pizza would satisfy his hunger.
The subject is built around the noun "piece," with the other words of the subject -- "a" and "of pepperoni pizza" -- modifying the noun. "Piece" is the simple subject.

Likewise, a predicate has at its centre a **simple predicate**, which is always the verb or verbs that link up with the subject. In the example we just considered, the simple predicate is "would satisfy", in other words, the verb of the sentence.

Find the predicate!

- His terror of spiders kept him out of the dark basement.
- There will be three concerts in the arts centre tonight.
- Would you willingly exchange half your intelligence for one million dollars?
- Despite the storm's destructiveness, the ship, with its crew of amateurs, might have survived in more experienced hands.
- After the movie, Emma and her brother bought a birthday present for their mother.

What is a simple object?

A **simple object** is a word that "receives the action" of a transitive verb or a verbal.

- I *met* **her** this morning.
"Her" is the **simple object** that receives the action of being met.
- *Meeting* **her** was nice.
"Her" is the **simple object** of the gerund "meeting."
- I always wanted *to meet* **her**.
Here, "her" is the **simple object** of an infinitive.

Direct and indirect objects

Two kinds of objects can follow verbs: direct objects and indirect objects. To determine if a verb has a direct object, isolate the verb and make it into a question by placing "whom?" or "what?" after it.

- The advertising executive drove a flashy red Porsche.

The sentence below also contains an indirect object:

- Her secret admirer gave her a bouquet of flowers.

To determine if a verb has an indirect object, isolate the verb and ask *to whom?*, *to what?*, *for whom?*, or *for what?* after it. The answer is the indirect object.

- Not all verbs are followed by objects. In the following two sentences there are no objects.
 - The guest speaker rose from her chair to protest.
 - After work, Randy usually jogs around the canal.

How else can I identify a direct object?

Another useful method for determining the direct object is to attempt to rephrase the sentence in the passive voice. If you can turn the sentence into the passive form, then the direct object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence.

- **Active** - Todd *sang* a song.
- **Passive** - A **song was sung** by Todd.
The direct object, "a song," of the *active sentence* becomes the **subject** of the **passive** one.

- Ashley became a **track star**.
"A track star" is not a direct object and thus cannot become the **subject** in a passive sentence.

Incorrect: A track star was become by Ashley.

More about indirect objects

Most commonly, verbs that involve giving something **to** someone or making something **for** someone have an **indirect** object as well as a **direct** one. Indirect objects are usually placed directly before the direct object. They usually answer the questions "to what/whom?" or "for what/whom?"

- She gave **Dave** a rose.
She gave a rose to whom? Dave

The predicate of the above sentence consists of the verb "gave," the indirect object "Dave," and the direct object "rose."

Complex objects

Like subjects, **objects** can be **complex**, consisting of the simple object and all the words which modify it.

- I finally bought the jeans I had tried on at least thirty times.
simple object – jeans
complex object - the jeans I had tried on at least thirty times
- He chose the small puppy shivering over in the corner of the cage.
simple object - puppy
complex object - the mangy puppy shivering over in the corner of the cage.

Compound Objects

Objects can also be **compound**, that is, composed of two or more noun phrases joined with a coordinating conjunction.

- Mary hated the heat and the flies.
compound object - the heat and the flies
- I can tolerate neither your arrogance nor your compassion.
compound object – neither your arrogance nor your compassion.

What is a subject complement?

A subject complement can either be a **predicate noun**, which renames the subject, or a predicate adjective which describes the subject.

Certain verbs called linking verbs, connect a **subject complement** to the subject. Some **linking verbs** are:

appear	become	seem	feel	grow		
act	look	taste	smell	sound	get	be

- The lake was a **tranquil pool**.
"Was" is a linking verb which links the subject complement (predicate noun) "tranquil pool" to the subject "lake."
- The lake is **tranquil**. "Tranquil" is a predicate adjective linked through the verb "is."

Object Complements

An **object complement** is similar to a subject complement, except that (obviously) it modifies an object rather than a [subject](#). Consider this example of a subject complement:

- The driver seems **tired**.
- In this case, as explained above, the adjective "tired" modifies the noun "driver," which is the subject of the sentence.
- Sometimes, however, the noun will be the object, as in the following example:
 - I consider the driver **tired**.
- In this case, the noun "driver" is the direct object of the verb "consider," but the adjective "tired" is still acting as its complement.
- In general, verbs which have to do with perceiving, judging, or changing something can cause their direct objects to take an object complement:
 - Paint it **black**.
 - The judge ruled her **out of order**.
 - I saw the Prime Minister **sleeping**.
- In every case, you could reconstruct the last part of the sentence into a sentence of its own using a subject complement: "it is black," "she is out of order," "the Prime Minister is sleeping."

What is an object complement?

With some verbs the direct object can be followed by another noun or modifying phrase called an **object complement**.

Some of the verbs which can take object complements are:

make	name	elect	call	find	consider	paint
appoint		believe		judge	declare	turn

- He dyed his hair **blonde**.

The predicate of the above sentence consists of the transitive verb "dyed," the direct object "his hair," and the **object complement "blonde."**

- The students elected him **president**.

The above sentence consists of the transitive verb "elected," the direct object "him," and the **object complement "president."**

Sentence Clauses and Phrases

Sentences can be broken down into smaller units called **clauses** and **phrases**. The main difference between the two is that clauses have a subject and a predicate whereas phrases do not have a predicate.

- She was walking *with a friend* **who went to my school**.

Clauses contain both a subject and a predicate, so **who went to my school** constitutes a **clause** in the above example.

With a friend is one example of a *phrase* from the above sentence, since it has no subject and no predicate.

Clauses can be either main or subordinate

A *main clause* is one which is independent. A *subordinate clause* depends on the main clause which it often modifies. Subordinating conjunctions (as, since, because...) or relative pronouns (who, which, that) usually introduce dependent clauses.

- While I was driving, I noticed the leaves had begun to turn autumn colours.

The first clause, **while I was driving**, is a *subordinate clause* introduced by the subordinate conjunction "while." The clause is subordinate because it cannot stand by itself as a complete sentence.

The second clause is the *main clause*. By itself, **I noticed the leaves had begun to turn autumn colours** can be a whole sentence.

Recognising clauses

- cows eat grass

This example is a **clause**, because it contains the subject "cows" and the predicate "eat grass."

- cows eating grass

What about "cows eating grass"? This could be a subject, but it has no predicate attached to it. The adjective phrase "eating grass" shows *which* cows the writer is referring to, but there is nothing here to show why the writer is mentioning cows in the first place. Therefore, this is a **phrase**.

- cows eating grass are visible from the highway

This is a complete **clause** again. The subject "cows eating grass" and the predicate "are visible from the highway" make up a complete thought.

- Run!

This single-word command is also a **clause**, even though it does seem to have a subject. With a direct command, it is not necessary to include the subject, since it is obviously the person or people you are talking to: in other words, the clause really reads "[You] run!".

Review: identifying clauses

- I love to eat meat pies
- the big, bad wolf
- took the bus to Shepparton
- they were thinking about the language issue
- the student considering everything written on this subject
- stay on the Princes Highway through New South Wales
- after the morning rush hour
- they hate politics
- because of the coat which I bought in Swanston Street
- when the train arrived at the station

Review: parts of the sentence

Identify the **highlighted** word in each of the sentences below as:

a simple subject, a verb, a direct object, an indirect object, or a subject complement.

- The old **house** on the hill gave Leonora chills and conjured up images of ghosts and monsters and other unknown beings.
- Next to the china cabinet, Mrs. Wilkes placed a polished side **table** and an antique jug.
- Despite winning the lottery last week, my cousin still seems **unhappy**.
- They gave the **university** a large endowment for the scholarship fund.
- Some experts **believe** it is easy to overstate the role that genes and heredity play in determining a person's predisposition to alcoholism.

Identify the **highlighted** word in each of the sentences below as: a simple subject, a verb, a direct object, an indirect object, or a subject complement.

- After the luncheon buffet, she grew **drowsy** and decided to take a nap.
- I don't know how you can understand **anything** that professor says.
- There were no **credits** after the movie.
- His deaf aunt will be **going** to the symphony next week.
- The company has been mailing **George** CD catalogues ever since he bought his stereo.
- Some experts **believe** it is easy to overstate the role that genes and heredity play in determining a person's predisposition to alcoholism.