

SUBJECT AND VERB IDENTIFICATION

PS-15

Two very important elements in every clause are the subject and the verb. **The verb is the action part, and the subject has to do with who or what is performing the action.**

EXAMPLE: The black bear pulled the honey from the tree.

Which word tells you something you could do? In other words, which word is action? Yes, **pulled** is the verb.

Now, look at the same sentence. Who did the pulling? Yes, the bear did it! **Bear**, then, is the subject.

TRY THIS ONE: The tired old dog wobbled down the road.

Which is the action word? Yes, it's **wobbled**. Who did the wobbling? Yes, the **dog** did it!

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. PLEASE UNDERLINE THE SUBJECT ONCE AND THE VERB TWICE.

1. The wind blew through the trees.
2. The clerk typed the letter.
3. Her husband caught the thief.
4. He gave me a gift.
5. Dr. Doolittle talked to animals.
6. My friend baked the cookies.
7. Henry drove to his appointment.
8. Sue dropped an egg.
9. The woman drank the juice.
10. The children laughed loudly.

***YOU MAY CHECK YOUR ANSWERS AT THE END OF THE PACKET.**

HELPING VERBS

Often in sentences (independent clauses) action words get help; thus, we have the term, helping verbs. Following are some commonly used helping verbs: will, shall, has, had, have, can, may, might, do, does, did, just, could, should, would, and all forms of the verb be.

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Check the following list:

be	shall be	should be
being	will be	would be
has been	can be	can be
is	have been	could be
are	had been	should have been
was	shall have been	would have been
were	will have been	could have been

DIRECTIONS: Underline the subject of each sentence and the verb phrase. The verb phrase is the action verb and the helping verb(s).

1. Carol has chosen her career carefully.
2. Everyone was holding his card.
3. Sarah was hiding the new toy.
4. The instructors were disappointed by the news.
5. The long wait could have caused him to become nervous.
6. That little tale never should have been told.
7. This book has been read frequently.
8. The class must have been dismissed early.
9. Paul can make multiple copies very quickly.
10. Jane is being helped by the tutor.

Some verbs do not show action. They are called “be” words: be, am, is, are, was, were, and been.

EXAMPLE #1: This is good news.

The pronoun “this” is the subject. The verb in the sentence is “is.” Certainly, none of the “be” words express action; however, they do link the subject with another word in the sentence.

EXAMPLE #2: I am glad to hear it.

The pronoun “I” is the subject. The verb “am” links the subject with the word “glad” which describes “I.”

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TRY THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES. UNDERLINE THE SUBJECT ONCE AND THE LINKING VERB TWICE.

1. He was certain of the election.
2. A party is always fun.
3. The plane is late.
4. A crew is in the plane.
5. Faster travel will be possible soon.
6. The cost was high.
7. That train has been late every night.
8. I am sad today.
9. The students were not happy about their grades.
10. Some actors are just fun to watch.

If you haven't studied prepositional phrases, it's time for you to ask an advisor for advice because you will need to understand prepositional phrases to be successful in identifying subjects and verbs in sentences. Often prepositional phrases come between the subject and the verb.

EXAMPLE: The plate on the shelf fell. (Plate is the subject; fell is the verb.)

NOW TRY THE FOLLOWING SET OF SENTENCES BY UNDERLINING THE SUBJECT ONCE AND THE VERB TWICE. DRAW A CIRCLE AROUND THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES.

1. The new student from France entered the classroom.
2. The children from the school caught a snake.
3. A flock of geese perched on the fence.
4. The scarf around her neck is beautiful.
5. The interest in the letter about the proposal amazed me.
6. Sarah's reflection on her school experiences entertained everyone.
7. The exciting life of the student interested all of us.
8. The bushes along the path were breathtakingly beautiful.

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9. The time for dinner has been set.
10. The chairs between the two tables have been reserved.

Remember that pronouns can be the subject of your sentence, and often a pronoun subject will be followed by a prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE: None of the girls laughed. (**None** is the subject; **laughed** is the verb.)

YOUR TURN! DRAW ONE LINE UNDER THE SUBJECT, TWO LINES UNDER THE VERB, AND A CIRCLE AROUND THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

1. Some of the teachers were absent this morning.
2. All of the students are good writers.
3. How many of you are taking algebra?
4. Which of the books are on reserve?
5. Most of them have come from another country.
6. Will one of you put this in the box?
7. Both of the trains ran late today.
8. None of the patients had taken the flu shot.
9. Each of the characters has acted before.
10. None of their friends will volunteer to help.

COMPOUND SUBJECTS AND COMPOUND VERBS

In some sentences, two subjects do the action of the verb. (The dog and the cat fought.) In some sentences, the subject performs two actions. (The cat stopped and scratched). In the following sentences, you may practice by drawing one line under the subject(s) and two lines under the verb(s). Remember prepositional phrases!!!

1. The pilot and the passengers survive the crash.
2. The teacher gave the tests to the students and left the room.
3. Mr. Jones and Ms. Smith will be married Saturday.

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4. The mother of the groom will stay with them and cook their meals.
5. Their courage and advice convinced us to follow them.
6. The orchestra and the chorus rose and bowed.
7. Some of the kids in that class yelled and screamed.
8. Bunny and Joan have moved to another city.
9. Tennis, swimming, and golf have been and will be my favorite sports.
10. The president of the college visited our lab and praised the students.

ANSWERS FOR SUBJECT, VERB IDENTIFICATION

Exercise 1

SUBJECTS	VERBS
1. wind	blew
2. clerk	typed
3. husband	caught
4. he	gave
5. Dr. Doolittle	talked
6. friend	baked
7. henry	drove
8. she	dropped
9. woman	drank
10. children	laughed

Exercise 2

1. Carol	has chosen
2. Everyone	was holding
3. Sarah	was hiding
4. instructors	were disappointed
5. wait	could have caused
6. tale	should have been told
7. book	has been read
8. class	must have been dismissed
9. Paul	can make
10. Jane	is being helped

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Exercise 3

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|-----|----------|----------|
| 1. | He | was |
| 2. | party | is |
| 3. | plane | is |
| 4. | crew | is |
| 5. | travel | will be |
| 6. | cost | was |
| 7. | train | has been |
| 8. | I | am |
| 9. | students | were |
| 10. | actors | are |

Exercise 4

SUBJECTS		VERBS
1.	student (from France)	entered
2.	children (from the school)	caught
3.	flock (of geese)	perched (on the fence)
4.	scarf (around her neck)	is
5.	interest (in the letter) (about the proposal)	amazed
6.	reflection (on her school experiences)	entertained
7.	life (of the students)	interested (of us)
8.	bushes (along the path)	were
9.	time (for dinner)	has been set
10.	chairs (between the two tables)	have been reserved

Exercise 5

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|----|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Some (of the teachers) | were |
| 2. | all (of the students) | are |
| 3. | many (of you) | are taking |
| 4. | which (of the books) | are (on reserve) |
| 5. | most (of them) | have come (from another country) |
| 6. | one (of you) | will put (in the box) |
| 7. | both (of the trains) | ran |
| 8. | none (of the patients) | had taken |

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|-----|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 9. | each (of the characters) | has acted |
| 10. | none (on their friends) | will volunteer |
| | | |
| 1. | pilot, passengers | survived |
| 2. | teacher | gave, left |
| 3. | Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith | will be married |
| 4. | mother | will stay, cook |
| 5. | courage, advice | convinced |
| 6. | orchestra, chorus | rose, bowed |
| 7. | some | yelled, screamed |
| 8. | Bunny, Joan | have moved |
| 9. | tennis, swimming, golf | have been, will be |
| 10. | president | visited, praised |

Website for Practice

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/indexexercises.htm>

Towson Education Online Exercises – Go to Parts of Speech/Grammar.