



SUBJECTS & PREDICATES

All sentences consist of at least two basic elements, a subject and a predicate. As we learned in the last lesson, the subject is a person or thing, and the predicate is an action. In the example below, *Bob* is the subject, and *grinned* is the predicate:

Bob grinned.

Anytime you have both a subject and a predicate, you have a **clause**—yet another strange grammar word Aunt Eunustice must have invented. And a clause, if it can stand on its own feet, making sense all on its own, is called an *independent* clause and is a sentence. If a clause doesn't make sense on its own, it is called a dependent clause and doesn't count as a full sentence. For example, both of these clauses have a subject and a predicate:

Melissa sang: *an independent clause (it makes total sense on its own)*

As she walked to the park: *a dependent clause (it can't stand on its own)*

Not all subjects and predicates consists of just one word. In fact, some subjects and predicates are rather complicated.

Bob's stinky purple mustache exploded violently all over the universe.
complete subject *complete predicate*

Subjects can be described as:

complete subject: all the words that describe the subject

red squirrel

simple subject: the most important word

squirrel

compound subject: two or more simple subjects

squirrel and chicken.

Similarly, predicates can be described as:

complete predicate: all the words that describe the action

exploded violently all over the universe

simple predicate: the most important word

exploded

compound predicate: two or more simple predicates

exploded and stank

Sentences too can be described in terms of how simple their arrangement of subject(s) and predicate(s) are.

Simple sentence: has only one subject and one predicate.

Compound sentences: created when two simple sentences are joined by a comma and a word like *and* or *but*.

Complex sentences: formed when one or more *dependent* clauses (clauses that can't stand on their own as simple sentences) are added to an *independent* clause (a clause that could function as a simple sentence).

As I was driving to work today,	kittens fell from the sky.
dependent clause	independent clause

Write the **simple subject** in the blank to the right.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Montana Jack's horse was faster than lightning. | <i>horse</i> |
| 1. My own chubby horse raced like a snail, only with fur. | _____ |
| 2. I thought about the story <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> . | _____ |
| 3. Everybody loves an unexpected victory from an underdog. | _____ |
| 4. Even slow, plodding Penelope could have an hour of glory. | _____ |
| 5. Clouds of dust whirled up in front of us as we tried to keep up. | _____ |
| 6. How did defeat surprise me after all? | _____ |

Identify the **complete subject**.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Henry's prize rifle lay in the grass. | <i>Henry's prize rifle</i> |
| 1. Next to it rested the keys to his front door. | _____ |

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2. Henry's heart skipped a beat. _____

3. Racing up the front steps, a frantic, frightened Henry turned the door knob.

4. Nine bullet holes formed a perfectly executed 'X' in the wood.

5. Henry's mysterious enemy was a straight shot. _____

6. As he stepped back from the doorway, Henry's T-shirt clung to him, drenched with sweat.

Write the **simple predicate** in the blank.

Jenna rode into the sunset. *rode*

1. The proud heads of the ostriches cast long shadows beneath her chariot wheels.

2. The day spent itself in a lavish display of color. _____

3. Jenna's feelings of hope plummeted with the dark that swiftly followed.

4. Yes, ostriches ran like the wind. _____

5. But not even the wind could outrun the vengeance of the king.

6. She closed her eyes briefly. _____

Identify the **complete predicate**.

The hurricane swept away every house. *swept away every house*

1. Cranberry Avenue was now strictly a heap of debris. _____

2. She still counted off the house numbers to herself. _____

3. She always paused longest in front of her vanished gate. _____

4. She wished so powerfully and helplessly for the past. _____

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5. But wishes gave her nothing but further pain. _____

6. She vowed to herself again and again to rebuild. _____

Identify each sentence as either a **simple sentence** or a **compound sentence** by circling S or C.

1. I have a tendency to oversleep. S C

2. It causes me no end of problems, but I can't seem to shake the habit. S C

3. Why does everybody but me wake up when an alarm clock goes off? S C

4. I turn the volume up as high as it will go, and I still don't hear it. S C

5. I am thinking of rigging up a bucket of water above my pillow. S C

6. I wish my alarm clock could pull on the rope and douse me with water. S C

Circle the **independent clause** in each sentence below. Remember that an independent clause can stand on its own. An independent clause can function as a simple sentence.

1. While Amina slept, Greg noiselessly snuck her teddybear from beneath her arm.

2. Amina's forehead creased in sleep.

3. Would she wake up?

4. He let out a long, slow breath, watching as her features relaxed.

5. If the surprise was going to work, he needed to act fast.

6. Quickly, Greg dressed the bear in the pirate costume.

Circle the **dependent clause** or clauses (there may be more than one or none at all) in each sentence below. Unlike an independent clause, a dependent clause cannot stand on its own.

1. Although Monique sat quietly at her desk, her thoughts were far away.

2. Until the professor mentioned living for a time in Ghana, she had been paying close attention.

3. Since it took so much daily effort to put Ghana behind her, it shook her up to hear her home mentioned without any warning on an ordinary Thursday.

4. Suddenly her inner being was no longer in Montana.

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5. She imagined she was winding through the labyrinth of stalls in her village market, because Thursdays were market days, after all.
6. She could almost taste a paper-wrapped hot beignet right now, even though she was stuck in Montana.

Turn the simple sentences below into complex sentences by adding one or more **dependent clauses** to the independent clause of the sentence. There are many correct ways to do this, so be creative!

Merlin lived his life backwards.

According to some legends I've read, Merlin lived his life backwards.

or

Merlin lived his life backwards, even though he seemed like an ordinary man.

1. The wolf pack slunk away.

2. She ate as much and as fast as she could.

3. Jack was even afraid of rubber ducks.

4. The grieving woman kept to her room.

5. Nothing could deter him from reaching his goal.

6. She secretly believed her Lego people could come to life.

