CHAPTER 10: THE SENTENCE

SENTENCE SENSE

10a A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES
The writing lab has several new computers.
Please be on time for play rehearsal.
Have you read the chapter on the Civil War?
Stop the car now!

10b A declarative sentence makes a statement. It is always followed by a period.

EXAMPLES
Shanti was elected class president two years in a row.
Here are two more suggestions.

10c An imperative sentence gives a command or makes a request. It is usually followed by a period. A strong command is followed by an exclamation point.

The subject of a command or a request is always you, but you doesn’t usually appear in the sentence. When you doesn’t appear, it is called the understood subject. You is the understood subject even when the person is addressed by name.

EXAMPLES
[You] Please shut the window.
[You] Watch out!
Rosaria, [you] please read the first two sentences aloud.

10d An interrogative sentence asks a question. It is followed by a question mark.

EXAMPLES
How did you know my name?
Do you live in Canada?

10e An exclamatory sentence shows excitement or expresses strong feeling. It is followed by an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES
What an exciting soccer game that was!
I can’t believe we are finally at the cabin!
EXERCISE 1  Identifying Sentences
On the line before each sentence, write s. if the group of words is a sentence or n.s. if the group of words is not a sentence. Add correct punctuation if the group of words is a sentence.

EX.  n.s.  1. Whenever she rides her mountain bike
      s.  2. Alana wears her helmet whenever she rides her mountain bike

____  1. Before the music began to play
____  2. Did Brad send Danielle a bouquet of yellow roses
____  3. Listening to the distant sound of thunder and seeing lightning crack across the nighttime sky
____  4. There is a way out of the tunnel
____  5. There wasn’t much left to eat by the time Malcolm arrived
____  6. Dr. García uses all the latest equipment in her dental practice
____  7. Walking to the party
____  8. Tyrone sat on the beach because he had broken his ankle
____  9. Imagine what could happen in the future
____ 10. Where did I put my library card

EXERCISE 2  Classifying and Punctuating Sentences
Classify each of the following sentences by writing dec. for declarative, imp. for imperative, int. for interrogative, or exc. for exclamatory on the line before the sentence. Then add the correct punctuation.

EX.  exc.  1. How loud that music is!
____  1. Every year, the island loses sand to the shifting tides and shrinks an inch or two
____  2. What a frightening experience that was
____  3. Hang up your coat in the front closet
____  4. I can’t believe how close to us that dolphin swam
____  5. Were you able to answer all the questions on that test
10f  The subject tells whom or what the sentence is about.

To find the subject of a sentence, ask who or what is doing something or whom or what is being talked about. The subject may come at the beginning, the middle, or the end of a sentence.

EXAMPLES  On his trip to the Amazon rain forest, Mr. Bergeron took hundreds of photographs. [Who took photographs? Mr. Bergeron did.]

Hanging from the thick tree branch was a hairy sloth. [What was hanging from the tree branch? A hairy sloth was.]

The rain forest is the habitat of many interesting animals. [What is being talked about? The rain forest is.]

10g  The complete subject consists of all the words needed to tell whom or what a sentence is about. The simple subject is the main word or words in the complete subject.

EXAMPLE  That spiny little creature is a hedgehog.

COMPLETE SUBJECT  That spiny little creature

SIMPLE SUBJECT  creature

EXAMPLE  Does Groundhog Day in the United States fall on February 2?

COMPLETE SUBJECT  Groundhog Day in the United States

SIMPLE SUBJECT  Groundhog Day

NOTE  In this book, the term subject means the simple subject unless it is defined otherwise.

EXERCISE 3  Identifying Subjects

Underline the subject in each of the following sentences.

EX.  1. The rain forest supports a tremendous diversity of life.

1. Many scientists are now studying rain forest plants.

2. The United States National Cancer Institute knows of over two thousand rain forest plants with cancer-fighting properties.
3. In her report, Jenna explained the effect of the rain forest on the weather.

4. The rain forest in the Amazon region influences the rainfall there.

5. “El Yunque” is the name of a rain forest in Puerto Rico.

6. With its fierce winds, Hurricane Hugo practically eliminated the Puerto Rican parrot from El Yunque.

7. Roaming the rain forests of New Guinea are huge, ferocious birds called cassowaries.

8. Standing almost as tall as a man, cassowaries have wings but can’t fly.

9. The female cassowary lays four to eight green eggs on the forest floor.

10. Do people know enough about ways to preserve the world’s rain forests?

**EXERCISE 4 Identifying Complete Subjects and Simple Subjects**

Underline the complete subject in each of the following sentences. Then draw a second line under the simple subject.

**EX.** 1. Our history teacher told us about the Shona culture.

1. The people of this culture lived in southern Africa many years ago.

2. The buildings of their capital city still stand today.

3. The capital, called Great Zimbabwe, lies near the Sabi River.

4. More than ten thousand people may have lived in the capital city.

5. Every year, fascinated tourists come to this home of one of the great cultures of the ancient world.
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THE PREDICATE

10h The predicate of a sentence is the part that says something about the subject.

Like the subject, the predicate may be found anywhere in a sentence.

EXAMPLES
The Lincoln Memorial is a national monument.
High above all the other buildings in Washington, D.C., stands the Washington Monument.
Throughout the city we saw historic sites.

10i The simple predicate, or verb, is the main word or group of words in the complete predicate. The complete predicate consists of all the words that say something about the subject.

EXAMPLE
The author autographed copies of his latest book.

COMPLETE PREDICATE autographed copies of his latest book
SIMPLE PREDICATE (VERB) autographed

A verb phrase has a main verb and one or more helping verbs. Helping verbs include will, can, do, should, would, could, and forms of the verbs be and have. [See the list of helping verbs on page 111.]

NOTE
The words not and never are adverbs, not verbs. They are never part of a verb or verb phrase.

EXERCISE 5 Identifying Predicates

Underline the complete predicate in each of the following sentences.


1. Two million people gathered along the shore of New York Harbor.
2. The occasion was the hundredth birthday of Lady Liberty.
3. For the big event, workers repaired the statue.
4. The repairs cost more than sixty-nine million dollars.
5. The Statue of Liberty was ready for her birthday party.
6. She had new elevators, a new torch, and a repaired crown.
7. At the celebration, spectators saw a dazzling display of fireworks.
8. Forty thousand fireworks soared into the sky over the harbor.
9. From the enormous crowd of people came a loud chorus of cheers and applause.
10. This was one of the largest displays of fireworks in the history of the United States.

**EXERCISE 6  Identifying Complete Predicates and Verbs**

Underline the complete predicate in the sentences below. Then write the verb or verb phrase on the line following the sentence.

ex. 1. You should have brought pictures of your vacation.

| should have brought |

1. A local actor and comedian writes funny stories about his childhood.

2. The library will be closed on Fridays during the summer.

3. The boys want pizza and salad for supper.

4. I can never remember our new telephone number.

5. Put the dirty dishes in the sink.
A compound subject consists of two or more connected subjects that have the same verb. The usual connecting word is and or or.

EXAMPLES
- The bear and the badger hibernate in the winter. [Bear and badger are both subjects of the verb hibernate. The two parts of the subject are connected by and.]
- Freda, Thomas, or his sister will baby-sit for the Grants. [Freda, Thomas, and sister are all subjects of the verb phrase will baby-sit. The three parts of the subject are connected by or.]

A compound verb consists of two or more connected verbs that have the same subject. A connecting word—usually and, or, or but—is used to join the verbs.

EXAMPLE
- Kim trained hard and then worked as a camp counselor. [Both verbs, trained and worked, have the same subject, Kim.]
- Namir may set the table, serve the meal, or wash the dishes. [Namir is the subject of the verbs may set, serve, and wash.]

Sometimes the subject of a sentence is difficult to locate. In such cases, find the verb first and then ask yourself whom or what the verb is referring to.

EXAMPLES
- In English class, we are reading poetry. [The verb phrase is are reading. Who are reading? We are reading. We is the subject of the sentence.]
- In the bowl were ripe fruit and cheese sticks. [Were is the verb. What were in the bowl? The answer is fruit and sticks. Fruit and sticks are the subjects.]

EXERCISE 7  Identifying Compound Subjects
Circle the verb and underline the compound subject in each of the following sentences.

EX. 1. Nutrition and health are interesting topics.

1. Apples and oranges are healthful choices for a snack.
2. Vitamin C and dietary fiber are found in apples.
3. However, oranges and the juice of oranges contain five times as much vitamin C.

4. Iron and vitamins are plentiful in whole wheat bread.

5. White eggs and brown eggs are equally nutritious.

**EXERCISE 8  Identifying Compound Verbs**

In the following sentences, circle the verbs or verb phrases that make up the compound verb and underline the subjects.

**EX.** 1. Some **people** can **operate** huge machines but **will** not **touch** a computer.

1. The sun gives light and provides warmth.

2. Baby penguins stand on their parents' feet and cuddle.

3. John bought tickets but never arrived for the play.

4. Dodo birds and dinosaurs once existed but now are extinct.

5. In late autumn the leaves on the oak tree turn bright red and fall to the ground.

6. Staple or clip the pages of your report together.

7. The *Titanic* hit an iceberg and sank.

8. The math problems looked hard but were really very simple.

9. Will Father drive us to the movie and take us home later?

10. Magda read the book and then wrote a review of it for the school newspaper.
A. Identifying Sentences by Purpose
On the line before the sentence, identify each sentence by writing dec. for declarative, imp. for imperative, int. for interrogative, or exc. for exclamatory. Then add the correct punctuation mark.

ex. int. 1. Would you rather see a movie about baseball or watch a baseball game?

_____ 1. Mom, please get a new movie while you are out
_____ 2. What a great baseball movie that was
_____ 3. How long will it take for your mother to return
_____ 4. We can make some popcorn while we wait
_____ 5. Don’t touch that hot pan

B. Identifying Complete Subjects and Complete Predicates
Underline the complete subjects once and the complete predicates twice in the following sentences.

ex. 1. The entire population of the city welcomed the winning team back home.

1. The baseball team had never won a championship in the history of our school.
2. During the season, the players and coaches worked hard.
3. Their dedication to the game was obvious.
4. Among their greatest achievements was perfect attendance by each player.
5. People in this town may never again feel such pride and joy.

C. Identifying Simple Subjects and Verbs
Underline the simple subjects and circle the verbs or verb phrases in the following sentences.

ex. 1. Dorothea Dix became a schoolteacher at the age of fourteen.

1. This amazing woman also wrote children’s books.
2. In 1841, she visited a jail in Massachusetts.
3. The jail housed not only criminals but also people with mental disorders.

4. The Massachusetts schoolteacher was horrified.

5. Because of Dorothea's work, states built proper hospitals for people with mental health problems.

D. Using Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs in Writing

You live in the year 2300. You have been on a long journey into space. On the lines below, write notes for a log that tells about your experience. Write your notes in sentence form. Include and label at least five compound subjects and five compound verbs in your notes. Use your own paper if you need more space. These are some of the questions you might answer in your notes.

1. What did you see on your journey?
2. Did you make any stops? If so, where?
3. What was the most unusual experience you had on your journey?
4. What was the most amusing thing that occurred on the journey?
5. What was the most frightening thing that happened on your journey?

EX. June 14, 2300—After twenty-five days in space, we saw and photographed an amazing meteor collision.