

SOME IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SUBJECTS AND VERBS:

1. The subject of a sentence is either a **NOUN** or a **PRONOUN**. It is helpful to think of a **PRONOUN** as a word that represents a thing (or a person) without naming it.

A noun is a word used to represent a thing (or person) by naming it: **John, physics, girl, hobo, New York.**

A pronoun is a word used to represent a thing (or person) without naming it: **I, we, you, he, she, it, they.**

2. The **SUBJECT** or the **VERB** of a sentence may be **COMPOUND**, or **BOTH THE SUBJECT AND THE VERB MAY BE COMPOUND**. **That is, there may be two or more subjects, and two or more verbs.**

Steve and Mary painted the house. (**compound subject**)

Steve painted the house and planted trees. (**compound verb**)

Steve and Mary painted the house and planted trees. (**compound subject and verb**)

3. Many **VERBS** consist of more than one word, depending on the time of the action, which relates to the **TENSE** of the verb. Below, for example, are some of the many forms of the verb **talk**:

talk	were talking	will be talking
talks	have talked	must talk
does talk	has talked	would talk
is talking	had talked	can talk
are talking	had been talking	should have talked

The following sentences contain verbs which are formed by using more than one word:

Diane is not working overtime this week.

Another book has been written about the Kennedy assassination.

The game has just been canceled.

PLEASE NOTE: Words like **NOT, JUST, NEVER, ONLY,** and **ALWAYS** are not part of the verb although they may appear within the verb.

4. Some **VERBS** require a **DIRECT OBJECT** to complete their meaning. For example, it does not make sense to say just. . . "Bert likes." Bert likes what? **DIRECT OBJECTS** answer the question "**WHAT?**" after a verb. Jazz is the answer and also the **DIRECT OBJECT** of this sentence -- Bert likes jazz.
5. It is important to distinguish **SUBJECTS** from **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES**. The subject of a

sentence never appears within a **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE**. A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** is a group of words that begins with a **PREPOSITION**.

Below is a list of some common **PREPOSITION**:

about	before	by	in	on	through
above	behind	during	inside	onto	to
across	below	except	into	out	toward
among	beneath	for	of	over	under
around	beside	from	off	past	with
at	between				

Here are some examples of some **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES**, which are phrases that begin with a preposition:

across the street	on the desk	under the table
before the dawn	up the river	inside the bank
at the gate	off the mark	for your mother

It is often helpful to locate the **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES** in a sentence first, in order to correctly pinpoint the subject. In the sentences below, all the prepositional phrases have been crossed out in order to make it easier to locate the subjects of those sentences:

~~Under my pillow~~ I found a quarter left ~~by the Tooth Fairy~~. (the subject is I)

John did not ~~hear about the cancellation of the class~~. (the subject is John)

~~During the rainstorm~~, Maria sat ~~in my car~~ reading magazines. (the subject is Maria)

THERE ARE SEVERAL PRACTICE EXERCISES ON THE NEXT THREE PAGES. PLEASE COMPLETE THESE EXERCISES IN ORDER TO REINFORCE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SUBJECTS, VERBS, AND PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

PRACTICE 1 -- FINDING SUBJECTS

Underline the subjects in the following sentences. The verbs have already been underlined twice. Remember to ask yourself WHO or WHAT the sentence is about.

1. Most students took one hour to finish the essay exam.
2. My socks wore thin after only three months.
3. Melanie has driven her car across the country on three separate occasions.
4. The windstorm blew over the storage shed in the backyard.
5. The video game was played by the entire family.
6. Pretzels and chips are his favorite evening snacks.
7. The window fan made a clanking sound and kept them awake at night.
8. The wind blew our storm door off its hinges.
9. The children stared in wide-eyed amazement at the Thanksgiving Day floats.
10. The shrubs are growing too close to the side of the house.

PRACTICE 2 -- FINDING VERBS

Draw a double line under the verbs in the following sentences. The subjects have already been underlined. Remember that you find a verb by asking what the sentence says about the subject.

1. Barbara believes in ghosts.
2. Most of my friends like my new hairstyle.
3. The drawer of the bureau sticks on rainy days.
4. The sun reflecting off the lake blinded my eyes.
5. Her part-time job limits her study time.
6. The game was called because of darkness.
7. The picture fell suddenly to the floor.
8. The checkout lines at the supermarket moved very slowly.
9. An old newspaper tumbled down the dirty street.
10. He starts every morning with a series of yoga exercises.

PRACTICE 3 -- FINDING SUBJECTS AND VERBS

Draw a single line under all the subjects and a double line under all the verbs in the following sentences. Where appropriate, be sure to identify all the words that are part of the verb.

1. All sentences have subjects.
2. Bread is the staff of life.
3. He might have been president.
4. Today's students are tomorrow's teachers.
5. The baby ate the sandwich.
6. The baby had eaten the sandwich.
7. The baby is eating the sandwich.
8. You smoke too much.
9. The firecracker exploded.
10. Your first thought is often your best.

PRACTICE 4 -- FINDING COMPOUND SUBJECTS AND VERBS

Draw a single line under all the subjects and a double line under all the verbs in the following sentences. Where appropriate, be sure to identify all the words that are part of the verb.

1. Tuna and dolphin were trapped in the fisherman's net.
2. Psychology and history are my favorite subjects.
3. Carol and Arnie have both received raises in their salaries.
4. She wrapped the packages and tied them with ribbons.
5. He majored in business administration and minored in women's studies.
6. The captain and the crew escaped in the lifeboats.
7. The sugar maple and the hemlock are both native to Canada.
8. Music, literature, and art are essential for a broad education.
9. I rose, steadied myself, and launched into my speech.
10. He pruned the bushes, mowed the lawn, clipped the hedge, and watered the flower beds all in one evening.

PRACTICE 5 -- LOCATING PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES I

First, cross out all the prepositional phrases. Then draw a single line under all the subjects and a double line under all the verbs. Where appropriate, be sure and identify all the words that are part of the verb.

1. The attractive man over there in the corner is one of my former husbands.
2. The dishes in the sink must be washed before tomorrow.
3. Both of my house keys are missing.
4. The hamburger on sale for 99¢ a pound looks several days old.
5. In the middle of the movie, the screen suddenly went blank.
6. The water stain on her blue suede shoes disappeared after brushing.
7. The last rays of the sun faded into darkness.
8. During the baseball game, my twin brother ate five hot dogs.
9. Without the help of a calculator, I could not balance my checkbook.
10. Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we will go.

PRACTICE 6 -- LOCATING PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES II

First, cross out all the prepositional phrases. Then draw a single line under all the subjects and a double line under all the verbs. Where appropriate, be sure to identify all the words that are part of the verb.

1. I did not hear about the cancellation of the class until yesterday.
2. A solution to the problem on page ten popped into my head last night.
3. The doctor spoke gently to the tear stained little boy with the broken finger.
4. Diesel trucks with heavy exhaust fumes should be banned from the road.
5. Her earrings were on the headboard of her bed.
6. I found the key for the back door under the kitchen mat.
7. She put the food in the oven and sat down to read the paper.
8. The variety of undersea life staggers the imagination.
9. She had been hoping for an appointment with the president for next week.
10. The old man shuffled along the sidewalk and stopped at intervals for a chat with the neighbors.