

Parts of the Sentence – Simple Subjects and Simple Predicates

Every sentence has a subject and predicate. A **simple subject** is the main noun or pronoun that tells who or what the sentence is about. A **simple predicate** is the verb or verb phrase that tells something about the subject.

Usually, it's easier to find the simple predicate first and then find the simple subject. To find the simple predicate, look for the action (walk, talk, argue, plant, etc.) of the sentence. Remember, though, that not all simple predicates are action verbs. If there isn't any apparent action taking place, a linking verb (is, am, are, was, were, etc.) may be present instead.

Once you've found the simple predicate of the sentence, the simple subject can be easily found by asking yourself who or what is performing OR being identified or described by the verb.

Example 1: Barbara washed the dog.

Think: What's the action of this sentence?

Answer: *washed*

Ask: Who's doing the washing?

Answer: *Barbara*

Example 2: Margaret is beautiful.

Think: What's the action of this sentence?

Answer: *is* (not an action verb but a linking verb describing Margaret's appearance.)

Think: Who or what is being identified by *is*? (Or, in other words, who *is* beautiful?)

Answer: *Margaret*

Exercise

Directions: Draw one line under each simple subject and two lines under each simple predicate.

1. The house collapsed in a cloud of dust.
2. The submarine captain peered through the periscope.
3. The dog stared intensely at the cat.

4. The wet grass shimmered in the sun.
5. David will paint the old fence.
6. Valerie searched for her concert tickets.
7. The king ordered the rebels to be imprisoned.
8. The ocean waves became extremely choppy as the storm approached.
9. An orange and red hen pecked at the seeds on the ground.
10. An old rickshaw clattered down the street.
11. A vibrant orange sun rose above the mountain peaks.
12. The lightening frightened us as we ran for cover.
13. Bob wrote another chapter of his novel.
14. Children always play enthusiastically at recess.
15. The hawk perched high in the tree.

Answer Key:

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| 1. house – s; collapsed – p | 6. Valerie – s; searched – p | 11. sun – s; rose – p |
| 2. captain – s; peered – p | 7. king – s; ordered – p | 12. lightening – s; frightened – p |
| 3. dog –s ; stared – p | 8. waves – s; became – p | 13. Bob – s; wrote – p |
| 4. grass – s; shimmered – p | 9. hen – s; pecked – p | 14. Children – s; play – p |
| 5. David – s; will paint – p | 10. rickshaw – s; clattered – p | 15. hawk – s; perched – p |