

Parts of a Sentence

1. What are the Parts of a Sentence?

In everyday life, people use sentences both in speech and in writing. Basically, a sentence is a grammatical unit which expresses a complete thought. You probably already know that it can be used to communicate a fact or an idea, state a command or a request, ask a question, or express a strong emotion.

But what about the parts of a sentence? In this article, you will be familiarized with the different parts of a sentence, and some examples will also be provided for your reference.

2. Subject

The [subject](#) simply refers to the doer of the action or to what (or whom) the sentence is all about. It can be in the form of a noun or a pronoun, and is usually (but not always) located before the [predicate](#).

Important Terms to Remember:

- [Simple Subject](#)= ONLY the main noun or pronoun

Example: Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* is my favorite novel.

The italicized part is the main noun that serves as the simple subject of the sentence.

- [Complete Subject](#)= the subject itself (main noun or pronoun) + other words that modify the subject

Example: *Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club* is my favorite novel.

The main subject is only "Fight Club," but if you're instructed to identify the complete subject, you must include "Chuck Palahniuk's" (because it modifies the main noun).

- [Compound Subject](#)= multiple subjects (including the words that modify them)

Example: *Christopher and the old man* became friends.

The italicized part is the compound subject in this example.

Note: There are times when the subject is not actually written in the sentence, such as in the sample sentence below.

Sit down!

The sentence above states a command, and even though the subject was not explicitly stated, you should automatically know that the subject is “you.”

3. Predicate

The predicate can be considered as one of the most important parts of a sentence. It is basically the part which says something about the subject and always contains a verb.

Important Terms to Remember:

- **Simple Subject**= ONLY the main verb

Example: The boa constrictor swallowed the whole monkey.

The underlined word is the main verb, which shows the action of the subject (boa constrictor).

- **Complete Predicate**= the main verb + other words that modify the verb

Example: The boa constrictor swallowed the whole monkey.

If you're instructed to underline the complete predicate, you must include “the whole monkey” and not only the verb “swallowed.”

- **Compound Predicate**= multiple verbs (including the words that modify them)

Example: The boa constrictor suffocated and swallowed the whole monkey.

The italicized part is the compound subject in this example.

4. Clause

The clause is a group of words within a sentence, which contains its own subject and predicate.

Two Kinds of Clauses:

- **Independent Clause**– this kind of clause expresses a complete thought and can stand on its own.

- Dependent Clause– as the name suggests, the dependent clause cannot stand on its own, and must be attached to an independent clause in order to have a complete thought.

Example: Chandler washed the car, *even though he didn't want to*.

The underlined group of words is the independent clause because it expresses a complete thought, and can even stand as a separate sentence. The italicized part, on the other hand, is the dependent clause because it relies on the first part of the sentence in order to make sense.

5. Phrases

Unlike a clause, a phrase is a group of words which doesn't have a subject or a predicate.

Types of Phrases:

- Noun phrase– as the name suggests, this type functions as a noun.
- Adjective phrase– this type acts as an adjective which describes nouns or pronouns
- Prepositional phrase– this type is composed of a preposition, an object of the preposition, and its modifiers
- Adverb phrase– this type functions as an adverb, and starts with a preposition

Examples of Phrases:

- He is an actor of great versatility. (adjective phrase)
- The house on the left is haunted. (prepositional phrase)

Final Thoughts

Knowing about the essential parts of a sentence will help you become a better writer and communicator. You will be able to avoid constructing a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that looks like a sentence but doesn't actually convey a complete thought. Furthermore, the knowledge that you gained on the concepts related to the parts of a sentence will help you improve your overall writing style and will definitely come in handy as you move on to more advanced topics in grammar as well.