

HOW TO WRITE A SIMPLE SENTENCE

Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will learn about the important parts of a simple sentence. You will review the main parts of speech and learn about punctuation marks and capitalization. Let's begin!

Warm-Up

A. Writing

Get a blank piece of paper.

1. Write a list of five people.
2. Write a list of five actions.
3. Now write five short sentences. Use the words from your lists.
4. Share your sentences with a partner.

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match these words to their correct definitions.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. punctuation | a) a word that changes or adds to the meaning of another word or phrase |
| _____ 2. part of speech | b) marks in a sentence (e.g., periods, question marks, exclamation marks) |
| _____ 3. capitalization | c) a word that describes a noun or pronoun |
| _____ 4. subject | d) type of word form in a sentence (e.g., noun, verb, adjective) |
| _____ 5. verb | e) a word that describes an action or state |
| _____ 6. complement | f) the main person or thing that is doing the action |
| _____ 7. direct object | g) the use of a large (capital) letter at the beginning of a word |
| _____ 8. modifier | h) information that completes a sentence |
| _____ 9. adjective | i) a person or thing that receives the action in a sentence |
| _____ 10. adverb | j) a word that describes a verb or other modifier |

Identifying the Subject and Verb

Here is one of the most important things to learn about English: Every sentence needs a *subject* and a *verb*. Let's practice looking for these parts in some simple sentences.

A. Verb

Think of the *verb* as the most important part of a sentence. The *verb* identifies the **action** or **state** of the main person or thing in the sentence. A verb can also **link** a subject to more information about the subject.

Action Verbs:

- go
- walk
- sing
- eat
- play
- run

Non-Action Verbs:

- be
- keep
- feel
- have
- seem
- look

B. Subject

The *subject* is the other essential part of a sentence. The subject is the person, place, thing, or idea that *is* or *does* something in a sentence.

After you find the *verb*, look for the subject.

- Mary walked.
Who walked?
Mary (*subject*)
- The dog barked.
Who barked?
The dog (*subject*)

More than one person or thing in a sentence can be the subject:

- The students and their teacher are at the library.
Who are there?
The students and their teacher (*subject*)

Task 1

Circle the subject in each sentence. Underline the verb.

1. She called.
2. The sun set.
3. Ralph sang in the choir.
4. Her cell phone died.
5. My sisters live in New York City.

Task 2

Write three simple sentences that contain a subject and a verb.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Subject-Verb Agreement

A. Singular and Plural Subjects

In English, the subject and verb must agree in number. This means that a *singular subject* takes a singular verb form and a *plural subject* takes a plural verb form.

Look at the correct sentences.
Now look at the incorrect sentences. What is wrong?

Correct Sentences:

- I *am* happy.
- The cat *eats* the mouse.
- The children *sing* a song.
- Dogs *like* bones.

Incorrect Sentences:

- I *is* tired.
- The child *eat* the pie.
- The mice *runs* away.
- Dogs and kittens *likes* sunshine.

TO PLAY

Subject	Verb
I	play
You	play
He/she/it	plays
We	play
They	play

TO EAT

Subject	Verb
I	eat
You	eat
He/she/it	eats
We	eat
They	eat

TO BE

Subject	Verb
I	am
You	are
He/she/it	is
We	are
They	are

Task 3

Work with a partner. Do the following dialogues have subject-verb agreement? Correct the mistakes. Then practice the corrected dialogues.

Dialogue 1

- A: My name is Jesse.
B: Hi, Jesse. I *is* Miles.
These are my brothers.
A: Nice to meet you, Miles.
What *is* your brothers' names?

Dialogue 2

- A: My dogs *is* hungry.
B: Do your dogs *eats* spaghetti?
A: No, they *eat* dog food.

Dialogue 3

- A: What do you
does after school?
B: I *play* soccer after school.
A: My brother *play* soccer, too.

Subject-Verb Agreement cont.

B. Tricky Subjects

Sometimes it's difficult to know if a subject is *singular* or *plural*. Here are a few of the tricky subjects to watch for.

COMPOUND SUBJECTS

Some subjects refer to *more than one* person or thing. When they are connected with *and*, they require a plural verb.

Examples:

- Ella and Sona **are** twins.
- Red and orange **make** yellow.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Some subjects refer to a group (team, family, staff). A collective noun usually refers to the group as one unit, so it takes a singular verb.

Examples:

- My family **celebrates** every holiday together.
- My team **is** the Ravens.

SOMEONE / ANYONE / EVERYONE / NO ONE / EACH / EVERY

These words take singular verbs.

Examples:

- Someone/Somebody **needs** to bring food.
- Anyone/Anybody **is** welcome to come.
- Everyone/Everybody **knows** about the meeting.
- No one/Nobody **feels** tired.
- Each of the guests **has** a gift.
- Every person **gets** a turn.

Identifying the Complement

All sentences include a *subject* and a *predicate*. The *predicate* can be only a *verb*, or it can be a *verb* and a *complement*. The *complement* includes the extra parts that complete a thought in a sentence. Let's look at a few simple ways to complete a sentence.

A two-word sentence with only a *subject* and a *verb* can be a complete sentence. In this case, the *predicate* is the verb all by itself.

Q: How did Mark get to school?

A: Mark walked.
(*subject* + *verb* = *complete thought*)

Many sentences are incomplete with only a *subject* and a *verb*. They need more words to complete the thought.

Q: Where did Mary go?

A: Mary walked.
(*subject* + *verb* = *incomplete thought*)

Q: Walked where?

A: Mary walked to school.
(*subject* + *verb* + *complement* = *complete thought*)

A. Object Complements

A *direct object* is a person or thing that receives the action of a verb. Direct objects complete the meaning of sentences that contain an *action verb*.

Here are some sentences with direct objects. Answer the question to find the object.

- The mother rocked her baby. *Rocked what?*
- We went to the mall. *Went where?*
- I called my mother. *Called who(m)?*

B. Subject Complements

Another way to complete a sentence is with a *modifier*. A *modifier* can complete some information about the subject with a word or phrase such as an *adjective* or an *adverb*.

- She is nice. *What is she like?*
- The birds sound lovely. *How do they sound?*
- I feel really cold. *How do you feel?*

Task 4

Circle the object complement (*direct object*) in each sentence. Then write a similar sentence of your own.

1. I bought a book.
2. We ate dinner.
3. The girl played the guitar.
4. My mom washed the dishes.
5. _____

Task 5

Circle the subject complement (*modifier*) in each sentence. Then write a similar sentence of your own.

1. My dog is dirty.
2. You are late.
3. It was fun.
4. I feel terrible.
5. _____

Capitalization and Punctuation

In English, every sentence starts with a capital letter. The pronoun “I” is always written with a capital “I”. Every sentence ends with a punctuation mark. Let’s look at some different punctuation marks that go at the end of different types of sentences.

A. Period (.)

Most sentences end with a *period*. This punctuation mark is also called a *full stop*. When you type, leave a space *after* a period. Do NOT leave a space before a period.

Examples:

- I am tired.
- She left.
- We went to the store.
- My teacher called my mom.
- There is a loaf of bread on the table.

B. Exclamation Point (!)

Some sentences end with an *exclamation point*. This punctuation mark is also called an *exclamation mark*. This mark signals emotion such as anger, excitement, or fear.

Examples:

- He is late!
- We won!
- They’re here!
- I lost my wallet!
- It’s a girl!

C. Question Mark (?)

Place a question mark at the end of a sentence that requires an answer.

Examples:

- Who is the main character?
- Why did he leave?
- Where is the party?
- What’s his name?

Task 6

Rewrite the sentences in your notebook.
Fix the capitalization and punctuation.

1. where are you going
2. get up?
3. my dad likes marshmallows!
4. i will finish my book tomorrow
5. when will i hear from you
6. i came in first place
7. you’re late.
8. it’s already five o’clock
9. are they here yet.
10. help. i lost my dog?

Note:

Do not overuse exclamation points.
Save this mark for emphasis.

Reviewing the Main Parts of Speech

Before you move on to writing compound and complex sentences, it is useful to review the main parts of speech. Review these parts of speech and practice identifying each in a sentence. Then practice identifying each in your own sentences.

1. Nouns

Nouns describe people, places, things, or ideas:

- brother
- park
- bicycle
- time

Proper nouns are capitalized:

- Friday
- New York
- February
- Lisa

Nouns may be plural, singular, or uncountable:

- babies
- car
- water

Compound nouns have two or more words:

- high school
- doorknob
- swimming pool

2. Verbs

Verbs express actions or states:

- go
- walk
- is
- feel

Verbs can be in many different tenses:

- walk
- walked
- am walking

Every sentence has a verb.

Task 7

Circle the nouns. Then write your own **silly** sentence. Use a noun and circle it.

1. I ate seven bananas for lunch.
2. My home is a subway station.
3. I walked to London from Africa.

4. _____

Task 8

Circle the verbs. Then write your own **serious** sentence. Use a verb and circle it.

1. The test is on Monday.
2. Drop your weapons.
3. She slipped on the ice.

4. _____

Reviewing the Main Parts of Speech cont.

3. Adjectives

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns:

- white
- funny
- nice
- big

Adjectives often come before the words they modify.

- a *white* cat
- a *nice* man

Adjectives often come after the **Be** verb.

- The house **is** *big*.

4. Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

- happily
- very
- quickly
- well

5. Pronouns

Pronouns take the place of nouns. They reduce the need to repeat a noun in writing and speaking. There are many types of pronouns.

- he
- my
- they
- their
- us
- which
- I
- herself

Task 9

Circle the adjectives. Then write your own **sad** sentence. Use an adjective and circle it.

1. My elderly neighbor died.
2. A terrible storm destroyed the town.
3. The zoo animals are lonely.
4. _____

Task 10

Circle the adverbs. Then write your own sentence about **sports**. Use an adverb and circle it.

1. Did she run quickly?
2. I throw very far.
3. He lightly kicked the ball.
4. _____

Task 11

Circle the pronouns. Then write your own sentence about **love**. Use a pronoun and circle it.

1. He called me today.
2. I love your mother.
3. Did you kiss her?
4. _____

Reviewing the Main Parts of Speech cont.

6. Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words and other parts of a sentence:

- and
- because
- or
- therefore

7. Prepositions

Prepositions show relationships between words and indicate space or time. They link nouns to other words.

- in
- at
- on
- during

8. Articles

Articles are short words that come before a noun to show how many of a noun there are.

- a
- an
- the

Note:

Articles are sometimes classified as *determiners*. Determiners are *articles* (a, an, the), *quantifiers* (all, many, two), *demonstratives* (this, that), and more. Some determiners are classified as *adjectives* and others as *pronouns*. *Pronouns* are sometimes classified with *nouns*.

Task 12

Circle the conjunctions. Then write your own sentence about **family**. Use a conjunction and circle it.

1. My sister and I are twins.
2. I cried because I was sad.
3. Do you want jam or peanut butter?
4. _____

Task 13

Circle the prepositions. Then write your own sentence about **food**. Use a preposition and circle it.

1. The coffee cup is on the table.
2. We ate at the restaurant.
3. Put the sugar in the bowl.
4. _____

Task 14

Circle the articles. Then write your own sentence about **clothing or accessories**. Use an article and circle it.

1. The child is wearing a pink hat.
2. You will need an umbrella today.
3. The dress is in the laundry. Wear a suit.
4. _____

Comprehension Check-In

Work with a partner and answer the following questions based on the lesson so far.

1. What does every sentence need?
2. What is the difference between a *subject* and an *object*?
3. Name the main parts of speech in English.
4. What goes at the beginning of a written sentence?
5. What goes at the end of a written sentence?
6. Are the subjects *anyone*, *no one*, and *each* singular or plural?

Writing Challenge

Write ten simple sentences about one subject (person, place, or thing). Keep your sentences short and simple. Use a few modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) in your sentences.

Review the checklist below and edit your sentences. Show your sentences to a partner. Can he/she identify the subject and complement in each sentence? Can he/she identify the different parts of speech?

A Checklist

BEFORE SHARING YOUR SENTENCES

- ☐ Does each sentence have a subject and a verb?
- ☐ Do my subjects and verbs agree in number?
- ☐ Does each sentence start with a capital letter?
- ☐ Did I add the correct punctuation after every sentence?
- ☐ Do all of my proper nouns start with a capital letter?
- ☐ Did I capitalize the pronoun "I"?