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University of Batna2

Department of English Language and Culture

BA(Licence 1) - Groups : 7 and 10

Module:Written Expression

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LESSON ONE :

**The Sentence**

There are many definitions of a sentence. For example: a sentence expresses a complete thought / a sentence has an expressed or understood subject and a predicate.

**The Subject and the Predicate**

A sentence is composed of two essential parts, a subject and a predicate.

Subject predicate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Birds  Fish  Teachers  He  They | fly.  swim.  teach.  smiled.  are sleeping. |

Sometimes it is necessary to have more than one noun in the subject and more than one in the predicate. In this case, the groups of words would be called the *compound subject* and the *compound predicate.*

*Compound subject Compound predicate*

The students and their friends sang and danced all night.

The principal, the teachers, and the students wrote and produced the play.

**The Subject and the Predicate Expanded**

The simple subject and simple predicate can be expanded by adding other words. The entire group of words is called *the complete subject* and *the complete predicate.*

*Complete subject Complete predicate*

Some water birds can not fly.

Baby in need of food usually cry.

The manager and his devoted staff are going to hold a meeting.

**Agreement of Subjects and Predicates**

In English sentences, it is important to remember that the predicate must always agree with the subject in *person* and in *number*. If the predicate is made up of more than one verb only the first or auxiliary verb changes to agree with the subject.

I *am* leaving tomorrow.

John *and* I *are* leaving tomorrow.

He *is* leaving tomorrow.

John *or* his brother *is* leaving tomorrow.

They *are* leaving tomorrow.

John, Robert, andPaul *are* leaving tomorrow.

In the examples above only the auxiliary « *be »* agrees with the subject*.* The present participle « *leaving »* remains unchanged.

Sometimes a modifying phrase follows the simple subject. The phrase may contain nouns which appear to be the subject. In each of the following sentences, the true subject is in *italics*.

*One of* her books is missing.

*Uncle Harry,* together with Aunt Mildred and Cousin Alice, plans to travel to Europe soon.

Only *Fred, not* his brothers*,* is attending the university.

*John,* along with his parents, has moved to London.

The presence of a compound subject may cause confusion in agreement of subject and verb. The following guides may be helpful.

\*If the compound subject is connected by *and* andconveys a plural idea, the plural form of the verb must be used.

Imane *and* Ramzi ***are*** travelling now.

December *and* January ***are*** the coldest months of the year.

\*If the compound subject is connected by *and* but conveys a singular idea, the singular form of the verb must be used.

*Bread and butter* ***is*** what he likes best for breakfast.

*Ham and eggs* ***is*** all he ever eats.

\*The singular form of the verb must be used if the compound subjects are both singular and are connected by such connectives as *or, nor, either…or, neither…nor.*

Karim ***or***his sister ***is*** going to attend the party.

No man ***nor***beast ***was*** seen in the desert.

*Neither* time *nor* effort ***is*** enough to improve his grade.

*Either* the manager *or* his representative ***plans*** to attend.

\*Notice that if the compound subject is composed of two nouns differing in number or person, the subject that is **nearer** the verb determines the verb form.

*Either his brothers or Miloud* ***is*** planning to attend the party.

*Neither Salima nor I* ***am*** planning to go abroad.

\*When both parts of the compound subject are plural, the plural form of the verb must be used.

*Either his brothers or his sisters are*planning to visit their grandparents.

*Neither the girls nor the boys* **want** the party to be cancelled.

**NOTE: Do these exercises at home, and when you come to class, we will deal with them together.**

**Exercises**

1. Find the groups of words below that are not sentences. Tell whether the subject or predicate is missing.Complete the unfinished sentences.

Example : The changes in the last two centuries.

*Sentence part-------Subject only---------------Predicate missing*

*Sentence:*  The changes in the last centuries a*re amazing.*

1. The invention of machines has brought most of the changes.
2. Suppose George Washington could return to earth to day.
3. Would find himself in a strange new world.
4. In his time no building more than four stories high.
5. Automobiles and trains had not yet been invented.
6. Horse-drawn vehicles traveled on unpaved roads.
7. A vast number of changes in the last two hundred years.
8. Let us suppose Washington could travel backward in time.
9. At the court of the king of Babylon in 2000 B.C..

(10)There he would see many things that were familiar to him.

(11)The lamps, torches and charcoal fires.

(12)Familiar means of transportation

(13)Two hundred years is a short period of time history.

(14)The changes that have occurred in that time are tremendous.

(15)Without the invention of machines.

1. Divide each of the following sentences into two parts. One part should be the complete subject and the other part should be the complete predicate. List them in columns as below.

**Example*:*** *Complete subject Complete predicate*

Earlyman  made four basic inventions.

They led in time to other inventions.

(1)The wheel, the plow, the loom, and metalworking were basic.

(2) Mankind found a need for each of them.

(3)These inventions were apparently first made in Asia.

(4)The Indians in America invented the loom and developed processes of metalworking independently.

(5)Indians in Mexico also invented the wheel.

(6)They did not realize the importance of that invention.

(7)Their use of it is found only in toys for children.

(8)You will remember the Greek’s neglect of an invention.

(9)They invented a steam engine many, many years ago.

(10)That invention lay unused for hundreds and hundreds of years.

(11)James Watt reinvented the steam engine in 1760.

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**The Sentence (followed)**

**\*Complements**

We have seen that a noun can serve as a subject of a sentence and that the essential part of the predicate is the verb. Happily, some sentences can be formed with these two elements only.

Birds fly. Questions were asked. The speaker talked.

Fish swim. Answers were given. The audience listened.

Verbs often require additional words to complete a statement about the subject. Words that join with the verb to complete a statement about the subject of a sentence make up the *complement.* These complements can be *direct object, indirect object, subject complement,* or *object complement.* To see how these complements function let us look again at some simple subject –predicate combinations---this time with the predicate expanded.

**Direct Objects**

The sentences below have their predicates expanded by direct objects.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Subject** r **Predicate**

**VERB**  **DIRECT OBJECT**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | The teacher | is brushing | the blackboard. |
| *I* | am reading | a book. |
| The postman  Miss Smith | delivered  teaches | the letters.  English. |
| She | speaks | Spanish. |
|  |  |  |

You probably noticed that the direct objects in the sentences above are nouns. Verbs that can take direct objects are called *transitive.*

**Indirect Objects**

The sentences below have their predicates expanded by indirect objects.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Subject | Predicate | | |
| Noun/Pronoun | Verb | Indirect Object  (noun /pronoun) | Direct Object  ( noun) |
| I  He  Miss Smith  She  Uncle Harry | am reading  gave  told  gave  bought | my daughter  his wife  us  the class  Jane | book.  a present.  stories.  an exam.  a car. |

The direct object is a noun, and the indirect object, which precedes it, is also a noun or a pronoun. If the indirect object is a pronoun, it must be in the objective form: *me, you, him,her,us,them.*

Often a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* or *for* is used in place of the indirect object. The direct object in such patterns is often a pronoun.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SUBJECT | *PREDICATE* | | |
| Noun/pronoun | verb | complement | |
|  | direct object | Prepositional phrase |
| *He*  *Miss Smith*  *Uncle Harry*  *We*  *She* | *gave*  *told*  *bought*  *sent*  *ordered* | *a present*  *some stories*  *a car*  *them*  *some cakes* | *to his wife.*  *to the class.*  *for Jane.*  *to our families.*  *for us.* |

*\*\**

**Subject Complements**

The sentences below have their predicate expanded by subject complements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SUBJECT | PREDICATE | |
| John  Reading  Roses  Roses  I  My friend  He  She | Linking verb | Subject complement |
| was  is  are  are  feel  looks  became  is | a student.  important.  red.  flowers.  tired.  disappointed.  wealthy.  clever. |

You can easily see that a subject complement can be either a noun that refers to the subject or an adjective that describes the subject. You probably also noted that the verbs are all *linking verbs.* Subject complements must be joined to the subject by a *linking verb* such as *be,become,remain,seem,feel,look,grow,turn,appear,taste,sound,smell.*

Some linking verbs may have *adverbs*, either single word adverbs or prepositional phrases, in subject complement position. Notice the adverbs in subject complement position in the following sentences.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| subject | predicate | |
| My daughter  She  They  We  I  Your appointment | Linking verb | subject complement |
| is  is  are  remained  am  will be | here.  at home.  upstairs.  there.  from New York.  on Friday. |

Object Complements

The sentences below have their predicates expanded by object complements that refer to the direct object. Combinations of direct objects and object complements occur only with certain verbs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SUBJECT | PREDICATE | | |
| Noun/Pronoun | Verb | Complement | |
|  | Direct object | Object Complement |
| This noise  He  The class  She | is driving  likes  elected  painted | me  his coffee  him  her room | crazy.  strong.  president.  blue. |

We have seen how nouns and pronouns can be used as the subject of a sentence and how they can be used as complements, words that join with a verb to complete a statement about the subject. The kinds of combinations of subject, predicate, and complement possible in English sentences make up only a very few simple sentences patterns. These in turn can be combined and expanded in only a limited number of ways.

**(Normally you should see other basic sentence patterns in grammar module!)**

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