

Unit 1 — The Verb and Its Subject English 2600

Lesson 1 — What Makes a Sentence?

Rule #1: A group of words that both names something and makes a statement about it is a **complete sentence**. Most sentences have two parts: a *naming part* and a *telling part*.

Examples:

1. Stars glow.
2. Penguins waddle.
3. Cats meow.
4. Horses gallop.
5. Snakes slither.

Rule #2: In grammar, we call the naming part of a sentence the **subject** because it names the topic that the sentence is about. In grammar, we call the telling part of a sentence the **predicate**. The predicate makes a statement about the subject. In most English sentences, we usually first name what we are talking about; then we make a statement about what we have named.

Examples:

1. I (subject) eat (predicate).
2. Dogs (subject) bark (predicate).
3. Children (subject) sing (predicate).
4. Fire (subject) burns (predicate).
5. Meat (subject) spoils (predicate).

Lesson 2 — The Complete Subject and Predicate

Rule #1: Until now we have been working with sentences having a one-word subject and a one-word predicate. Usually, however, subjects and predicates have more than one word.

Examples:

1. The cat in the hallway (subject) hisses (predicate).
2. The umbrella under the couch (subject) protects us from the rain (predicate).
3. Clowns (subject) entertain at the circus (predicate).
4. Stars in the sky (subject) shine down upon us (predicate).
5. The food in the refrigerator (subject) spoiled (predicate).

Lesson 3 — The Simple Subject and Verb

Rule #1: In our grammar work, we shall be more concerned with the simple subject than with the complete subject. For convenience, therefore, we shall always refer to the simple subject as just the **subject**. From here on, the subject will mean not the complete subject but the simple subject.

Examples:

1. *The cat in the hallway hisses.*
2. *The umbrella under the couch protects us from the rain.*
3. *Clowns entertain at the circus.*
4. *Stars in the sky shine down upon us.*
5. *The food in the refrigerator spoiled.*

Rule #2: A word that can be used as the simple predicate of a sentence is called a **verb**. A simple predicate and a verb are the same thing. The verb tells us what the subject did.

Examples:

1. The cat in the hallway hisses.
2. The umbrella under the couch protects us from the rain.
3. Clowns entertain at the circus.
4. Stars in the sky shine down upon us.
5. The food in the refrigerator spoiled.

Rule #3: The simple subject and the verb “tell the story” of the sentence.

Examples:

1. The girl with the red freckles sang in the school choir.
2. My grandmother cooks for my family every night.
3. The coach of the basketball team screamed at the top of his lungs.
4. Pets in nursing homes heal lonely people.
5. My favorite teacher wrote on the blackboard only once a week.

Lesson 4 — Finding the Verb

Rule #1: The verb is the most important word in the predicate. Most verbs are *action words*. Verbs like **break, swim, build, and write** represent actions that we see going on around us. Some verbs like **decide, remember, think, hope, and understand** represent *actions of the mind*. These actions can’t be seen by an outsider.

Examples:

1. Action Verb that can be seen—sing
2. Action Verb that can be seen—eat
3. Action Verb that can’t be seen—trust
4. Action Verb that can’t be seen—imagine
5. Action Verb that can’t be seen—deduce

Rule #2: Verbs are the only words that can show by a change in spelling whether they mean *present* or *past* time; for example, **shout—shouted, play—played, take—took, give—gave**. When you change a sentence from *present* to *past* or from *past* to *present*, only one word changes—the verb.

Examples:

1. sing—sang (PRESENT—PAST)
I sing a song. I sang a song.
2. walk—walked (PRESENT—PAST)
My friend walks the dog. My friend walked the dog.
3. eat—ate (PRESENT—PAST)

- Healthy people eat broccoli. The healthy people ate broccoli.
4. jump—jumped (PRESENT—PAST)
Bad boys jump on their beds. The bad boys jumped on their beds.
 5. win—won (PRESENT—PAST)
Our team always wins. Our team always won.

Rule #3: When looking for the *subject* and *verb* in a sentence, always find the *verb* first. Look for the verb before you find the subject. After you find the verb, find the subject in this way: If, for example, the verb is **ran**, ask yourself, “Who or what **ran**?” The answer to this question always tells you the subject.

Examples:

1. The supervisor instructed the new employees. (Who instructed the new employees? The supervisor...)
2. The horse won the race. (Who won the race? The horse...)
3. In the summer my sisters pick dandelions. (Who picks dandelions? My sisters...)
4. The dog on the street ate leftovers in the garbage can. (Who ate leftovers? The dog...)
5. The movie star signed autographs. (Who signed autographs? The star...)

Lesson 5 — Here Comes the Noun!

Rule #1: Words, just like tools, can be grouped according to the jobs they do. There are eight different kinds, or classes, of words. Each does a different job in the sentence. We have already met one class of words—the words that make statements about subjects. These words are called **verbs**.

Examples:

1. sing
2. walk
3. eat
4. jump
5. win

Rule #2: We need a class of words to name the persons, places, and things we talk about. These words are called **nouns**. The subject of a sentence is often a noun. Any word that is a noun can be used as the subject of a verb.

Examples:

1. New Orleans (place)—New Orleans is my hometown.
2. teacher (person)—The teacher brainstormed ideas for English class.
3. yardstick (thing)—The yardstick is in the garage.
4. schoolyard (place)—The schoolyard was designed by a famous architect.
5. Carmela (person)—Carmela is a feisty young lady.

Rule #3: Most of the things that we talk about can be seen or touched — just like the things in this room. But we sometimes talk about something that we can’t *see* or *touch*.

Words like **freedom, strength, truth,** and **imagination** are also nouns because they are the names of *ideas* that we have in our minds.

Examples:

1. power
2. memory
3. compassion
4. love
5. peace

Rule #4: The same word can often be used as either a *noun* or a *verb*. Which it is depends on how it is used in the sentence. If the word is used as the subject of the sentence, it is used as a noun. If the word makes a statement about the subject, it is a verb.

Examples:

1. I hope to meet you soon. VERB
2. My mother clung to hope after my father became ill. NOUN
3. The class of sixth graders will plant a tree in the park. VERB
4. Your husband should buy you a plant for your birthday. NOUN
5. I trust my best friend. VERB
6. Two people in love must share trust if they want to be in a good relationship. NOUN

Lesson 6 — Pronouns Take the Place of Nouns

Rule #1: Another kind of word that can serve as the subject of a verb is the **pronoun**. The name *pronoun* comes from a Latin word which means “in the place of a noun.” Pronouns take the place of nouns. A pronoun is generally less definite than a noun. Pronouns help us to avoid the tiresome repetition of nouns.

Examples:

1. My cat is friendly. She is friendly.
2. The family picnicked in the park. They picnicked in the park.
3. The shirt was accidentally bleached. This was accidentally bleached.
4. Our team impressed the teacher. We impressed the teacher.
5. Hope was lost. It was lost.

Rule #2: To show ownership, nouns and pronouns have a **possessive** form. Possessive pronouns take the place of possessive nouns.

Examples:

1. My sister’s dress is dirty. Her dress is dirty.
2. The team’s coach retired. Their coach retired.
3. Jamaul ate his pizza. Jamaul ate his.
4. I called your telephone. I called yours.
5. I told Jack and Jill about the hill. I told them about the hill.

Lesson 7—Unit Review

NO NOTES NECESSARY FOR REVIEW UNITS