

CHAPTER 3

FINDING THE SUBJECT AND THE VERB IN THE SENTENCE

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- Finding the verb in the sentence
 - Action verbs
 - Linking verbs
 - Words mistaken for verbs
- Finding the subject in the sentence
 - Simple and complete subjects
 - Compound subjects
 - Subjects and verbs in compound and complex sentences
- Writing paragraphs: Making paragraphs coherent through chronological order

To improve your writing, you should master the sentence and its two main parts, the subject and the verb. This chapter will give you some useful tips for locating the subject and verb in every sentence. Once you have mastered this skill, you will be on your way to writing clear and effective sentences.

The Subject and the Verb

The **subject** of a sentence names a person, place, thing, or idea; it tells us *who* or *what* the sentence is about. The **verb** describes action or the subject's state of being; it tells us what the subject *does*, what the subject *is*, or what the subject *receives*.

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(subject) (verb)

- *Francis Scott Key wrote* the words to our national anthem.

(subject) (verb)

- *Baton Rouge is* the capital of Louisiana.

(subject) (verb)

- *Gertrude Ederle was* the first woman to swim the English channel.

(subject) (verb)

- *Martin Luther King Jr. received* the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964.

(subject) (verb)

- *I rarely eat* this much licorice.

Each of the previous sentences contains a subject and a verb, and each makes a complete statement. In other words, they convey a sense of completeness. In conversations, sentences often lack stated subjects and verbs, but their contexts—the words and sentences that surround them—make clear the missing subject or verb. For example:

- “Studying your sociology?”
- “Yes. Big test tomorrow.”
- “Ready for it?”
- “Hope so. Flunked the last one.”

If this conversation were written in formal sentences, the missing subjects and verbs would be supplied, and the exchange might look something like this.

- “Are you studying your sociology?”
- “Yes. I have a big test tomorrow.”
- “Are you ready for it?”
- “I hope so. I flunked the last one.”

All sentences, then, have subjects, either stated or implied. Before proceeding further, therefore, it is important that you be able to locate the subject and the verb in a sentence. Because it is usually easier to locate, the verb is the best place to begin.

Finding the Verb

You will remember from Chapter 2 that the verb may be a single word (he *sleeps*) or a verb phrase of two, three, or even four words (he *had slept*, he *had been sleeping*, he *must have been sleeping*). Remember, too, that parts of the verb can be separated by adverbs (he *must not have been sleeping*).

Action Verbs

As you saw in Chapter 2, **action verbs** tell what the subject does.

- Carbohydrates provide energy for body function and activity by supplying immediate calories. (What action takes place in this sentence? What do carbohydrates do? They *provide*. Therefore, the verb in this sentence is *provide*.)
- Taiwan holds the record for most Little League World Series titles. (What does Taiwan do? It *holds*. The verb in this sentence is *holds*.)
- The students boarded the plane for San Juan. (What did the students do? They *boarded*. The verb in this sentence is *boarded*.)
- Oceans cover three-quarters of the earth's surface. (What action takes place in this sentence? What do the oceans do? They *cover*. Therefore, the verb in this sentence is *cover*.)
- Blood returning from the body tissues enters the right atrium. (What does the blood do? It *enters*. The verb in this sentence is *enters*.)
- Visitors to Disneyland buy souvenirs for their friends at home. (What do visitors do? They *buy* souvenirs. The verb is *buy*.)

EXERCISE 3-1

Each of the following sentences contains one or more action verbs. Circle them.

1. Modern drivers enjoy a wealth of recent technological breakthroughs.
2. Probably the most important development, the lithium-ion battery, powers cars with electricity, rather than gasoline or diesel.
3. While your laptop computer uses six to nine 3.7-volt lithium ion cells, the new electric Tesla sedan uses nearly 7,000.
4. Truck lovers look forward to upcoming hybrid models which seat eight people, tow 6,000 pounds, and boast vigorous V-8 engines.
5. Drivers like staying “in touch” while on the road, and with a new, voice-activated system called SYNC, they make phone calls, hear text messages, and play stored music from iPods.
6. On some new vehicles, video cameras show drivers outside views on all four sides to help with parking situations or navigating near small children.
7. While most cars have five or six speeds, Lexus now features an eight-speed automatic transmission for a quieter ride and faster acceleration.
8. Even car radios perform more smartly now: hybrid digital (HD) tech provides sharper, more vibrant sound.

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9. Many drivers already have global positioning satellite systems (GPS), which lead them to friends' homes, restaurants, or cross-country destinations.
10. However, many automotive engineers see a near-future in which cars also know their exact positions and talk to nearby cars in order to manage without lane markings or traffic lights.

Linking Verbs

Some verbs do not show action. Instead, they express a condition or state of being. They are called **linking verbs**, and they link the subject to another word that renames or describes the subject. You will recall from Chapter 2 that most linking verbs are formed from the verb *to be* and include *am*, *are*, *is*, *was*, and *were*. Several other verbs often used as linking verbs are *appear*, *become*, *feel*, *grow*, *look*, *remain*, *seem*, *smell*, *sound*, and *taste*.

The verbs in the following sentences are linking verbs. They link their subjects to words that rename or describe them.

- My parents *seem* happy in their new apartment. (The linking verb *seem* connects the subject *parents* with the word that describes them: *happy*.)
- French *is* the language of the province of Quebec in Canada. (The linking verb *is* connects the subject *French* with the word that renames it: *language*.)
- The first-graders *remained* calm during the earthquake. (The verb *remained* connects the subject *first-graders* with the word that describes them: *calm*.)
- Bernie Mac *was* an actor as well as a comedian. (The linking verb *was* connects the subject *Bernie Mac* with the word that renames it: *actor*.)
- Lord Kelvin *was* a founder of the science of thermodynamics. (The linking verb *was* connects the subject *Lord Kelvin* with the word that renames it: *founder*.)

EXERCISE 3-2

Each of the following sentences contains a linking verb; circle it.

1. Few people realize how bad conditions were for the Pilgrims who came to Massachusetts on the *Mayflower* in 1620.
2. The *Mayflower* was a cargo ship, not designed to carry people.
3. There was not enough sleeping space for everyone, so eighty passengers slept on the deck, and others slept inside a rowboat stored below deck.
4. The passengers could not bathe during the sixty-six-day voyage because there were no bathrooms on the boat.
5. Bugs and mold were often in their food.

6. After standing in oak barrels for several weeks, the drinking water (tasted) bitter, so both adults and children began to drink beer.
7. Despite games and the presence of a cat and two dogs aboard the ship, the journey probably (seemed) boring for the children.
8. One of the women passengers (became) a mother during the voyage and named her son Oceanus.
9. Upon seeing land at last, the Pilgrims (grew) joyful at the lonely and wild look of the thickly forested shore.
10. While the men explored the countryside, the women (were) on the beach.

When looking for the verb in a sentence, you should remember that it sometimes consists of more than one word. In such cases, it is called a **verb phrase**, and verb phrases consist of a main verb and a **helping/auxiliary verb** (see Chapter 2). Any helping/auxiliary verbs in front of the main verb are part of the verb, as in the following examples.

- *may have* disappeared
- *should be* avoided
- *might* stay
- *did* guarantee
- *is* speaking
- *could have* objected

For a complete list of the words that serve as helping/auxiliary verbs, see page 17 in Chapter 2.

EXERCISE 3-3

Circle the verbs in the following sentences, including any helping/auxiliary verbs. Some sentences have more than one verb.

1. Cheese rolling (has been known) as one of Britain's most unusual customs for centuries.
2. Each year, Gloucestershire, England, (is invaded) by thousands of fans who (can't wait) for the contest.
3. They (are thrilled) to watch perfectly sane men and women (chase) seven-pound wheels of Gloucestershire cheese that (are rolled) down Cooper's Hill.
4. Once the spectators (see) the athletes (line up) along the crest of the hill, they (begin) chanting "(Roll) that cheese!"
5. When the master of ceremonies (has blown) the whistle, the athletes (give) their cheeses a push and (scramble) after them.

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6. The hill is steep and lumpy, so contestants know that they might get injured; broken bones and sprains are reported each year.
7. Some competitors win only by accidentally tumbling down the hill, past their more careful peers.
8. At times, the cheese rolls into the crowd and strikes someone, but no one is hurt and the cheese is kicked back onto the course.
9. The winner gets a fine prize: the cheese that he or she has chased.
10. Cheese rolling may have evolved from early harvest or fertility rituals, and it may date back to the ancient Britons or Romans who lived in the area.

EXERCISE 3-4

Circle the verbs in the following sentences; be sure to include any helping/auxiliary verbs. Some sentences have more than one verb.

1. Normal red blood cells look round and plump, something like jelly doughnuts.
2. In about eight percent of American blacks, however, some red blood cells are much smaller than normal and have a sickle, or crescent, shape.
3. Sickling of the red blood cells is an inherited trait that has been traced to a mutation in a single gene.
4. A person who has inherited two sickling genes has sickle-cell anemia.
5. Sickle cells carry much less oxygen than normal cells, and such a person frequently suffers from insufficient oxygen.
6. In addition, the cells often clog blood vessels, cause severe pain, damage tissue, and even cause death if vessels that supply the brain or lungs are blocked.
7. People with sickle-cell anemia frequently die at an early age.
8. Certain African populations contain a high incidence of the sickling gene.
9. These populations live in areas with a high incidence of malaria.
10. People with the sickle-cell trait (one sickling gene and one normal gene) have a substantially lower incidence of malaria than the rest of the population.

Words Mistaken for the Verb

You may sometimes be confused by two forms of the verb that may be mistaken for the main verb of the sentence. These forms are the infinitive and the present participle.

The **infinitive** is the “to” form of the verb: *to leave*, *to write*, *to start*, and so on. The infinitive is the base form of the verb—in other words, it merely names the verb. It does not give us any information about its person, its tense, or its number. The infinitive by itself

is never the verb of the sentence. Note how the following word groups fail to make sense because they use only the infinitive form—the “to” form—of the verb.

- Homeowners *to install* new roofs because of the damage from hail.
- My reading comprehension *to improve* by 15 percent.
- Missionaries from Spain *to arrive* in California in the 1760s.
- Ornithologists *to study* the mating habits of condors.
- Contractors *to build* cheaper and smaller homes in the future.

These word groups are not sentences because they try to make an infinitive do the work of a main verb. They can be corrected by placing a verb before the infinitive.

- Homeowners *had to install* new roofs because of the damage from hail.
- My reading comprehension *was to improve* by 15 percent.
- Missionaries from Spain *began to arrive* in California in the 1760s.
- Ornithologists *plan to study* the mating habits of condors.
- Contractors *vow to build* cheaper and smaller homes in the future.

Of course, these word groups could also have been converted to sentences merely by changing the infinitives to main verbs: *installed*, *improved*, *arrived*, *study*, and *will build*.

The other form of the verb that sometimes looks as though it is the main verb is the **present participle**, the “-ing” form of the verb. It is the result of adding *-ing* to the verb, as in the following: *leaving*, *starting*, *writing*, and so on. Like the infinitive, the present participle can never stand by itself as the verb in a sentence. Notice how the following groups of words fail to make sense because they attempt to use the present participle—the “-ing” form—as their verb.

- Homeowners *installing* new roofs because of the damage from the hail.
- My reading comprehension *improving* by 15 percent.
- Missionaries from Spain *arriving* in California in the 1760s.
- Ornithologists *studying* the mating habits of condors.
- Contractors *building* cheaper and smaller homes in the future.

These word groups can be corrected by placing a form of the verb *to be* in front of the present participle.

- Homeowners *were installing* new roofs because of the damage from the hail.
- My reading comprehension *has been improving* by 15 percent.

TIPS for Finding the Verb

1. Find the verb by asking what action takes place.
2. Find the verb by asking what word links the subject with the rest of the sentence.
3. If a word fits in the following slot, it is a verb.

"I (or He or They) _____."

Examples: I *hunt* elk.
 He *swims* every morning.
 They *bring* us flowers each time they visit.

4. Remember that the verb in a sentence will never have *to* in front of it.
5. The "-ing" form (the present participle) can be a verb only if it has a helping verb in front of it.
6. The verb will never be in a prepositional phrase.

- Missionaries from Spain *were* arriving in California in the 1760s.
- Ornithologists *have been* studying the mating habits of condors.
- Contractors *will be* building cheaper and smaller homes in the future.

A final warning: You will never find the verb of a sentence in a prepositional phrase. The reason for this rule is simple. Prepositional phrases are made of prepositions and their objects, which are either nouns or pronouns—never verbs. Therefore, a prepositional phrase will never contain the verb of a sentence.

EXERCISE 3-5

Identify the italicized words by writing the appropriate letter in the space provided.

a. verb b. present participle c. infinitive

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| <u> a </u> | 1. Bosses often <i>dislike</i> chit-chat among their workers. |
| <u> a </u> | 2. However, some researchers at University of Rochester <i>have found</i> some benefits to workplace friendships. |
| <u> c </u> | 3. The researchers asked about 24,000 Canadian workers <i>to talk</i> about their work lives and health histories. |
| <u> c </u> | 4. Employees who had friends at work were less likely <i>to experience</i> health problems from job stress. |
| <u> b </u> | 5. Workers with friends reported <i>feeling</i> much less depressed or powerless. |

- a 6. Meanwhile, employees who *had* little social support suffered depression two to three times more often.
- b 7. *Feeling* more positive and enthusiastic about the workplace brought benefits for bosses, too.
- a 8. Healthy, happy workers increased productivity and *needed* fewer absences.
- b 9. They also filed fewer disability claims, *saving* their employers some money.
- c 10. In addition, healthy workers were less likely *to take* early retirement.
- b 11. Most people appreciate *having* family or friends at home who are supportive, too.
- a 12. But the researchers *found* that coworkers' support may be more valuable.
- a 13. After all, who understands a worker's problems better than someone who *does* the same work for the same boss?
- b 14. *Socializing* at work may seem a waste of time to some employers and employees.
- c 15. However, this study might persuade office hermits *to reconsider* the physical and emotional value of taking a seat at the lunch table.

Finding the Subject

A sentence is written about something or someone—the **subject** of the sentence. The verb, as you have learned, tells what the subject *is* or *does*. Every grammatically complete sentence has a subject. Sometimes, as in the case of commands, the subject is not directly stated but implied.

- Please return all overdue library books by next Friday. (Although the subject *you* is not stated, it is implied.)

The rule for finding the subject of a sentence is actually very clear. To find the subject of a sentence, first find the verb. Then ask, “Who?” or “What?” The answer will be the subject. Read the following sentences carefully to see how the rule works.

- The invoice was paid on February 10. (By asking “What was paid?” you can easily determine the subject of this sentence: *invoice*.)
- Luis follows a strict diet because of his high blood pressure. (As in the previous sentence, you can find the subject in this sentence by locating the verb and asking “Who?” or “What?” *Luis* follows a strict diet and therefore is the subject.)
- Several cracks in the kitchen ceiling appeared after the last earthquake. (What appeared? *Cracks*, the subject.)

Subjects and Other Words in the Sentence

Do not be confused if a sentence has several nouns or pronouns in it. Only the word that answers “Who?” or “What?” before the verb can be the subject. In the following sentence notice that only *mayor* answers the question, “Who blamed?”

(*subject*)

- The *mayor* blamed himself, not the city manager, the council, or the voters, for the defeat of the bond issue.

Do not mistake phrases beginning with such words as *along with*, *in addition to*, *including*, *rather than*, *together with*, and similar terms for a part of the subject of the sentence. Note the following sentences.

- The summary, as well as the chapters, contains several important terms to memorize. (Although *chapters* might appear to be the subject because it is closer to the verb, the subject is *summary* because it answers the question “What contains?”)
- The basketball players, together with their coach, are featured in this week’s sports special. (The subject is *players* because it answers the question “Who are featured?”)

Simple and Complete Subjects

The main noun or pronoun without any of its modifiers that answers the questions “Who?” or “What?” before the verb is the **simple subject**. The **complete subject** is composed of the simple subject and its modifiers—the words and phrases that describe it.

In the following sentence, *waiter* is the simple subject; *a tall, gracious, smiling waiter* is the complete subject.

- A tall, gracious, smiling waiter seated us at our table.

In the following sentence, what is the simple subject? What is the complete subject?

- The woman in the green dress and high heels is my sister.

When you are asked to identify the subject of a sentence, you normally name the simple subject.

Compound Subjects

A sentence can have more than one subject, just as it can have more than one verb. Two or more subjects are called **compound subjects**.

- *Athletes and celebrities* are frequently seen on television endorsing products.
- *Polluted water and smog* made the city unattractive to tourists.
- *Either hamburgers or hot dogs* will be served at the picnic.

EXERCISE 3-6

Underline all of the complete subjects in the following sentences. Some sentences have more than one subject.

1. The daring life and unexplained death of an American pilot, Amelia Earhart, have intrigued people for decades.
2. Her love affair with airplanes bloomed when Amelia attended an air show in California with her father.
3. Amelia received a parade and a medal from President Herbert Hoover in 1932 after she became the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean.
4. Her most treasured goal, however, was to be the first pilot ever to circle the earth at the equator.
5. Amelia, along with her copilot, Fred Noon, took off from Miami in June 1937.
6. Articles and photographs for American newspapers, together with letters to her husband, were sent by Amelia throughout her journey.
7. The public followed Amelia and Fred's progress eagerly.
8. Everyone was stunned when their airplane suddenly vanished one month after their quest began.
9. The two flyers had completed 22,000 miles of the mission.
10. A final message from Amelia to a Coast Guard ship indicated that her plane was near New Guinea, in the South Pacific.
11. Neither the plane nor its pilots were ever found, though squads of Army planes and Navy ships searched thoroughly.
12. Numerous adventurers, scholars, and Earhart fans have launched their own unsuccessful searches.
13. Rumors about the pilots' disappearance continue to circulate today.
14. Some say that Earhart dove into the ocean deliberately, while others claim she was on a spy mission and was captured by the Japanese.
15. Nevertheless, many modern female pilots cite Earhart's courage and achievements among their reasons for learning to fly.

Subjects in Inverted Sentences

Most sentences follow the subject-verb pattern. In **inverted sentences**, however, the pattern is reversed: the subject generally comes *after* the verb. Read the following inverted sentences carefully.

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- Across the street stood the abandoned schoolhouse. (The abandoned *schoolhouse* stood across the street; *schoolhouse* is the subject, although street is in the subject position before the verb.)
- On her desk is a new word processor. (What is the verb? What is the subject?)

Questions are usually inverted, with the subject coming after the verb.

- Was Charles Lindbergh the first man to fly across the Atlantic? (The verb *was* precedes the subject *Charles Lindbergh*.)
- Where are the keys to the car? (The subject *keys* follows the verb *are*.)
- What is the best time to call you? (The subject *time* follows the verb *is*.)

In sentences that begin with *here is*, *here are*, *there is*, or *there are*, the real subject follows the verb. To find the subject in such sentences, use the method you learned earlier. Ask “Who?” or “What?” before the verb.

- Here is a map of the subway route to the Bronx. (What is here? The subject, *map*, is here.)
- There are several reasons to explain his refusal. (What are there? Several *reasons*, the subject.)

Subjects with Verbs in Active and Passive Voice

The sentences that we have examined so far have contained subjects that performed actions indicated by action verbs, or they have contained subjects that were connected by linking verbs to words that described or renamed them. Occasionally, however, we may encounter or write sentences in which the subjects receive the action.

If the subject of the sentence performs the act, the verb is in the **active voice**.

- Matthew repaired his tractor.
- Burl’s poodle attacked Bob.

In the **passive voice** the subject is replaced by the object.

- The tractor was repaired by Matthew.
- Bob was attacked by Burl’s poodle.

As you can see, in the active voice the emphasis is on the *subject*, which performs the action of the verb. In the passive voice the emphasis is shifted to the *object* instead of the subject, which is “passive” or acted upon. The passive voice of a verb always consists of a form of the helping/auxiliary verb *be* (such as *is*, *was*, *has been*, and so on) plus the *past participle* of the main verb. (The past participle of a regular verb is the form that usually ends in *-ed*.)

To change a sentence from active to passive voice, we turn the sentence around and use a form of *be* as a helping/auxiliary verb.

- **Active:** The intruder *surprised* the hotel guests.
- **Passive:** The hotel guests *were surprised* by the intruder.
- **Active:** Gustaf *threw* the winning touchdown.
- **Passive:** The winning touchdown *was thrown* by Gustaf.

To change a sentence from passive to active voice, we substitute a new subject for the previous one.

- **Passive:** Tides *are caused* by the moon.
- **Active:** The moon *causes* tides.
- **Passive:** The soldiers *were wounded* by the snipers.
- **Active:** The snipers *wounded* the soldiers.

You will often be able to choose between active and passive voice when composing sentences. The active voice is usually more direct and forceful. For this reason you should use active verbs except in cases when you have good reason to use passive ones.

EXERCISE 3-7

Revise the following sentences by changing passive verbs to the active voice when possible.

1. Short stature is caused by a number of problems and diseases.
A number of problems and diseases cause short stature.
2. The condition has been called “dwarfism” by many people, though those who live with it prefer the term “short stature.”
Many people call the condition “dwarfism,” though those who live with it prefer the term “short stature.”
3. Most often, the bones are prevented from growing normally by any one of a group of conditions called skeletal dysplasia.
Most often, any one of a group of conditions called skeletal dysplasia prevents the bones from growing normally.
4. More than five hundred kinds of skeletal dysplasia have been identified by scientists, but the most common is Achondroplasia.
Scientists have identified more than five hundred kinds of skeletal dysplasia, but the most common is Achondroplasia.
5. All races and both genders are struck with Achondroplasia with equal frequency.
Achondroplasia strikes all races and both genders with equal frequency.

6. About one in every forty thousand newborns is affected by it.
It affects about one in every forty thousand newborns.

7. A number of daily frustrations—ill-suited chairs, stairs, gas and brake pedals—are faced by Little People.
Little People face a number of daily frustrations—ill-suited chairs, stairs, gas and brake pedals.

8. Use of many ATMs, gas pumps, pay phones, vending machines, and elevator buttons is made impossible by what Little People call the Six-Inch Barrier.
What Little People call the Six-Inch Barrier makes impossible the use of many ATMs, gas pumps, pay phones, vending machines, and elevator buttons.

9. Thanks to the Internet, a worldwide network of socializing and support has been formed by Little People.
Thanks to the Internet, Little People have formed a worldwide network of socializing and support.

10. Events, scholarships, and specially designed products are offered by hundreds of Web sites.
Hundreds of Web sites offer events, scholarships, and specially designed products.

Subjects and Prepositional Phrases

The subject of a sentence will never be in a prepositional phrase. The reason for this rule is simple. Any noun or pronoun in a prepositional phrase will be the object of the preposition, and the object of a preposition cannot also be the subject. Examine the following sentences, in which the subjects can be confused with objects of prepositions.

- Thousands of tourists from countries throughout the world visit Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. (*Tourists, countries, and world* are in the subject position before the verb *visit*, but they are all objects of prepositions, and therefore cannot be the subject. By asking “Who visits?” you can determine the subject: *Thousands* visit. *Thousands* is the subject.)
- The author of *Adam Bede* was better known as George Eliot, rather than by her real name, Mary Anne Evans. (Although *Adam Bede* is in the subject position, it is the object of a preposition and cannot therefore be the subject of this sentence. Who was better known? The *author of Adam Bede*. The subject is *author*.)
- One of the Beatles continues to produce records. (*Beatles* is the object of a preposition and therefore is not the subject. Who continues to produce records? The subject is *One*.)

By placing parentheses around the prepositional phrases in a sentence, you can more easily identify the subject and verb. Examine the sentence below.

- The warden (of a jail) (in the northern part) (of Minnesota) explained (in an interview) (on television) (during the past week) his position (on the death penalty.)

TIPS for Finding the Subject in a Sentence

1. The subject will answer the questions *Who?* or *What?* before the verb.
2. In questions or inverted sentences, the subject will usually come after the verb.
3. The subject of a sentence will never be *here* or *there*.
4. The subject of the sentence will never be in a prepositional phrase.

By discarding the prepositional phrases, we can easily see the subject (*warden*) and the verb (*explained*).

EXERCISE 3-8

Underline the subject and circle the verb in these sentences. Some sentences have more than one subject or verb.

1. Many animals are friendly, helpful, or amusing, but others possess venom that can cause their victims pain or even death.
2. Rattlesnake bites, for example, can cause severe pain, swelling, and temporary paralysis.
3. Several old horror movies feature Gila monsters, a type of venomous lizard that frequents the southwestern United States and Mexico.
4. Bites from Gila monsters can bring horrible pain and dangerously low blood pressure.
5. Many people are allergic to bites from bees, wasps, hornets, and even ants.
6. Allergic reactions can include swelling and rashes.
7. Some victims are so allergic that they may die of shock within minutes of being bitten.
8. Though most spiders' bites cause only itching and swelling, others are much more harmful.
9. Black widow spider bites cause severe pain, weakness, and convulsions, though survival from their bites is likely.
10. The brown recluse spider is often called a "fiddleback" because of its oblong body.

Subjects and Verbs in Compound and Complex Sentences

You have seen that sentences may have more than one subject and more than one verb.

(subject) (verb) (verb)

- a. *Mark Twain piloted* a riverboat and later *wrote* several novels.

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(subject) (subject) (verb)

b. *Mia Hamm and Julie Foudy were* two of America's most popular professional soccer players.

(subject) (subject) (verb) (verb)

c. *Nelson Mandela and Vaclav Havel were* political prisoners and later *became* elected leaders of their countries.

Sentence (a) has one subject and two verbs; sentence (b) has two subjects and one verb; sentence (c) has two subjects and two verbs. All three sentences are **simple sentences** because they each contain only one **independent clause**. An independent clause is a group of words with a subject and verb capable of standing alone. As we saw above, the subject and the verb may be compound.

We will now look briefly at two other kinds of sentences: the **compound sentence** and the **complex sentence**. Both kinds of sentences are discussed in detail in Chapter 8, "Compound and Complex Sentences." At this point we need to learn only enough to recognize their subjects and verbs.

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses containing closely related ideas usually connected by a **coordinating conjunction**. In other words, it is two or more simple sentences connected by one of the following conjunctions.

Coordinating Conjunctions						
and	but	for	nor	or	so	yet

The following are simple sentences because each contains one independent clause.

- The violin has just four strings.
- It is difficult to play.

By combining these two simple sentences with the conjunction *but*, we can create a compound sentence.

- The violin has just four strings, *but* it is difficult to play.

Each of the independent clauses in the preceding sentence has its own subject (*violin* and *it*) and its own verb (*has* and *is*) and is capable of standing alone. A compound sentence, therefore, has at least two subjects and two verbs. Of course, a compound sentence can have more than two independent clauses. But regardless of the number of clauses, a compound sentence remains the same: two or more independent clauses usually connected by a coordinating conjunction. (In Chapter 8 you will see that semicolons also connect independent clauses to form compound sentences.)

Notice that the conjunction *but*, which connected the two independent clauses in the example compound sentence, was preceded by a comma. In general, a coordinating conjunction linking two independent clauses in a compound sentence should be preceded by a comma. Chapter 8 will give you greater practice in the punctuation of compound sentences.

EXERCISE 3-9

In each of the following compound sentences, underline the simple subjects and circle the verbs in each independent clause.

1. Acupuncture (is) a method of inhibiting or reducing pain impulses, but it (is) also (used) to abandon habits like smoking and nail-biting.
2. The word (comes) from two Latin words meaning “needle” and “to sting,” but most acupuncture treatments (are) virtually painless.
3. Needles (are inserted) through selected areas of the skin, and then they (are twisted) gently by the acupuncturist or by a battery-operated device.
4. The location of the needle insertion (depends) on the patient’s ailment, and each part of the body (corresponds) to certain illnesses.
5. Acupuncture (is used) in China as an anesthetic, and in an operation for the removal of a lung, one needle (is placed) in the forearm, midway between the wrist and the elbow.
6. To pull a tooth, the acupuncturist (inserts) a needle in the web between the thumb and the index finger, and for a tonsillectomy, one needle (is inserted) about two inches above the wrist.
7. There (is) no satisfactory explanation to account for the effects of acupuncture, but according to one theory, the twisting of the acupuncture needle (stimulates) two sets of nerves.
8. One very narrow nerve (is) the nerve for pain, and the other, a much thicker nerve, (is) the nerve for touch.
9. The impulse passing along the touch nerve (reaches) the spinal cord first, and it “(closes) the gate” to the brain, blocking the pain impulse.
10. Acupuncture still (encounters) much skepticism in the United States; nevertheless, increasing numbers of Americans, including medical doctors, (are investigating) its claims.

A **complex sentence** is a sentence containing a **dependent clause**. A dependent clause is a group of words containing a subject and verb but is not capable of standing alone as a sentence. (An independent clause, you remember, has a subject and a verb and can stand alone to form a sentence.) A dependent clause always needs to be attached to an independent clause in order to complete its meaning. Examine carefully the following sentence:

- **Because a cure for cancer does not exist, some patients resort to bizarre diets and remedies.**

This sentence is made up of two clauses, each containing a subject and a verb. The first clause (*because a cure for cancer does not exist*) will not stand alone to form a sentence, and therefore it is a *dependent clause*. The second clause (*some patients resort to bizarre*

diets and remedies) is capable of standing alone as a sentence, and therefore it is an *independent clause*. The entire sentence is a *complex sentence* because it contains a dependent clause.

You can recognize dependent clauses because they do not express complete thoughts. You can also spot them because they usually begin with **subordinating conjunctions**. Here are some of the most common subordinating conjunctions.

Subordinating Conjunctions					
after	although	as	because	if	since
though	unless	until	when	while	why

In Chapter 8 you will learn how to recognize and form compound and complex sentences so that your writing will have variety and will not consist only of simple sentences.

EXERCISE 3-10

Place parentheses around the dependent clause in each of the following complex sentences. Then underline all of the subjects in the sentences and circle the verbs.

- Many Native American tribes were forced from their ancestral lands (when the Indian Removal Act was passed in 1830.)
- President Andrew Jackson began to annex "Indian territory" (after settlers heard reports of gold deposits there.)
- Sharing land was deemed unreasonable by the government, (even after many tribes agreed to adopt Anglo culture.)
- (Though some tribes traded their land for tracts out West,) other tribes refused to leave their homes.
- American soldiers used physical force (if any Native American resisted eviction.)
- Most Native Americans left food and belongings behind (as they were marched at gunpoint from their land.)
- Hundreds of Native Americans were buried along the westward route (because they froze or starved to death during the winter march.)
- (Because the Native Americans suffered such deep loss and anguish,) their forced journey is known as the Trail of Tears.
- (When the Cherokee tribe appealed to the Supreme Court for help,) the court ruled against them.
- (Although Andrew Jackson is regarded as an admirable president by many students of history,) others hold him responsible for the grief and humiliation of so many Native American tribes.



Want more help or practice with finding subjects and verbs in sentences? Just visit <http://www.mywritinglab.com> and click on "Verbs," then "The Subject and the Verb," to watch a helpful animation. Practice identifying subjects and verbs in a short paragraph, or try revising an entire paragraph that contains incorrect subject and verb forms.

EDITING EXERCISES

*The following paragraphs consist of a series of choppy simple sentences. By changing the structure of the sentences, revise each paragraph in order to make it flow more smoothly. For example, you might combine two simple sentences into a compound sentence or into a simple sentence with a compound subject and compound verb. Other changes could include creating complex sentences by converting simple sentences into dependent clauses and attaching them to independent clauses or changing passive verbs to the active voice. **Answers will vary.***

"American Idol" remains one of television's hottest shows. It is a live show. It is carefully planned. A staff member addresses the audience for fifteen minutes before the show begins. He or she tells the audience members how to behave. He or she tells them how to clap. Audience members in front of the stage must clap their hands above their heads. Otherwise, the cameras won't "see" them clapping. Sometimes, slow songs play. At those times, audience members must wave their arms slowly over their heads. They must look somber and affected by the slow song. The producers want young, attractive women visible. They invite local college sororities. These women are beautiful. They are well dressed. They are positioned near the cameras. The host appears three minutes before the show starts. He introduces the judges. The show begins! During commercial breaks, the judges sign autographs. They make cell phone calls. They return to their seats just in time. The show continues with its musical acts. Some contestants' dreams will come true tonight. Some contestants' dreams will shatter tonight.

Everyone wants to spend less money on gasoline. Take better care of your car. Then you can get better gas mileage. Mileage is affected by the cleanliness of
(continued)

your engine. One way to keep your engine clean is to replace the spark plugs often. Check whether the air filter and fuel filter are clean. If they're not, replace them. Invest in a new oxygen sensor. It can improve gas mileage by as much as 15 percent. Monitoring the fullness of your tires seems minor. Tire pressure affects mileage. Keeping tires inflated properly can mean a 6 percent boost in mileage. Extra weight in your vehicle lowers mileage. Mileage is typically cut by one mile per gallon for every two hundred pounds of weight. Inspect your trunk, truck bed, or cargo space. Remove all unneeded items. These tips are easy. They are inexpensive and bound to reduce your gasoline expenses.

WRITING SENTENCES Identifying Subjects and Verbs

This review exercise asks you to identify the subjects and verbs in sentences that you write. When writing your sentences, do not hesitate to review the appropriate pages in this chapter as needed.

1. Write two original sentences; each sentence should contain a compound subject. Circle the subjects.
2. Write two inverted sentences. Circle the subject and verb in each sentence.
3. Write a sentence in which the verb is in the active voice. Circle the verb.
4. Using the same verb used in the preceding sentence, write a sentence with the verb in the passive voice. Circle the verb.
5. Write three compound sentences. Circle the subject and the verb in each independent clause.
6. Write three complex sentences. Circle the subject and the verb in each dependent (subordinate) and independent clause.

LANGUAGE TIP

Avoid repeating the subject unnecessarily in your sentences. Study the following examples.

Examples: My sister ~~she~~ is a nurse at Belleville Hospital. (*Sister* and *she* refer to the same person, and therefore *she* is unnecessary repetition.)
The class that I signed up for ~~it~~ was canceled. (*It* is unnecessary because *that* replaces *it*.)

REVIEW TEST 3 - A

Finding the Subject and the Verb in the Sentence

A. Identify the *italicized word or words* by writing the appropriate letter in the space before each sentence.

a. *action verb* b. *linking verb* c. *helping/auxiliary verb* d. *none of the above*

- c 1. Watching television *has* become a weekly tradition for our family.
- a 2. The brain of an addicted smoker *responds* to nicotine as if it were necessary for survival.
- b 3. Sometimes your local farmers' market *is* the best source of fresh, healthy produce.
- a 4. Cheese that comes from yak often *has* higher levels of healthy omega-3 acids than cheese that is from other animals.
- c 5. Marco said that he *would* visit us next weekend.
- d 6. Do you prefer miniature golf, *or* golf on a regular course?
- a 7. Inbreeding sometimes *produces* racehorses with delicate health.
- b 8. Text-message me if you *are* able to join us for lunch.
- c 9. Though the Knicks haven't won a national title in decades, Mel *will* not give up on his favorite team.
- a 10. Ava *showed* us the skating rink in Santa Rosa where Charles Schultz, the creator of "Peanuts" cartoons, ate breakfast each morning.

B. In the space before each sentence, write the letter that corresponds to the simple subject of the sentence.

- a 11. Elizabeth just bought that pretty house on Joper Road.
a. Elizabeth b. bought c. house d. Joper
- b 12. The pet shop owner gave Jamila some advice for training her parrot to speak.
a. pet shop b. owner c. Jamila d. parrot
- c 13. As a student at Harvard, Bill Gates wrote a computer program for the world's first personal computer.
a. student b. Harvard c. Bill Gates d. program
- a 14. Surviving as a single parent while attending college is a difficult juggling act.
a. Surviving b. parent c. college d. difficult

- b 15. Having just installed an alarm, Kumar was sickened by the theft of his new car.
a. alarm b. Kumar c. theft d. car
- b 16. Throughout the neighborhood, sound waves from the ambulance siren vibrated.
a. neighborhood b. waves c. ambulance d. siren
- a 17. The Great Pyramids, in Egypt, may have taken twenty years to build.
a. Great Pyramids b. Egypt c. years d. build
- b 18. For nearly two centuries, the Alamo has symbolized Texans' pride.
a. centuries b. Alamo c. Texans' d. pride
- a 19. A man recently became national champion of hot dog-eating by consuming forty-one wieners in just twelve minutes.
a. man b. champion c. wieners d. minutes
- d 20. Despite many decades of peace talks, Israel does not seem near reaching a peace treaty with Palestinians.
a. decades b. peace c. talks d. Israel
- c 21. In the recent mortgage crisis, many people lost their homes and declared bankruptcy.
a. mortgage b. crisis c. people d. homes
- a 22. Leo bought a Wii gaming system but does not know how to use it.
a. Leo b. Wii c. system d. it
- a 23. Danica Patrick, the racecar driver, is a role model for many girls worldwide.
a. Danica Patrick b. driver c. model d. girls
- c 24. During a hurricane warning, it is important to remove toys, bicycles, and other loose objects from your yard.
a. hurricane b. warning c. it d. yard
- a 25. You should not be surprised by the large audience at your graduation.
a. You b. surprised c. audience d. graduation

REVIEW TEST 3 - B

Finding the Subject and the Verb in the Sentence

A. Identify the italicized word or words by writing the appropriate letter in the space before each sentence.

a. action verb b. linking verb c. helping/auxiliary verb d. none of the above

- a 1. The Liberty Bell *cracked* while tolling for the death of Chief Justice John Marshall, in 1835.
- b 2. Hinduism *is* the primary religion of India, practiced by 80 percent of its population.
- c 3. The longest time anyone *has* spent in a hot air balloon is about 477 hours.
- a 4. Idaho and Utah still *use* firing squads for capital punishment.
- d 5. The Pura Belpre Awards honor Latino *writers* and book illustrators.
- a 6. More than fifteen hundred people died when the Titanic *sank* in 1912.
- c 7. The Hubble telescope *was* named for the American astronomer Edwin P. Hubble.
- c 8. The United States *has* been divided into eight time zones.
- b 9. North Dakota *is* the most rural of our fifty states.
- a 10. A Norwegian *invented* the aerosol can in 1926.

B. In the space before each sentence, write the letter that corresponds to the simple subject of the sentence.

- a 11. Americans eat 140 pounds of potatoes each year.
a. Americans b. pounds c. potatoes d. year
- c 12. Followed by Spain and Italy, France is the world's top tourist destination.
a. Spain b. Italy c. France d. tourist
- c 13. A blue metal, lead can cause kidney problems and learning disabilities in children.
a. blue b. metal c. lead d. cause
- b 14. The Civil War battlefield at Antietam, Maryland, is the nation's largest.
a. Civil War b. battlefield c. Antietam, Maryland d. nation's
- d 15. In Los Angeles, California, the average driver spends more than 130 hours per year in traffic delays.
a. Los Angeles b. California c. average d. driver

- a 16. Cars are much more dangerous than buses, trains, and airplanes.
a. cars b. dangerous c. buses d. trains
- a 17. Sport utility vehicles continue to rank among the world's most polluting vehicles.
a. vehicles b. rank c. world's d. polluting
- b 18. As a worker, you are eligible to start receiving Social Security benefits in your sixties.
a. worker b. you c. Social Security d. benefits
- b 19. Though criticized by some people for its labor practices, Wal-Mart is one of the nation's largest and most profitable companies.
a. people b. Wal-Mart c. one d. companies
- b 20. Vatican City is the world's smallest country.
a. Vatican b. City c. world's d. country
- d 21. Although a beautiful and richly historic country, Sudan has suffered civil war for decades.
a. beautiful b. richly c. country d. Sudan
- c 22. After constructing six nuclear bombs, South Africa voluntarily disabled them.
a. constructing b. bombs c. South Africa d. them
- b 23. At approximately 4 percent, Mexico has one of the world's lowest tax burdens.
a. 4 percent b. Mexico c. one d. burdens
- a 24. Spanish is the official language of the people of Argentina.
a. Spanish b. official c. language d. Argentina
- b 25. Many people enjoy canoeing in the summertime.
a. many b. people c. canoeing d. summertime

WRITING PARAGRAPHS

COHERENCE IN THE PARAGRAPH THROUGH CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Coherence means “sticking together,” and in a *coherent* paragraph, all the ideas stick together. You have seen that when a paragraph is unified, all the other sentences support or develop the topic sentence. If sentences are placed in the right order with the right connecting words so that the reader is never confused, the writer’s train of thought is easy to follow from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph.

Good writers make their paragraphs coherent in two ways: they arrange their ideas in an order that best fits their subject, and they use *linking words or phrases* between their sentences to help the reader understand how the ideas are related.

To tell a story, give directions, explain a process, summarize historical events, or report on the steps or actions taken by an individual, paragraphs are usually arranged in *chronological order*—they present their ideas in the order in which they happened.

In the following paragraph notice that all of the details are presented in the order in which they happened.

- After his arrival in Illinois at the age of twenty-one, Abraham Lincoln tried his hand at a variety of occupations. In 1830 he worked as a flatboatman, making a voyage down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. On his return he worked as a storekeeper, postmaster, and surveyor. With the coming of the Black Hawk War in 1832, he enlisted as a volunteer. After a brief military career he was elected to the state assembly. In 1836, having passed the bar examination after private study, he began to practice law. The next year he moved to Springfield and began a successful career. By the time he started to become prominent in national politics in 1856, he had made himself one of the most distinguished lawyers in Illinois.

When you use chronological order to organize your paragraphs, it is important that you relate the events in the order in which they occurred. The preceding paragraph would have been confusing to readers if the writer had started with Lincoln’s career in national politics, then detailed his early days as a storekeeper, then jumped ahead to his practice of law, and so on. You can avoid confusion by including all points or incidents as they happened.

Chronological order can also be used in personal narrative writing. A personal narrative is simply a story taken from your life. Your life is organized chronologically—that is, it moves along in time from one event to another as they happen. Whenever writers want to tell what happened, they rely on narration, sometimes in combination with description and other kinds of writing.

A personal narrative is easy to write because you are an authority on its subject: yourself. A personal narrative has a beginning, a middle, and an end. If it is brief, it should be about

one main point or incident. By arranging the details and incidents chronologically, you can help your reader see and feel the experience as he or she reads about it.

EXERCISE A Chronological Development

Select one of the topics from (a) or (b) and develop it into a paragraph in which the ideas are arranged chronologically. Underline your topic sentence. Before writing your final copy, make certain that you have asked yourself the following questions.

1. Are all of my ideas and details in the right order or sequence?
2. Have I stayed with the main idea as stated in my topic sentence, or have I included sentences that wander off the topic?
3. Did I read my paragraph carefully, looking for any errors in spelling, punctuation, or usage?
 - a.
 - meeting my boyfriend's or girlfriend's parents
 - a childhood memory
 - getting lost in a strange city
 - how a friend took advantage of my trust
 - my first attempt to play a musical instrument
 - b.
 - changing the oil in an automobile
 - downloading a software program
 - selecting the right dress or suit for a formal affair
 - preparing a favorite dish
 - planning a hiking trip

EXERCISE B Chronological Development

The following paragraphs are developed in chronological order. Read both paragraphs carefully and then follow the directions in either (a) or (b).

- Sometimes at the flea market, Afghan acquaintances made remarks about Baba's weight loss. At first, they were complimentary. They even asked the secret to his diet. But the queries and compliments stopped when the weight loss didn't. When the pounds kept shedding. And shedding. When his cheeks hollowed. And his temples melted. And his eyes receded in their sockets.

—Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, p. 158

- Although the Donner party was not the first group of European emigrants to cross the Sierra Nevada westward, it is surely the most famous. Brothers Jacob and George Donner and their friend James Reed formed the party of adventurous families in April 1846. Soon the wagon caravan of ninety people left Illinois for

WRITING TIPS Timely Transitions

Paragraphs arranged chronologically should include words that signal the order in which events happen. Words like *first, second, next, then, before, after, during, finally,* and *while* help the reader follow the ideas in a paragraph. Be sure to include them in your chronologically arranged writing.

California. When they reached the South Pass, the party's leaders made a fatal error: to try a haphazard shortcut through Utah into Nevada. But soon they became lost. When early winter storms began in October, the travelers were still battling the trail. Humans and animals grew weak or ill. Then, personal grudges blossomed; one member stabbed another and was banished from the party. Most of the group members were too frail to cross the mountains in the blizzard. Eventually, the party broke into several smaller groups, depending on how fast each was able to travel. Some, stranded at a makeshift campsite near modern day Reno, Nevada, resorted to cannibalism in order to survive. By winter's end, about half of the emigrants had died of illness or starvation. Today, descendants of the Donner party hold an annual summertime reunion in Nebraska, far from the fateful trail that is now named Donner Pass.

a. Narrate in chronological order an event that occurred in a short time span—perhaps even a matter of seconds. Remember that brief narratives can be enriched with the use of descriptions based on the five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell). Some possible topics:

- an online chat
- receipt of good or bad news
- a family gathering
- an awards ceremony
- a frightening experience
- a memorable date

b. Presenting your ideas in chronological order, write a paragraph of at least 150 words on an event that unfolded over several days, months, or years. Use an event from world history, current news, or your own life. Some possible topics are

- the origins of a war
- a natural disaster
- an unforgettable vacation



You can find more information at <http://www.mywritinglab.com>. Click "Verbs," then "Coherence in the Paragraph," and watch animations about developing, organizing, and drafting a paragraph. There are also tips for using concrete words, supporting details, and chronological order. A list of topics and topic sentences will help you start a great paragraph of your own.