

SUBJECTS AND VERBS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the workshops. We know we've been talking about the same things you're hearing in class and it probably seems repetitive but studies show that our attention shifts about every seven minutes. We want to give you a chance to check in with the concepts again. Review strengthens understanding.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

(List subject and verb on the board. Leave room to fill in the definitions after discussing with the students. Reminder: one tutor writes on the board while the other leads the workshop.)

Subjects and verbs are the most important parts of a sentence. If I said “on the table,” what might you ask? (What is on the table?) Right! “What” (subject—what the sentence is describing) and “is” (the verb). They give meaning to our utterances by telling us *what is happening in the sentence*, and *WHO or WHAT is doing it*.

- The **VERB** is the main action and what the subject *does* or *is*. (From the TV commercial: Verb—It's what you do!)
- The **SUBJECT** is what is doing the action.

ALWAYS first identify the verb, and then find the subject that relates to the verb.

EXAMPLES (On Board)

1. Lightning strikes back and forth (from the clouds) (to the ground) very quickly.
(There are a lot of words that look like action words in this sentence so it is important to know how to separate things out in order to identify the verb and subject.)
 - The word *strike* is what the lightning is doing, so it is the VERB.
 - *Lightening* is the thing you are writing about. It is the SUBJECT.
2. The lion is enormous.
(ASK: which words in this sentence seem to have the most action going on? This helps to make students aware of the impulse to pick big words like enormous rather than verbs like is.)
3. The mouse frightened the lion.
4. The athlete and the trainer began to run (in the morning).
(Because the verb is not “to run,” use example as a transition to “The Main Verb of the Sentence Will Never Be” discussion.)

TRICKS FOR IDENTIFYING VERBS

Again, identifying subjects and verbs is easier if the verb is found first.

(Write **THE MAIN VERB OF THE SENTENCE WILL** on the board followed by three bullet points starting with NEVER. Leave room to fill in the information after discussing with the students.)

THE VERB WILL:

1. **NEVER be in the “to” form.** [one kind of verbal] (to run, to jump, to be...or not to be? You can't to run something.)

EXAMPLE

- Anne likes to shop, to cook, and to sew.

2. **NEVER be part of a prepositional phrase.** (Re-explain briefly if you feel necessary.)

EXAMPLE

- He loved to jump (in the morning) to start his day. (Two infinitives in this sentence look like verbs. One “ing” is inside a prepositional phrase.)

3. **NEVER end with an -ing ALONE.** [another kind of verbal] (Helping verb must come **before** the **ing**.) The ing words aren’t cool enough to show up to the party on their own, they must be invited by a cooler word like is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been.

EXAMPLES (On Board)

- Jogging is good (for your heart). (Though jog is a verb, in this case it is the subject. IS is the verb.)
- Sewing quilts is difficult.
- My parents are wondering (about my future).
- Tomorrow, Bob will be running, jumping, and swimming (in the relay race). (Compound predicate)

ACTIVITY

Have the students create sentences with verbals: “to” forms and -ing words. Identify the main verb and subject in each sentence.

EXPLAIN

ADVERBS BETWEEN VERBS

Sometimes an extra word (adverb) sits in the middle of the verb—watch out for those.

EXAMPLES (On Board)

- I am still listening (to music).
- He is quietly waiting (for the game) to start.

CONCLUSION

- Subjects and verbs are the most important parts of a sentence.
- You’ll never find a verb in the “to” form, in a prepositional phrases, or that ends with an -ing without a helper verb.

PRE-TEST & POST-TEST

Workshop the sentences in question 2 and 3 on the board after collecting. Discuss why answers are correct/ incorrect. Refer to laminated sentences.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

1. **SUBJECTS FOLLOWING VERBS**

If a sentence begins with “there is” or “here are,” the subject and verb will be inverted.

EXAMPLE (On Board)

- There is a nametag for all of the participants. (Nametags are here for all of the participants.)

2. **IMPLIED “YOU” IN COMMANDS**

Some sentences may not appear to have a subject.

EXAMPLE (On Board)

- Sit down. (In this case, an unwritten “you” is implied.)

COLOR KEY

BLUE TEXT refers to something that should be written on the board for the workshop.

RED TEXT refers to markings that need to be added to sentences during the workshop.

GREEN TEXT is for added emphasis or is for something important but that is hard to spot in a big block of text.