

The Subject

The Simple Subject

Sentences consist of two main parts: subjects and predicates.

1c. The **simple subject** is the main word or word group that tells *whom* or *what* the sentence is about.

EXAMPLES The **smell** of fresh bread drifted into the living room. [*What* drifted into the living room? Smell did. *Smell* is the subject of the sentence.]

When did your **sisters** take an art class? [*Who* took an art class? Sisters did. *Sisters* is the subject of the sentence.]

TIP The simple subject is never found after a preposition. A preposition is a word that tells the relationship of a noun or pronoun to another word in the sentence. Some common prepositions are *about*, *among*, *at*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *under*, and *with*. To find the simple subject, cross out any preposition and the noun or pronoun that follows it.

EXAMPLE The **smell** of fresh bread drifted by. [*Smell* is the subject, not *bread*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the simple subject in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Does the watch on the table belong to Chad? [The sentence tells about *watch*.]

- Soft music was playing on the radio. [What is the sentence about?]
- A pile of magazines and newspapers sat in the middle of the room.
- Several rows of flowers are beyond the fountain.
- The four students from Seattle enjoyed their trip to the Grand Canyon.
- Were many delicious dishes from different countries served to the guests?

The Complete Subject

The **complete subject** consists of all the words that tell *whom* or *what* a sentence is about.

COMPLETE SUBJECTS The **smell of fresh bread** drifted into the living room. [What drifted into the living room? The smell of fresh bread did. *The smell of fresh bread* is the complete subject.]

Near the waterfall are **some beautiful orchids**. [What objects are near the waterfall? Some beautiful orchids are. *Some beautiful orchids* is the complete subject.]

REMINDER Sometimes the simple subject is also the complete subject.

EXAMPLE **Jane** is on vacation in London. [*Jane* is the simple and complete subject.]

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EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, underline the complete subject once. Then, underline the simple subject a second time. Hint: In some sentences, the simple subject and the complete subject will be the same.

Example 1. On a small leaf was a black-and-yellow caterpillar. [The sentence tells about the complete subject *a black-and-yellow caterpillar*. The simple subject is *caterpillar*.]

6. Jessica did her math homework on the porch of the house. [Who is the sentence about?]
7. A small flock of birds was flying north toward a lake.
8. Next to the vase is a beautifully framed picture of the family.
9. We are going to the Smoky Mountains on our next vacation.
10. Are the CDs from that record label still on sale?

The Compound Subject

- 1f.** A **compound subject** consists of two or more subjects that are joined by a conjunction and that have the same verb.

A conjunction connects words or groups of words. The conjunctions that are usually used to connect the parts of a compound subject are *and* and *or*.

EXAMPLES **Sarah and Katie** are good soccer players. [The parts of the compound subject *Sarah and Katie* are joined by the conjunction *and*. They have the same verb, *are*.]

Patrick, Cindy, or Chris will bring the music. [The parts of the compound subject *Patrick, Cindy, and Chris* are joined by the conjunction *or*. They have the same verb, *will bring*.]

EXERCISE C In the following sentences, underline the parts of the compound subject. Then, circle the conjunction.

Example 1. Are Tom, Owen, and Jim going to the movies? [The conjunction is *and*. *And* connects the subjects *Tom, Owen, and Jim*.]

11. Books or folders are stacked next to the wall. [What is the sentence about? What connects the parts of the subject?]
12. The party supplies and the food will be picked up Saturday afternoon.
13. A grapefruit or an orange can be part of a good breakfast.
14. Wide rivers and narrow streams run through our home state.
15. Are Sally, Ted, and Bob sleeping yet?