

Introduction: Parts of Sentences

Parts of Sentences: Subject, Predicate, Object, Indirect Object, Complement

Every word in a sentence serves a specific purpose within the structure of that particular sentence. According to rules of grammar, sentence structure can sometimes be quite complicated. For the sake of simplicity, however, the basic parts of a sentence are discussed here.

The two most basic parts of a sentence are the subject and predicate.

Source: http://www.butte.edu/departments/cas/tipsheets/grammar/sentence_structure.html

SUBJECT

The subject of a sentence is the person, place, or thing that is performing the action of the sentence. The subject represents what or whom the sentence is about. The simple subject usually contains a noun or pronoun and can include modifying words, phrases, or clauses.

The man . . .

PREDICATE

The predicate expresses action or being within the sentence. The simple predicate contains the verb and can also contain modifying words, phrases, or clauses.

The man / builds a house.

The subject and predicate make up the two basic structural parts of any complete sentence. In addition, there are other elements, contained within the subject or predicate, that add meaning or detail. These elements include the direct object, indirect object, and subject complement. All of these elements can be expanded and further combined into simple, compound, complex, or compound/complex sentences.

DIRECT OBJECT

The direct object receives the action of the sentence. The direct object is usually a noun or pronoun.

The man builds a house.

The man builds it.

INDIRECT OBJECT

The indirect object indicates to whom or for whom the action of the sentence is being done. The indirect object is usually a noun or pronoun.

The man builds his family a house.

The man builds them a house.

SUBJECT COMPLEMENT

A subject complement either renames or describes the subject, and therefore is usually a noun, pronoun, or adjective. Subject complements occur when there is a linking verb within the sentence (often a linking verb is a form of the verb to be).

The man is a good father. (father = noun which renames the subject)

The man seems kind. (kind = adjective which describes the subject)

Note: As an example of the difference between parts of speech and parts of a sentence, a noun can function within a sentence as subject, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, or subject complement.

