



POWER BASICS[®]

Introduction to Composition

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UNIT 1

Sentences



LESSON 1: What Is a Sentence?

GOAL: To learn to recognize and write complete sentences

WORDS TO KNOW

complete predicate	predicate	simple subject
complete subject	sentence	subject
fragment	simple predicate	

Sentences

A **sentence** is a group of words that forms a complete thought. Every sentence has two parts. These parts are the subject and the predicate.

The **subject** is the part of the sentence that tells who or what does or is something. The subject always contains a noun or a pronoun. Read this sentence:

Jessie ran.

Who ran? The answer is *Jessie*. *Jessie* is the subject of the sentence.

The **predicate** is the part of the sentence that tells what the subject does or is. The predicate always contains a verb.

Look at the example again:

Jessie ran.

What did Jessie do? The answer is *ran*. The verb *ran* is the predicate of the sentence.

If a group of words does not have both a subject and a predicate, it does not make a sentence.

A sentence may have more than one subject and/or more than one predicate.

Look at these examples:

Margo and Jason left. *two subjects:* Margo, Jason

Beth skipped and jumped. *two verbs:* skipped, jumped

Tomas and Brad ran and swam. *two subjects:* Tomas,
Brad; *two predicates:*
ran, swam

It is important to know what is and is not a sentence. When you write, you must use complete sentences. Learning to recognize complete sentences in what you read will help you write complete sentences.

■ PRACTICE 1: What Is a Sentence?

Underline the subject or subjects in each sentence once.
Underline the predicate or predicates twice.

1. Hugh reads.
2. He writes.
3. Elena and Helen dance.
4. Mr. Lavoie teaches.
5. Ms. Rush jogs.
6. Sara and Rachel ran and hid.

Fragments

A sentence must tell a complete thought, and it must have a subject and a predicate. Otherwise, the group of words is not a sentence. An incomplete sentence is called a sentence **fragment**.

Look at these examples:

The boiling water.

Were singing and laughing.

These groups of words do not tell a complete thought. These are fragments. They are missing something. In the first sentence, there is no verb. In the second sentence, there is no subject.

It is important that you be able to recognize fragments. You will be able to check your writing for them and fix them.

■ PRACTICE 2: Fragments

Some groups of words below are complete sentences, and some are fragments. For each complete sentence, write *sentence* on the line. For each fragment, write a complete sentence using the fragment. Here is an example:

Eats cereal. *Sharon eats cereal.* or *He eats cereal.* or
Mr. Kemp's giant white dog eats cereal.

1. The fast car. _____

2. The dog sleeps all day. _____

3. The little boy cried. _____

4. Laughed through the whole movie. _____

5. That little red house on the corner. _____

■ THINK ABOUT IT



Fragments occur more often when people speak than when they write. Why do you think this is? Write your ideas on another sheet of paper.

Complete Subjects and Simple Subjects; Complete Predicates and Simple Predicates

You know that a sentence must express a complete thought and have two parts: a subject and a predicate.

You know that the subject of a sentence tells who or what does something. Look at this sentence:

The girl with long hair ran.

What is the subject of the sentence? The simple subject is *girl*. The complete subject is *the girl with long hair*.

- The **simple subject** is the main word in the complete subject.
- The **complete subject** contains the simple subject and any words that describe the simple subject.

You know that a predicate tells what the subject does or is. Look at this sentence:

The girl with long hair ran in the relay race.