

Subjects

Every sentence must include each of the following to be considered complete and correct: a **subject**, a **verb**, and a **complete idea**.

The subject of a sentence is usually a **noun** (person, place, thing, idea, or quality). Note that a sentence often includes several nouns. The **subject noun** of the sentence usually occurs early on and is the noun that the rest of the sentence hinges on. The subject noun is the one that engages the action in a sentence.

Consider the sentence: **David takes his dog to the vet.**

There are three nouns in the sentence above: *David*, *dog*, and *vet*. Which of these nouns do you think is the subject of the sentence?

If you answered, *David*, then you're correct. *David* is the noun doing the action in the sentence; he is *taking* his dog to the vet.

Many times, the subject of a sentence is a **pronoun**. A pronoun takes the place of a noun in a sentence. The subject pronouns are: **I**, **you**, **he**, **she**, **it**, **we**, and **they**.

Fill in the missing pronouns in the sentences below:

1. **David takes his dog to the vet. ____ learns that his dog must have surgery.**
2. **Martha decides to take a course at Cabrillo College. ____ wants to study art.**
3. **I would like to travel around the world. ____ have always wanted to see Italy.**
4. **Take a course in culinary arts. ____ will not regret it.**
5. **My family and I are saving our money. ____ plan to travel to Egypt in the fall.**
6. **Juan and Jorge are great students. ____ always study hard for exams.**

Note that in example # 6 above, there are two subjects: Juan and Jorge. We call this a **compound subject**.

There is perhaps only one other word more important to a sentence than its subject. That is the **verb**. The verb is linked to the subject and is the part of the sentence that moves the subject forward by linking it to an action or quality. A sentence may have more than one verb. Can you underline the verbs in the sample sentences above?

Note that example # 4 begins with a sentence that doesn't have a subject. *Take a course in culinary arts* is a **command**. Commands do not require subjects because the subject (person being commanded) is the person the speaker or author is talking to. However, commands do require verbs. In example # 4, the verb is *take*.