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II/ Parts of a Sentence

The main two parts of a sentence are the subject and predicate, with the subject identifying whom or what the sentence is about and the predicate giving more information about the subject.

The elements within the predicate adding more detail or meaning, are verbs, direct objects, indirect objects, and subject complements.

Subject

The subject of a sentence is the person, place, or thing that the sentence is about.

If it comes before an action verb (e.g. climb, eat, build, say etc) then it is the part of the sentence that shows whom or what is doing that action. If it comes before a state verb (e.g. is, see, smell) it tells us whom or what is in that state of being.

It is usually a noun or pronoun and can also include modifying words, phrases or clauses. Here are some examples of subjects in a sentence:

The woman...

Cars....

The boy in the red coat... (includes modifying phrase)

Predicate

While the subject is what the sentence is about, the predicate is what is being said about the subject.

It will always include a verb but will usually also include other elements. So these are what it will/may include:

Verb

Direct Object

Indirect Object + Direct Object

Direct Object + Object Complement

Subject Complement

In the examples below, the predicate is in bold.

The woman **is hot**.

Cars **are blocking all the parking spaces**.

The boy in the red coat **is trying to find his toy**.

She **is a police officer**.

Predicates as parts of a sentence can get a little more complex than this as there can be predicates within predicates when there are other clauses in the sentence (the ones above have just one clause) and there are also compound predicates.

Objects

The predicate always includes and starts with a verb, but it may also be followed by objects.

Direct Object

A direct object is the receiver of the action within a sentence, and it is usually a noun or pronoun. They are used with action verbs and are shown below in bold:

He built **a cottage**

The horse jumped **the fence**

He ate **some dinner**

I hit **him**

The complete predicate in this case is "built a cottage" and so on.

Indirect Object

Indirect objects can only be in a sentence if there is also a direct object. They indicate to whom or for whom the action of the sentence is being done. Again, the indirect object is usually a noun or pronoun.

They are shown below in bold (the direct object is now the last noun).

He built **his family** a cottage

She bought **them** some presents

He gave **his girlfriend** a kiss

The complete predicate in this case is "built his family a cottage" and so on.

Object Complement

Object complements provide more information about or describe the direct object, and they can be nouns or adjectives.

He built the house **shoddily**.

Exciting films make me **happy**.

The students elected John as **president of the student's union**.

So to take the first one, the direct object is 'the house' and it is being described as 'shoddily built'.

The complete predicate is: "built the house shoddily".

Subject Complement

It was explained above that objects are used with action verbs. However, for state verbs (verbs that describe a state of being e.g. is, see, hear, feel etc) subject complements follow the verb.

A subject complement either renames or identifies the subject by including a noun - predicate nominative - or describes the subject by having an adjective - predicate adjective.

John is **a really nice person**

She seems **happy**

I was **impressed** by the film

The complete predicate in this case is "is a really nice person" and so on.