**Sentence Writing Strategy Study Guide**

**Simple Sentence Describe**

What is the definition of a simple sentence?

**Independent Clause**

Does anyone know what an independent clause is?

A group of words that

An example simple sentence or independent clause: Susan ran.

This is a group of words that can stand by itself. It can stand by itself because it has two important things. What are the two important parts of the sentence?

Susan ran.

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Every independent clause and, therefore, every simple sentence contains two parts: a subject and a predicate.

**The Subject of a Sentence**

Who knows what the definition for the subject of the sentence is?

The subject is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The subject is the   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
that the sentence is about.

**Examples:**

John went for a walk. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Towns are quiet after snowfalls. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Eggs rolled off the counter. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Silence is golden. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Peace is at hand. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

**The Predicate of a Sentence**

We've talked about the subject. What is the other part of a simple sentence called?

The predicate shows the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the subject of the sentence. The predicate tells what the subject is or does. The words we use to show action or a state of being are called **verbs.**

If the verb shows some sort of action, it is usually easy to pick out. That means it shows physical or mental activity. An activity is something that is done in the mind or through physical motion. It is something you can do.

**Examples:**

Sally sneezed. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

John thinks. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Sometimes the verb shows the subject's state of being or condition. Words like "is," "are," and "were" are verbs that show the subject's state of being. For example, in the sentence, "Jesse is happy," "is" is the word that shows the state of being. It links or connects the subject "Jesse" with what Jesse is. For this reason, words used to show state of being are called **linking verbs.**

Jesse is happy. (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Let's think of examples of verbs that by themselves can be the predicate of a simple sentence.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Physical Action Verbs** | **Mental Action Verbs** | **State-of-Being or Linking Verbs** |

Review: What is a predicate?

**Subject-Verb Identification Procedure**

It's important that you know how to find the verbs and subjects in the sentences you write because this will help you know whether you have a complete sentence. A complete simple sentence contains a subject and a verb. An incomplete sentence has a subject but no verb or has a verb but no subject. You should avoid leaving out a vital part of the sentences you write.

To identify the verb and subject of a sentence, you will need to go through a two-step procedure. First, look for the word that shows mental or physical action or a state or being. That is, you need to look for an action verb or a linking verb.

Step 1:

**Example:** Kevin reported the theft.

Once you have found the verb, you need to complete the second step. In the second step, you ask yourself, "Who or what?", and add the verb you've found. For our Example, where the verb is "reported," you should ask yourself, "Who or what reported?", to find the subject. What is the subject in this sentence if you ask the question, "Who or what reported?" \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Step 2:

Try another example.

**Example:** Paula is an astronaut.

Step 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Step 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Practice finding subjects and verbs. Go to Example Set I. Use the Subject/Verb identification procedure and underline verbs twice and subjects once.

**Noun Phrases**

So far, the sentences we have talked about were sentences in which the complete subject consists of one word - a noun. However, sometimes two or more words are used for the subject. When several words are used together like that, they are called a noun phrase. The noun phrase is the complete subject. For example, when we apply the Verb-Subject Identification Procedure to the first sentence in Example Set II, "The old gray mare limped down the lane," what is the verb? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When we ask the "Who/What Question," what group of words gives us the answer?

Within that group of words, which word is the most important? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ It is called the **head word.** It is the one word without which you would not know what the sentence was about. Whenever you are asked in this class to identify the subject of a sentence, remember to identify the one word that tells what the sentence is about. Underline the one word with one line.

**X-out number 1.**

From now on, do your X-outs before you do Subject/Verb ID

**Prepositional Phrases**

See handout.

Finish Example Set II

**Verb Phrases**

Just like several words can form the subject of a sentence, the verb can consist of two or more words. This is called a **verb phrase.** For example, in the sentence, "The bus must have gone by now," the words "must have gone" are the verb phrase. Underline the three words twice. The word "gone" is the main verb. It shows the action. Without it, the action of the bus would be unknown.

**Helping Verbs.** Verb phrases are formed by putting one or more **helping verbs** in front of a main verb. Copy this list of helping verbs on your paper. (See Cue Card #5) Notice the boxed and circled verbs.

Boxed Verbs:

Circled Verbs:

Finish Example Set III

**Simple Sentences in which the Verb Comes First**

1. Down the street moved the bulls.
2. Will you go to the movie tonight?

**X-out #2: Action Words that are not Verbs (Infinitives)**

1. Chad hoped to go sledding.

Any verb that has the word "to" in front of it is an infinitive; it is not the main verb of the sentence. When you have a sentence with several action words in it, check for the word "to." Never identify as the main verb a word that has "to" in front of it.

**Simple Sentences with Compound Subjects**

(Go to Example Set IV)

**X-out #3: Negatives**

**Review**

What are the three X-outs?

**Simple Sentences with Compound Verbs**

(Go to Example Set V)

**Simple Sentences with Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs**

(Go to Example Set VI)

**Simple Sentence Formulas**

* Example:
* Example:
* Example:
* Example:

**Steps for Sentence Writing**

* Step 1:
* Step 2:
* Step 3:
* Step 4:   
  (First do X-outs)

Thanks to Terry Freese, SIM Trainer and teacher from Rocky Comfort, Missouri, for contributing this study guide to SIM Trainer Resources on the KU-CRL Web site.