

The Subject (S)

S

That woman by the window is Mary's mother.

The subject is the first principal sentence element. The main principles of identifying the subject are:

- a) It is realized by a noun phrase or any other structure in nominal function.
- b) It is in number agreement with the predicator (that woman is).
- c) In statements it normally precedes the predicator, while in questions it follows it.
- d) It can be replaced by personal pronoun in the subjective case.

(She is Mary's mother)

The subject is realized by noun phrases and some other structures in nominal function.

Here belong:

- a) Noun phrases:

Peter is a teacher

The old woman living in the basement needs help

All three of them were sitting on the stairs

The first was the best

- b) Co-ordinated Nominal structures:

Mrs Brown and her daughters arrived first

- c) The introductory "There"

There is a kind of introductory or provisional subject used to introduce the real subject which is usually indefinite.

There was no doubt about that.

There is no answer to your question

d) Adverbial and Prepositional phrases- such phrases only rarely function as subjects.

Now is the time to make holiday plans.

Under the stairs is no place for keeping old clothes.

e) Infinitives or Infinitive clauses- can be subject by their function in a sentence.

To have seen him lose his temper was shocking for all of us.

To summarize the findings would require many pages.

The infinitive clause in the function of the subject may precede the predicator, but it is more common for them to follow it. In such cases the introductory it is usually used as an empty subject.

It is important to know the truth.

f) Gerunds or Gerundial Clauses: can be used in the function of the subject of a sentence.

Smoking is a bad habit.

Dancing has not begun yet.

Seeing is believing.

A gerundial clause is more common than a simple gerund.

Reading novels is his favorite pastime

Watching basketball is great fun.

Building the motorway will take 3 years.

Here also the structure with the introductory it is very common.

It was strange finding you there.

e) Finite Nominal Clauses:

That the man is famous is hardly known in his village.

Whoever said this is mistaken.

Why he has sold all his property is a mystery.

The Predicator (P)

The predicator is the second main sentence element. The main principles of identifying the predicator are:

a) It is always realized by a verb phrase, finite or non-finite.

Birds sing

Here is a letter announcing his arrival.

To get in time we have to take a taxi.

b) Its position in statements is usually after the subject.

The children played.

S P

In questions the operator precedes the subject.

Did the children play?

P S P

c) It precedes the objects and complements.

The gentleman brought Mary flowers.

S P IO DO

d) It may precede an adjunct.

Here reads quickly.

S P A

The predicator is dependent on the subject because of the agreement between the subject and the predicator.

The girl studies hard.

The girls study hard.

A finite verb form is always the predicator of the sentence. Non-finite verb forms can function as

other elements of the sentence structure as well.

S

Swimming is healthy sport.

SC

Talking to her is wasting one's time.

DO

I love driving.