Complements

A complement is a word or group of words that completes the meaning of a verb.

There are four kinds of complements: direct objects, indirect objects, object complements, and subject complements.

Direct Objects

A direct object answers the question what? or whom? after an action verb.

The subject of the sentence usually performs the action indicated by the verb. A direct object—someone or something—is the recipient of that action. Nouns, pronouns, or words acting as nouns may serve as direct objects. Only transitive verbs have direct objects.

Estela sold her typewriter. [Estela sold what?]
Everyone watched the diver. [Everyone watched whom?]
They understood what I had said. [They understood what?]
Estela sold her typewriter and radio. [Estela sold what?]
Marguerite enjoyed Domingo’s singing. [Marguerite enjoyed what?]
Pao painted a remarkable likeness of his grandmother. [Pao painted what?]

Exercise 14 Identifying Direct Objects

On your paper, write the action verb that appears in each of the following sentences. Then list the direct object(s).

Faith Ringgold, Contemporary Artist

1. In the 1950s, Faith Ringgold studied art and education at the City College of New York.
2. After graduation she taught art classes for many years.
3. Ringgold gained a position as a professor of art at the University of California at San Diego.
4. Much of Ringgold’s work reveals her interest in civil rights and feminism.
5. She sometimes uses very interesting and unusual media, such as life-sized portrait masks of famous people.
7. She uses these masks as props in dramatic presentations.
8. Ringgold wrote stories for a series of “narrative quilts.”
9. These unusual artworks contain both text and images on quilt-like panels.
10. Ringgold adapted one of her quilts into a children’s book, Tar Beach.
Indirect Objects

- An **indirect object** answers the question *to whom? for whom? to what? or for what?* after an action verb.

In most cases, in order for a sentence to have an indirect object, it must first have a direct object. The indirect object always appears between the verb and the direct object.

- Airlines give **passengers** bonuses. [Airlines give bonuses to whom?]
- The owner reserved **us** a table. [The owner reserved a table for whom?]
- The committee gave my **project** top priority. [The committee gave top priority to what?]
- Airlines give **passengers** and **employees** bonuses. [Airlines give bonuses to whom?]
- Adrienne made her **report** a cover. [Adrienne made a cover for what?]
- Nikoli left **Tonya** a message. [Nikoli left a message for whom?]

**Exercise 15** Identifying Indirect Objects

First write on your paper the direct object in each of the following sentences. Then list any indirect objects. (There may be more than one indirect object in a sentence, or there may be none at all.)

**The Art of Collage**

1. Collage offers the beginner and the professional an especially flexible art form.
2. The maker of a collage simply glues material to a “ground.”
3. The use of diverse materials can lend this genre an unusual effect.
4. For example, different types of paper give artists the opportunity to experiment with various textures.
5. Some artists create vivid sensory detail through the imaginative use of multiple textures and layered effects.
6. Some artists give their collages more interest with three-dimensional objects.
7. The use of paint and ink virtually guarantees both the experienced artist and the novice various effects.
8. Photographs of famous persons often lend collages social or political import.
9. Abstract works, however, can also evoke powerful feelings.
10. The technique of collage has attracted many famous artists, including Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.
Object Complements

An object complement answers the question what? after a direct object. That is, it completes the meaning of the direct object by identifying or describing it.

Object complements occur only in sentences that contain a direct object and only in sentences with action verbs that have the general meaning “make” or “consider,” such as the following:

- appoint
- declare
- make
- prove
- call
- elect
- name
- render
- consider
- find
- proclaim
- think

An object complement may be an adjective, a noun, or a pronoun. It usually follows a direct object.

The accident rendered her car useless. [adjective]
I called the dog Dusty. [noun]
Jeanine considers our house hers. [pronoun]
The board named Cho president and treasurer. [nouns]

Exercise 16 Identifying Object Complements

On your paper, write the object complement(s) that appear in the following sentences. (One sentence has two object complements, and one sentence has none.)

A Mexican–Cooking Contest

1. For my class’s midyear cooking contest, the teacher named Mexican food the theme.
2. At a neighborhood restaurant, several students researched unusual appetizers and main courses.
3. Kim judged the restaurant’s menu quite good.
4. With a few bold, inventive changes, Juana made a cookbook’s recipe hers.
5. Flour made Hank’s tomato sauce thicker and paler.

Exercise 17 Providing Object Complements

Complete each sentence by adding an object complement. Label your object complement adjective, noun, or pronoun.

1. Shoppers consider neighborhood malls _________.
2. Unfortunately, Miki found bargains _________.
3. Mark called the shopping ordeal _________.
4. For sportswear choices, we appointed Miki the _________.
5. Gradually, I made her suggestions _________.

Parts of the Sentence
Subject Complements

■ A subject complement follows a subject and a linking verb and identifies or describes the subject. There are two kinds of subject complements: predicate nominatives and predicate adjectives.

■ A predicate nominative is a noun or pronoun that follows a linking verb and points back to the subject to identify it further.

Cellists are musicians.
The soloist for this concert is someone from Dallas.

Predicate nominatives usually appear in sentences that contain a form of the linking verb be. Some other linking verbs (for example, become and remain) can also be followed by a predicate nominative.

Those two may be thieves.
When did he become treasurer?
The candidates remained rivals but friends.
The woman who phoned you is she.
The man you have been trying to locate is he.

Exercise 18  Recognizing Predicate Nominatives

On your paper, write the subject complements from the following sentences. Then label each subject complement as a noun or pronoun. If a sentence has no subject complement, write no complement.

Commercial Aspects of Horticulture

1. Horticulture is the science and art of growing plants.
2. The two main branches of horticulture are the cultivation of food plants and the cultivation of ornamental plants.
3. The nursery industry is one of the specialized commercial areas of horticulture.
4. Another area of the horticulture business is the plant-growing industry.
5. The third division of the commercial side of horticulture is the seed-production enterprise.
6. The nursery industry grows fruit trees for fruit farmers and decorative trees for the ornamental gardener.
7. Every year, the plant-growing industry is the source of annual, biennial, and perennial plants.
8. The division of horticulture responsible for seeds remains the seed-growing industry.
9. Europe, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium, Great Britain, and the United States are some of the many countries with modern methods of horticulture.
10. The most advanced countries in this field are also they.
11.5 Complements

A predicate adjective follows a linking verb and points back to the subject to further describe it.

That cellist is talented.
The soloist seemed thoughtful.

Any linking verb may precede a predicate adjective.

Rachel’s tale sounded preposterous to all of us.
The runners looked exhausted but happy.
We became quite impatient with the long wait.

Exercise 19   Recognizing Adjectives as Subject Complements

Write the subject complements and label each by writing predicate adjective or predicate nominative.

1. Abigail Van Buren is a newspaper advice columnist.
2. Van Buren’s identical twin sister, Ann Landers, is also an advice columnist.
3. The names of Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren are pen names for the twins who were born Esther Pauline and Pauline Esther Friedman.
4. Landers started her column in 1955; Van Buren later felt motivated to follow in her sister’s footsteps.
5. The San Francisco Chronicle was interested in her articles.
6. Her efforts were immediately successful.
7. Van Buren’s advice column, “Dear Abby,” is sometimes sarcastic but practical.
8. Ann Landers’s suggestions are sometimes humorous and lighthearted.
9. Van Buren and Landers answer many letters.
10. Both columnists are popular with their readers.

Exercise 20   Identifying Subject Complements

On your paper, write all the subject complements that appear in the following sentences. Identify each as a predicate nominative or a predicate adjective. (Two sentences have more than one predicate nominative or predicate adjective; three sentences have none.)

1. Monks returning from studying Zen Buddhism in Chinese monasteries brought the practice of drinking green tea to Japan.
2. Today the tea ceremony has become a traditional Japanese custom.
3. A teahouse may be a detached structure or a special room in the host’s house.
4. The design of a teahouse is simple.
5. Bowing to enter through the three-foot doorway, guests feel humble.
6. A scroll, a flower arrangement, and fragrant incense greet visitors.
7. The host serves a light meal before the ceremony.
8. During the ceremony one feels calm and aware of the surroundings.
9. An admiring examination of the host’s teapot and utensils is an important part of the ritual.
10. The wabi style of these utensils, plain and simple, has been traditional in Japan since the sixteenth century.
Exercise 21  Review: Identifying Parts of the Sentence

On your paper, identify the underlined portion of each sentence as a **simple subject**, **simple predicate**, **complete subject**, or **complete predicate**. If the underlined portion contains a compound subject or a compound predicate, write **compound**.

**SAMPLE**

Argentina, Brazil, and Chile are three South American countries.

**ANSWER**

complete subject—compound

**ABC Powers**

1. The **ABC Powers** was an early 1900s designation for Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.
2. These three countries **struggled** to preserve peace in South and Central America.
3. They also **endeavored** to help all Latin American countries.
4. Finally, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile developed a series of treaties.
5. The agreements **granted arbitration of disputes and provided mutual support against aggression**.
6. The alliances were **principally directed** against several policies of the United States.
7. The **ABC Powers** were particularly dissatisfied with policies in the Monroe Doctrine.
8. The **Monroe Doctrine** was a statement to the U.S. Congress by President James Monroe in 1823.
9. The doctrine **basically granted the United States the right to intercede in any Latin American country’s internal or external affairs**.
10. One significant **effort** of the ABC Powers was their offer to arbitrate a 1914 dispute between the United States and Mexico.

Exercise 22  Review: Recognizing Subjects in Exceptional Positions

On your paper, write the simple subjects from each of the following sentences. If the subject is understood **you**, write **you** in parentheses. Then label the sentence **C** for **command** or **I** for **inverted order**.

1. Emerging from the tepid earth are daffodils and tulips.
2. Growing daily in blossoming trees are masterfully constructed birds’ nests.
3. Help me mow the lawn.
4. Let’s drive to the shore and lie in the sun.
5. Here were once trees barren of leaves and yards.
6. Bursting open are the flowers of azalea plants.
7. Heating the earth and the air are longer days of brilliant sunshine.
8. Growing dimmer are the memories of ice and snow.
9. Here is everyone’s favorite time of year.
10. Here is the splendor of springtime.

Exercise 23  Review: Creating Sentences with Direct Objects

Write five sentences describing how to make or do something. Use action verbs. Identify all subjects, verbs, and direct objects.