Subject and Predicate: How It Works

Every sentence has a subject and a predicate. Here is how to find them.

1. Every sentence has two parts

The red fox | **ran across the field.**

subject — predicate

The **subject** tells who or what the sentence is about. The **predicate** tells what the subject does or is.

2. Find the predicate first

Look for the **verb**, the action or being word. In most sentences the predicate starts at the verb and runs to the end.

Pam | **planted three seeds.**

subject — predicate

The verb is planted.

3. Then find the subject

Ask **who or what** and say the verb. Who lost a hat? **My little brother.** The words that tell who or what are the subject.

My little brother | **lost his hat.**

subject — predicate

4. Simple subject and simple predicate

The **simple subject** is the main noun. The **simple predicate** is the verb. They are the two most important words.

The red **fox** **ran** across the field.

fox is the simple subject
ran is the simple predicate

Three steps to split any sentence

1. **Find the verb.** What is happening, or what is?
2. **Ask who or what.** Who or what does it? That is the subject.
3. **Draw the line.** It usually goes just before the verb.

Being, not doing

A predicate does not have to be an action. It can tell what the subject **is**, **was** or **has**.

The soup | **is hot.**

subject — predicate

Gus | **was a small pup.**

subject — predicate

A spider | **has eight legs.**

subject — predicate

Watch out

A group of words needs **both** parts to be a sentence.

✗ **The tall girl**
No predicate. What did she do?

✗ **Ran to the bus**
No subject. Who ran?

✓ **The tall girl ran to the bus.**
A subject and a predicate. A sentence!