

**I've provided the first week's readings in case you're waiting on your book.**

***Writer's Reference with Writing about Literature, 9<sup>th</sup> ed.***

**Main Verbs, pp 308**

### **Main verbs**

The main verb of a sentence is always the kind of word that would change form if put into these test sentences:

<b>BASE FORM</b>	Usually I ( <i>walk, ride</i> ).
<b>PAST TENSE</b>	Yesterday I ( <i>walked, rode</i> ).
<b>PAST PARTICIPLE</b>	I have ( <i>walked, ridden</i> ) many times before.
<b>PRESENT PARTICIPLE</b>	I am ( <i>walking, riding</i> ) right now.
<b>-S FORM</b>	Usually he/she/it ( <i>walks, rides</i> ).

If a word doesn't change form when slipped into the test sentences, you can be certain that it is not a main verb. For example, the noun *revolution*, though it may seem to suggest an action, can never function as a main verb. Just try to make it behave like one (*Today I revolution . . . , Yesterday I revolutioned . . .*) and you'll see why.

When both the past-tense and the past-participle forms of a verb end in *-ed*, the verb is regular (*walked, walked*). Otherwise, the verb is irregular (*rode, ridden*). (See [G2-a](#).)

The verb *be* is highly irregular, having eight forms instead of the usual five: the base form *be*; the present-tense forms *am, is, and are*; the past-tense forms *was* and *were*; the present participle *being*; and the past participle *been*.

Helping verbs combine with main verbs to create tenses. See [G2-f](#).

**NOTE:** Some verbs are followed by words that look like prepositions but are so closely associated with the verb that they are a part of its meaning. These words are known as particles. Common verb-particle combinations include *bring up, drop off, give in, look up, run into, and take off*.

**TIP:** For more information about using verbs, see these sections of the handbook: active verbs ([W3](#)), subject-verb agreement ([G1](#)), Standard English verb forms ([G2-a](#) to [G2-d](#)), verb tense and mood ([G2-f](#) and [G2-g](#)), and verbs for multilingual writers ([M1](#)).

## Subjects, pp 312-314

### B2-a Subjects

The subject of a sentence names whom or what the sentence is about. The simple subject is always a noun or pronoun; the complete subject consists of the simple subject and any words or word groups modifying the simple subject.

#### *The complete subject*

To find the complete subject, ask Who? or What?, insert the verb, and finish the question. The answer is the complete subject.

\_\_\_\_\_ **COMPLETE SUBJECT** \_\_\_\_\_  
The devastating effects of famine can last for many years.

Who or what can last for many years? *The devastating effects of famine.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **COMPLETE SUBJECT** \_\_\_\_\_  
Adventure novels that contain multiple subplots are often made into successful movies.

Who or what are often made into movies? *Adventure novels that contain multiple subplots.*

COMPLETE  
SUBJECT

In our program, student teachers work full-time for ten months.

Who or what works full-time for ten months? *Student teachers*. Notice that *In our program, student teachers* is not a sensible answer to the question. (It is not wise to assume that the subject must always appear first in a sentence.)

### **The simple subject**

To find the simple subject, strip away all modifiers in the complete subject. This includes single-word modifiers such as *the* and *devastating*, phrases such as *of famine*, and subordinate clauses such as *that contain multiple subplots*.

SS

The devastating effects of famine can last for many years.

SS

Adventure novels that contain multiple subplots are often made into successful movies.

A sentence may have a compound subject containing two or more simple subjects joined with a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *or*.

SS                      SS

Great commitment and a little luck make a successful actor.

### **Understood subjects**

In imperative sentences, which give advice or issue commands, the subject is understood but not actually present in the sentence. The subject of an imperative sentence is understood to be *you*.

[*You*] Put your hands on the steering wheel.

### **Subject after the verb**

Although the subject ordinarily comes before the verb (*The planes took off*), occasionally it does not. When a sentence begins with *There is* or *There are* (or *There was* or *There were*), the subject follows the verb. In such inverted constructions, the word *There* is an expletive, an empty word serving merely to get the sentence started.

SS

There are eight planes waiting to take off.

Occasionally a writer will invert a sentence for effect.

Joyful is the <sup>SS</sup>child whose school closes for snow.

*Joyful* is an adjective, so it cannot be the subject. Turn this sentence around and its structure becomes obvious.

The *child* whose school closes for snow is joyful.

In questions, the subject frequently appears between the helping verb and the main verb.

HV                      SS                      MV  
Do Kenyan marathoners train year-round?

**TIP:** The ability to recognize the subject of a sentence will help you edit for fragments (G5), subject-verb agreement (G1), pronouns such as *I* and *me* (G3-c), missing subjects (M3-b), and repeated subjects (M3-c).

## Sentence Types, pp 324-325

### B4-a Sentence structures

Depending on the number and the types of clauses they contain, sentences are classified as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

Clauses come in two varieties: independent and subordinate. An independent clause contains a subject and a predicate, and it either stands alone or could stand alone as a sentence. A subordinate clause also contains a subject and a predicate, but it functions within a sentence as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun; it cannot stand alone. (See B3-e.)

#### Simple sentences

A simple sentence is one independent clause with no subordinate clauses.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Without a passport, Eva could not visit her aunt in Peru.

A simple sentence may contain compound elements — a compound subject, verb, or object, for example — but it does not contain more than one full sentence pattern. The following sentence is simple because its two verbs (*comes in* and *goes out*) share a subject (*Spring*).

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Spring comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.

### Compound sentences

A compound sentence is composed of two or more independent clauses with no subordinate clauses. The independent clauses are usually joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*) or with a semicolon. (See P1-a and P3-a.)

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE      INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
The car broke down, but a rescue van arrived within minutes.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE      INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
A shark was spotted near shore; people left immediately.

### Complex sentences

A complex sentence is composed of one independent clause with one or more subordinate clauses. (See B3-e.)

ADJECTIVE      SUBORDINATE CLAUSE  
The pitcher who won the game is a rookie.

ADVERB      SUBORDINATE CLAUSE  
If you leave late, take a cab home.

NOUN      SUBORDINATE CLAUSE  
What matters most to us is a quick commute.

### Compound-complex sentences

A compound-complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause. The following sentence contains two independent clauses, each of which contains a subordinate clause.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE      INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Tell the nurse practitioner how you feel, and she will decide whether you  
SUB CL      SUB CL  
can go home.

## **B4-b** Sentence purposes

Writers use declarative sentences to make statements, imperative sentences to issue requests or commands, interrogative sentences to ask questions, and exclamatory sentences to make exclamations.

<b>DECLARATIVE</b>	The echo sounded in our ears.
<b>IMPERATIVE</b>	Love your neighbor.
<b>INTERROGATIVE</b>	Did the better team win tonight?
<b>EXCLAMATORY</b>	We're here to save you!