

COMPLEMENTS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT
OBJECTS, SUBJECT
COMPLEMENTS

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

A complement is a word or word group that completes the meaning of a verb. Every sentence has a subject and a verb. Sometimes the subject and the verb can express a complete thought all by themselves.

✧ Examples:

Adriana swam.

The puppy was sleeping.

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

Often, however, a verb needs a complement to complete its meaning.

✖ Examples:

Incomplete: My aunt found
(what?)

Complete: My aunt found a wallet.
(The noun wallet completes the
meaning of the verb found.)

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

× Examples:

Incomplete: Sarah bought (what?)

Complete: Sarah bought herself a new jacket. (The pronoun herself and the noun jacket complete the meaning of the verb bought.)

Incomplete: The longcase clock was (what?)

Complete: The longcase clock was an antique. (The noun antique completes the meaning of the verb was.)

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

Incomplete: The elephant
seemed (what?)

Complete: The elephant seemed
tired. (The adjective tired
completes the meaning of the
verb seemed.)

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

An adverb is never a complement.

Adverb: The koala chews slowly.
(The adverb slowly modifies the verb by telling how the koala chews.)

Complements: The koala chews eucalyptus leaves. (The noun leaves completes the meaning of the verb chews by telling *what* the koala chews.)

RECOGNIZING COMPLEMENTS

A complement is never a part of a prepositional phrase.

Object of Preposition: Hannah is riding to her friend's house. (The noun house is the object of the preposition to.)

Complement: Hannah is riding her bicycle. (The noun bicycle completes the meaning of the verb phrase is riding by telling *what* Hannah is riding.)

OBJECTS OF VERBS

Direct objects and
indirect objects
complete the meaning
of transitive verbs.

DIRECT OBJECTS

The direct object is one type of complement. It completes the meaning of a transitive verb. A direct object is a noun, pronoun, or word group that tells *who* or *what* receives the action of the verb.

DIRECT OBJECTS

A direct object answers the question *Whom?* or *What?* after a transitive verb.

✧ Examples:

My brother bought a model. (My brother bought *what?* Bought a *model*. The noun *model* receives the action of the verb *bought*.)

Jan called somebody for the assignment. (Jan called *whom?* Called *somebody*. The pronoun *somebody* receives the action of the verb *called*.)

DIRECT OBJECTS

A direct object may be a compound of two or more objects.

Examples:

Did the car have spoked wheels and a spoiler? (The compound direct object of the verb *Did have* is *wheel* and *spoiler*.)

She needed glue, paint, and decals for her model. (The compound direct object of the verb *needed* is *glue*, *paint*, and *decals*.)

DIRECT OBJECTS

A direct object can never follow a linking verb because a linking verb does not express action.

Linking Verb: Julia Morgan was an architect. (The verb *was* does not express action; therefore, *architect* is not a direct object.)

INDIRECT OBJECTS

The indirect object is another type of complement. Like the direct object, the indirect object helps complete the meaning of a transitive verb. If a sentence has an indirect object, it must also have a direct object.

INDIRECT OBJECTS

An indirect object is a noun, pronoun, or word group that usually comes between the verb and the direct object.

An indirect object tells to whom or to what or for whom or for what the action of the verb is done.

INDIRECT OBJECTS

× Examples:

I gave that problem some thought. (The noun problem is the indirect object of the verb *gave* and answers the question "*To what did I give some thought?*")

Dad bought himself some

INDIRECT OBJECTS

If the word to or for is used, the nouns, pronoun, or word group following it is part of a prepositional phrase and cannot be an indirect object.

Objects of Prepositions:

The ship's captain gave orders to the crew.

Vinnie made some lasagna

INDIRECT OBJECTS

Like a direct object, an indirect object can be compound.

✧ Examples:

She gave Ed and me the list of summer activities. (*Ed* and *me* are indirect objects of the verb *gave*. They answer the question "*To whom did she give the list?*")

Did the peacock show you

SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

A subject complement is a word or word group that is in the predicate and that identifies or describes the subject.

A linking verb connects a subject complement to the subject.

× Examples:

Mrs. Suarez is a helpful

SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

✕ Examples:

The airport appears very busy. (The subject complement *busy* describes the subject *airport*. The linking verb *appears* connects *airport* and *busy*.)

What smells so good? (The

SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

✕ Examples:

He was the one in the middle of the line, in fact. (The subject complement *one* identifies the subject *He*. The linking verb *was* connects *He* and *one*.)

The author of that story is

SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

Subject complements
always complete the

		Common	Linking	Verbs	
Appear	Become	Grow	Remain	Smell	Stay
Be	Feel	Look	Seem	Sound	Taste

The two kinds of subject complements are
the predicate nominative and the predicate
adjective.

PREDICATE NOMINATIVES

A predicate nominative is a word or word group that is in the predicate and that identifies the subject or refers to it.

A predicate nominative may be a noun, a pronoun, or a word group that functions as a noun. A
predicate nominative is

PREDICATE NOMINATIVES

✗ Examples:

Seaweed is algae, as I remember. (The noun *algae* is a predicate nominative following the linking verb *is*. *Algae* identifies the subject *Seaweed*.)

Was the first runner-up

NOTE

Expressions such as *It's*, *I*, and *That was she* may sound awkward even though they are correct. In informal situations, many people use *It's me* and *That was her*. Such expressions may one day become acceptable in formal situations as well. For now, however, it is best to follow the rules of standard, formal English in all formal speaking and writing.

PREDICATE NOMINATIVES

Be careful not to mistake a direct object for a predicate nominative. A predicate nominative always completes the meaning of a linking verb.

Direct Object: My brother admired the acrobat.

(Acrobat is the direct object of the action verb

PREDICATE NOMINATIVES

✖ Examples:

Maya Angelou is a great
poet and storyteller.

*(Poet and storyteller are
predicate nominatives.*

*They identify the subject
Maya Angelou and
complete the meaning of
the linking verb is.)*

PREDICATE NOMINATIVES

✖ Examples:

Yesterday was my birthday, Labor Day, and the first day of the week! (*Birthday, Labor Day, and day* are predicate nominatives. They identify the subject *Yesterday* and complete the meaning of the linking

PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

A predicate adjective is an adjective that is in the predicate and that describes the subject.

A predicate adjective is connected to the subject by a linking verb.

× Examples:

By 9:30 P.M., I was very tired. (The adjective

PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

Like a predicate nominative,
a predicated adjective
may be compound.

✧ Examples:

The blanket felt soft and
fuzzy. (Both *soft* and
fuzzy describe the
subject *blanket*.)

The cave looked cold,