Think about the different types of possibilities involved in a football play. When the center hikes the ball to the quarterback, the quarterback passes it to a receiver, hands it off, or perhaps keeps the ball himself and runs with it. Those who really understand football, however, know that only a limited number of patterns are possible in the game. English sentences use a limited number of patterns as well. In this chapter, you will learn the five basic English sentence patterns. The first type is the Subject/Verb pattern.

**Sentence Pattern 1: Subject / Verb**

The basic Subject/Verb sentence pattern consists of a subject and a verb. Below is a sentence in this pattern:

Fido barks.

First, find the verb. The part of the sentence that includes the verb is called the **predicate**. To find the verb, ask yourself, “What happens?” Find the word that shows action or being. In the sentence above, the action is *barks*, so *barks* is the verb. The **simple subject** is the word that acts or causes the action. To find the simple subject, ask yourself, “Who or what barks?” The simple subject is *Fido*, the word that answers this question.

Here are some more examples in the Subject/Verb pattern:

- **S V**
  
  *Anthony left early.*

- **S V**
  
  The ancient plumbing leaked badly.

- **S V**
  
  The noisy frog in the pond croaked throughout the night.
Directions: In the following sentences, underline the simple subjects once and the verbs twice.

Example: Ethan stood in the corner.

1. My mother retired.
2. The hawk soared above the trees.
3. The skater spun in circles.
4. During the final inning, a runner scored.
5. Beside the beautiful statue in the park, the pigeon found some popcorn.

Diagramming Subject/Verb Sentence Patterns

Remember the football plays? When the coach wants to visualize the play, he draws a picture, or a diagram, of the play. He might use “X” and “O” to represent the opposing players and draw arrows to show the direction each player will run. Likewise, visualizing sentences is helpful in understanding the structure of English. Linguists have devised a system of diagrams to illustrate the patterns of sentences. Diagramming a sentence involves placing words on lines that connect to form a frame that shows how all of the words are related.

The diagram for a Subject/Verb pattern looks like this:

subject verb

In the sentence Fido barks, you already know that barks is the verb. To determine the subject, ask, “Who or what barks?” The answer is Fido. The simple subject is Fido, so Fido goes in the subject part of the diagram. Note that all capitalized words in the sentence are also capitalized on the diagram frame.

Fido barks

Practice Set 2–2

Directions: Place the simple subject and verb in their appropriate places on the diagram frames. Draw the diagrams on a separate sheet of paper.
Example: Lindsay left before the finale.  
1. Hector sneezed.  
2. The fire blazed.  
3. The old swimming hole freezes in the winter.  
4. After the game, the girls celebrated.  
5. In the middle of the sixth inning, the pitcher balked.

**PRACTICE SET 2–3**

**Directions:** On a separate sheet of paper, write five sentences in the Subject/Verb pattern. Then place the subjects and verbs in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame.

**Sentence Pattern 2: Subject/Verb/Direct Object**

Some verbs require a **direct object**, which is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. Examine this sentence:

John drove the car.

Begin by finding the verb. What happened? Somebody **drove**. To find the subject, ask who or what did the action. John did, so **John** is the subject. To find a direct object, ask **whom or what?** after the verb. John drove the car, so **car** is the direct object. Thus, the subject does the action, and the direct object receives the action.

Here are more examples in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object pattern:

- **S  V  DO**
  The New York Giants won the game.

- **S  V  DO**
  LeeAnn asked Marc to the prom.
Verbs that take direct objects are called **transitive verbs**. Verbs that do not take direct objects are called **intransitive verbs**. To determine whether a verb is transitive, remember to ask whom or what? after it, not how? or when?

- I ate the sandwich.
- I ate what? I ate the sandwich. In this sentence, *ate* is a transitive verb.
- Does quickly tell whom or what? No, it tells how. In this sentence, *ate* is an intransitive verb.

**PRACTICE SET 2–4**

**Directions:** In the sentences below, underline the simple subject once and the verb twice. Write “DO” above the direct object.

**Example:** Tyler left the company.

1. The waiter carried the heavy tray.
2. The tycoon owns several companies.
3. Brianna spent her entire paycheck on food.
4. Good judgment creates positive outcomes.
5. The gifted actress won her first Academy Award.

**PRACTICE SET 2–5**

**Directions:** In the sentences below, identify the pronouns and indicate whether they are being used as subjects or direct objects.

**Examples:**

- She left the hat in the car. She—subject
- Everyone kissed her on the forehead. Everyone—subject, her—direct object

1. They sent him away.
2. Each received a new computer.
3. Some found the answer quickly.
Diagramming Subject/Verb/Direct Object Sentence Patterns

The Subject/Verb/Direct Object pattern diagram looks like this:

```
subject | verb | direct object
```

Place a short vertical line after the verb and then add the direct object. Notice that the line dividing the subject and the verb crosses through the horizontal base line to separate the words belonging to the subject from the words belonging to the predicate. However, to indicate that the direct object is part of the predicate, the line separating the verb from the direct object stops at the horizontal line rather than crossing through it. Look at the following diagram for placement:

```
John | drove | car
```

**PRACTICE SET 2–6**

**Directions:** For the sentences below, place the subjects, verbs, and direct objects in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame. Draw the diagrams on a separate sheet of paper.

**Example:** George ate too much candy.  
```
George | ate | candy
```

1. Annie sang a lullaby.

2. Honesty provides its own rewards.

3. The jury made a hasty decision.

4. Sydney called Morgan.

5. Sophie happily completed the difficult assignment for her science teacher.

6. Everyone needs a friend.

7. Nobody won the lottery in March.

8. He married her during halftime.
WRITING YOUR OWN SENTENCES

Directions: Fill in the blanks below, using the cues to help you write your own sentences in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object pattern. You may add a, an, or the if needed.

_________________________  _______________  _______________

noun or pronoun  verb  noun or pronoun that completes the thought

Try another one:

_________________________  _______________  _______________

noun or pronoun  verb  noun or pronoun that completes the thought

Now try one on your own:

_________________________

PRACTICE SET 2–7

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, write five sentences in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object pattern. Then place the subjects, verbs, and direct objects in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame.

Sentence Pattern 3: Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object

This third pattern is similar to the Subject/Verb/Direct Object pattern but with an addition. In the Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object pattern, you go one step beyond asking whom or what? after the verb. The indirect object answers the question to whom or what? or for whom or what? and always appears between the verb and the direct object.

Here is a sentence in the Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object pattern:

I sent John a gift.

In this sentence, sent is the verb. To find the subject, ask, “Who or what sent?” The answer is I sent, so I is the subject. To find the direct object, ask, “I sent whom or what?” I sent a gift, so gift is the direct object. To find the indirect object, ask, “To whom did I send the gift?” I sent the gift to John, so John is the indirect object.

To find the indirect object, ask the following questions about the verb:

To whom?  I offered Lizzie a sandwich. =
            I offered (to) Lizzie a sandwich.
In a sentence containing an indirect object, the words to or for do not actually appear before the indirect object.

I sent John a gift contains an indirect object.
I sent a gift to John does not contain an indirect object.

To what?
I mailed the electric company my check. =
I mailed (to) the electric company my check.

For whom?
I baked Zachary some brownies. =
I baked (for) Zachary some brownies.

For what?
The alumni bought the school a new van. =
The alumni bought (for) the school a new van.

Be careful not to confuse sentences that look alike because they contain nouns that appear to occupy the same positions. Consider these two sentences:

I sent Marcy some flowers.

I sent Marcy to the store.

In the first sentence, flowers is the direct object, telling what I sent. Marcy is the indirect object: I sent (to) Marcy some flowers. In the second sentence, Marcy is the direct object. Whom did I send? I sent Marcy. To the store is a phrase telling where I sent her. This sentence does not contain an indirect object.

Try another example.

Glenna painted her teacher a picture.
Painted is the verb. Glenna painted, so Glenna is the subject. Remember to ask the appropriate questions to distinguish the direct object from the indirect object. To determine the direct object, ask, “What did Glenna paint?” Glenna painted the picture, so picture is the direct object. To determine the indirect object, ask for whom Glenna painted. Glenna painted for her teacher, so teacher is the indirect object.

Here are some other examples in the Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object pattern:

Dorothy offered Melanie an explanation.
The actors gave the audience a hand.
Marisol sent her friend a long letter.

PRACTICE SET 2–8

Directions: In the following sentences, underline the simple subjects once and the verbs twice. Then label the indirect objects (IO) and direct objects (DO). Not all sentences contain direct objects or indirect objects.

Example: Asher gave his brother a book.

1. Dora sat calmly by the window during the thunderstorm.
2. Michelle taught her brother a lesson about manners.
3. Kyle gave Madison the wrong directions to his house.
4. They smuggled cans of soda into the stadium.
5. Carson showed his friends his new MP3 player.
6. I give anyone in social work much respect.

7. Ellie kept the stray puppy in her garage.

8. Rob went to dinner with his girlfriend.

9. Lauren teaches dolphins sign language.

10. Amy baked Steve an apple pie.

**Diagramming Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object Sentence Patterns**

To diagram Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object sentence patterns, begin with the parts you already know. For example, in the sentence Glenna painted her teacher a picture, you have already determined that Glenna is the subject, painted is the verb, and picture is the direct object:

```
Glenna | painted | picture
```

Under the verb, place the indirect object on a horizontal line (__________) attached to a backslash diagonal, which extends slightly below the horizontal line.

```
Glenna | painted | picture
    \  
     teacher
```

**PRACTICE SET 2–9**

**Directions:** For the sentences below, place the subjects, verbs, indirect objects, and direct objects in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame. Draw the diagrams on a separate sheet of paper.

Example: The teacher gave the entire class a lecture.

```
    teacher | gave | lecture
          \  
           class
```

1. The supervisor asked Meredith some difficult questions.

2. The con man sold Carolyn some land in the Cypress Swamp.

3. Terri fed her iguanas a beautiful salad.

4. Dr. Totten sent the laboratory a detailed report.

5. Madonna sang the audience another encore.
6. She brought him a pineapple pizza for lunch.
7. Valerie presented him an ultimatum.
8. The job offered her a chance for advancement.

WRITING YOUR OWN SENTENCES

Directions: Fill in the blanks below, using the cues to help you write your own sentences in the Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object pattern. You may add a, an, or the if needed.

noun or pronoun choose one of the following verbs: ask, bring, buy, give, send, show, teach, tell noun or pronoun noun or pronoun

Try another one:
	noun or pronoun choose one of the following verbs: ask, bring, buy, give, send, show, teach, tell noun or pronoun noun or pronoun

Now try one on your own:

____________________________________________________________________________________

PRACTICE SET 2–10

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, construct five of your own sentences in the Subject/Verb/Indirect Object/Direct Object pattern. Then place just the subjects, verbs, indirect objects, and direct objects in the appropriate positions on the diagram frame.

Sentence Pattern 4: Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement

This pattern contains the subject, verb, and direct object, but it adds another word, the object complement. An object complement always follows the direct object and either renames or describes the direct object. Consider this sentence:

She named the baby Bruce.
Object complements can be nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. When an adjective functions as the object complement, it describes the direct object before it rather than renaming it:

I painted my nails green.

Painted is the verb. Who or what painted? I did, so I is the subject. What did I paint? I painted my nails, so nails is the direct object. What did I paint them? I painted them green, so green is the object complement, describing nails.

In addition, certain verbs, such as appoint, believe, call, choose, consider, elect, keep, leave, make, name, paint, prove, select, think, turn, and vote, commonly appear in patterns with object complements.

The verb is named. To find the subject, ask, “Who or what named?” The answer is she named, so she is the subject. Now ask, “Whom or what did she name?” She named the baby, so baby is the direct object. Any word following the direct object that renames or describes the direct object is an object complement. She named the baby Bruce, so Bruce is the object complement.

Here is another sentence in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement pattern. To find the direct object, remember to ask whom or what? about the verb. To find the object complement, remember to ask what? about the direct object.

what what

S V DO OC
The dye turned the shirt red.

Look at some more examples in this pattern:

S V DO OC (noun)
The panel selected Dong Li Miss Universe.

S V DO OC (adjective)
The doctor considered the patient’s feelings important.

S V DO OC (adjective)
The party at the amusement park made the little girl’s friends happy.

Be careful not to confuse sentences that look alike. Consider these two sentences:

He called the man a liar.

He called the man yesterday.

Man is the direct object in both sentences. In the first sentence, liar renames the man, so it is the object complement. In the second sentence, yesterday is an adverb that tells when he called the man. This sentence does not contain an object complement.
**Directions:** In the following sentences, underline the simple subjects once and the verbs twice. Then label the direct objects (DO) and object complements (OC).

Example: We **named our boat** *Hog Heaven."

1. He called his brother a genius.
2. The dye turned my hair purple.
3. I proved him wrong today.
4. The comedian left the audience hungry for more.
5. I kept Nicky busy during the boring speech.
6. The committee appointed me the leader.
7. Carlie made me sorry about my behavior.
8. I consider you my friend.

**Diagramming Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement Sentence Patterns**

To diagram a sentence in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement pattern, begin with the parts you already know.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>verb</th>
<th>direct object</th>
<th>\object complement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

The object complement follows a backslash placed next to the direct object. Notice how the line points back to the direct object, the word the object complement renames or describes.
PRACTICE SET 2–12

Directions: For the sentences below, place the subjects, verbs, direct objects, and object complements in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame. Draw the diagrams on a separate sheet of paper.

Example: We elected Jack secretary.  
We| elected | Jack \ secretary

1. American Idol made Simon Cowell a celebrity.
2. Joey’s sarcastic comment left Belinda speechless.
3. Joe Torre called the New York Yankees unbeatable.
4. I consider Dr. Dayan an expert.
5. The boss appointed his new secretary chairperson of the United Way campaign.

WRITING YOUR OWN SENTENCES

Directions: Fill in the blanks below, using the cues to help you write your own sentences in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement pattern. You may add a, an, or the if needed.

noun or pronoun

one of the following verbs: appoint, believe, call, choose, consider, elect, keep, leave, make, name, paint, prove, select, think, turn, vote

noun or pronoun

noun, pronoun, or adjective that renames or describes the noun or pronoun just before it

Try another one:

noun or pronoun

one of the following verbs: appoint, believe, call, choose, consider, elect, keep, leave, make, name, paint, prove, select, think, turn, vote

noun or pronoun

noun, pronoun, or adjective that renames or describes the noun or pronoun just before it

Now try one on your own:

____________________________________
PRACTICE SET 2–13

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, write five sentences in the Subject/Verb/Direct Object/Object Complement pattern. Then place the subjects, verbs, direct objects, and object complements in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame.

Sentence Pattern 5: Subject/Linking Verb/Subject Complement

The verbs examined so far have been action verbs. You have learned that some action verbs are intransitive verbs, that is, verbs that do not take a direct object. Remember Fido? Fido barks. Other action verbs are transitive verbs, which do take a direct object. Remember John and his car? John drove the car, so car is the direct object.

Not all verbs show action, however. Linking verbs have a special purpose—to link the subject to a word in the predicate in order to explain or enhance the subject’s meaning.

Lindsay seems lucky.

In this sentence, lucky tells something about the subject, Lindsay. The verb seems links the word Lindsay to lucky. Verbs such as seem, appear, and become are usually linking verbs. Other verbs can also be linking verbs, such as those involving the senses, including feel, sound, taste, smell, and look. These verbs are linking verbs only when they connect the subject to a word that renames or describes it. Be careful not to consider them linking verbs when they show action. Examine these two sentences:

Hilda tastes the chocolate.

The chocolate tastes bitter.

In the first sentence, Hilda is doing something. She tastes the chocolate. Here, tastes shows action. In the second sentence, tastes connects bitter to the word it describes—chocolate. In this sentence, it is a linking verb.

A good trick to determine if a verb is a linking verb is to substitute the word seems for the verb. If the sentence still makes sense, the verb is a linking verb.

The food looked spoiled.
The food seemed spoiled.

Seemed works, so looked is a linking verb in the sentence above.

I looked at the dark clouds.
I seemed at the dark clouds.

Seemed doesn’t work, so looked is not a linking verb in the sentence above.
PRACTICE SET 2–14

Directions: For the sentences below, underline the verbs twice and then determine whether the verbs are linking verbs or action verbs.

Examples:

He looked at the instructions carefully.  
He looked confused.

1. Jason suddenly appeared in the window.
2. The track star’s running shoes smelled terrible.
3. I felt the rough surface of the tabletop.
4. She sounded the bell at midnight.
5. The Tin Man appeared rusty.
6. I really feel sorry for you.
7. The campers smelled the skunk in the woods.
8. His excuse sounds insincere to me.
9. The climber became weary near the summit.
10. His prospects looked grim.

The most common linking verb is the verb to be.

Albert is an actor.
Jessica was fortunate.

Any form of the verb to be can be a linking verb: am, is, are, was, were. Be, been, and being can also be linking verbs when they appear with helping verbs (will be, has been, are being).

Like the verbs of the senses, forms of to be are not always linking verbs. Sometimes they are auxiliary verbs, that is, verbs that combine with other verbs to form a verb phrase:

verb phrase
I am running.

verb phrase
You were snoring.

You will learn more about verb phrases in Chapter 4.
In the sentences below, underline the linking verbs twice.

Example: Anthony is cautious when he drives.

1. I am a baseball fan.
2. Kayla and Anna are sisters.
3. Taylor is certain about the plan.
4. The singer was nervous when he performed in public.
5. You are a true inspiration to everyone.
6. They were soldiers in Iraq.
7. I was upset when you called me.
8. I am often angry with my brother.

You can now recognize three types of linking verbs:

Verbs such as seem, become, appear

Verbs dealing with the senses, such as feel, smell, taste, look, sound

Forms of to be, such as am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being

Don’t assume that all to be verbs are either linking verbs or part of a verb phrase. A to be verb can also come before a word designating time or place:

The game was yesterday.
My doctor is away.

Words that designate time or place are adverbs. You will learn more about them in Chapter 3.
When the verb in the sentence is a linking verb, the word that it links to the subject is called the subject complement. A subject complement is a word that follows a linking verb and renames or describes the subject. Subject complements can be nouns, pronouns, or adjectives:

S  LV  SC (noun)
Shelly is a student of history.

S  LV  SC (noun)
Jack became a tour director in Europe.

S  LV  SC (adjective)
She was alone for three years.

S  LV  SC (adjective)
The sky appeared black before the storm.

S  LV  SC (adjective)
Marianne looked healthy.

S  LV  SC (pronoun)
The person chosen in charge was he.

Diagramming Subject/Linking Verb/Subject Complement Sentence Patterns

The Subject/Verb/Subject Complement diagram frame is similar to the Subject/Verb/Direct Object diagram frame. The only difference is that the line between the verb and the subject complement slants to the left, pointing back to the subject renamed or described.

PRACTICE SET 2–16

Directions: For the sentences below, place the subjects, verbs, and subject complements in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame. Draw the diagrams on a separate sheet of paper.

Example: The windows were foggy. windows were \ foggy
1. The trophy was enormous.
2. Wynton Marsalis is a trumpeter.
3. The tacos looked spicy.
4. The winner was he.
5. My answer sounded stupid.
6. The cold seemed unbearable.
7. My uncles were fishermen.
8. Austin is the capital of Texas.

WRITING YOUR OWN SENTENCES

Directions: Fill in the blanks below, using the cues to help you write your own sentences in the Subject/Linking Verb/Subject Complement pattern.

_______ noun or pronoun linking verb, like be, seem, become, appear, verb of the senses _______ noun, pronoun, or adjective linking to the subject

Try another one:

_______ noun or pronoun linking verb, like be, seem, become, appear, verb of the senses _______ noun, pronoun, or adjective linking to the subject

Now try one on your own:

_______ noun or pronoun linking verb, like be, seem, become, appear, verb of the senses _______ noun, pronoun, or adjective linking to the subject

PRACTICE SET 2–17

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, write five sentences in the Subject/Linking Verb/Subject Complement pattern. Then place the subjects, linking verbs, and subject complements in their appropriate positions on the diagram frame.
TEST YOURSELF

Directions: Identify the sentence patterns of the following sentences and write the pattern on the lines provided.

Example: Kevin asked a silly question.  
S/V/DO

1. Arthur sold Ricky his old car.  

2. Bert is a very smart guy.  

3. Katherine won first prize at the fair.  

4. Elena considered her son brilliant.  

5. Mashid left his keys in his locked car.  

6. Our hot water heater broke over the weekend.  

7. Mazie colored the tree orange.  

8. The speaker told the crowd the story of his life.  

9. They were all good dancers.  

10. The final exam was very easy.  

WORD WATCHERS

Some words sound alike but have very different meanings. Be sure to use the words that you mean.

accept/except  
Accept is a verb meaning to receive: I accept your apology.  
Except is a preposition meaning but: Everyone was invited except Tim.

affect/effect  
Both can mean influence. Affect is a verb: How does the weather affect your mood?  
Effect is a noun: The weather has no effect on my mood.  
Effect can also be a verb meaning to bring about: I want to effect a change in policy.

(continued)
between/among  Use *between* for two; use *among* for more than two:  
I divided the chores between the twins but among the triplets.

capital/capitol  The *capital* is a city; the *capitol* is a building:  
The capital of Florida is Tallahassee; many state capitols have copper domes.

choose/chose  Choose, rhyming with *fuse*, means to select:  
Please choose your partner.

Its past tense is *chose*, rhyming with *hose*:  
He chose the same partner last week.

**WORD WATCHERS PRACTICE SET**

**Directions:** Circle the correct word in the parentheses.

1. How does this grade (affect/effect) my overall average?
2. Mr. Callahan spread the workload (between/among) all of the students in the class.
3. The (capital/capitol) of Vermont is Montpelier.
4. Tie a ribbon on every chair (accept/except) that one.
5. Lilly (choose/chose) the low-calorie dessert.
6. The senator gave his speech on the steps of the (capital/capitol) building.
7. You must (accept/except) responsibility for your actions.
8. The accident at the nuclear reactor had a devastating (affect/effect) on the village.
9. You can (choose/chose) the path you wish to take in life.
10. Please place your luggage (between/among) the two posts.