**What is the subject?**

The subject of a sentence is simply what or whom the sentence is about. It usually comes before the predicate. For example, consider this sentence:

* Samantha collects reptiles.

This sentence is about a person with an unusual hobby—Samantha. Samantha is therefore the subject of the sentence. Here's another example:

* My girlfriend's boa constrictor seems restless this morning.

What is this sentence about? It's about my girlfriend's boa constrictor. The boa constrictor is therefore the subject of the sentence.

Some sentences that give commands might look as if they don't contain a subject:

* Come in, please.

In the example above, there is no visible subject. But don't be fooled: the subject in such a sentence is the pronoun *you.* Normally, the subject in a command is left out, or invisible.

When we do express the subject *you* in a command, it's most often a sign of strong irritation:

* You get that fish hook out of my aquarium right now!

**What is the predicate?**

The predicate is the part of the sentence that makes a statement about the subject. The main part of the predicate is the verb.

The predicate usually comes after the subject. Once you find the subject, you can easily find the predicate. Just ask yourself what the sentence is telling you about the subject.

The predicate might tell you what the subject did (or does, or will do). Let's take another look at our first example:

* Samantha collects reptiles.

In this sentence, as you know, the subject is *Samantha.* The predicate *collects reptiles*tells you what Samantha does. The verb here is the action verb *collects*.

The predicate might also give a description of the subject, as in our second example:

* My girlfriend's boa constrictor seems restless this morning.

Here, *seems restless this morning* gives a description of the subject *boa constrictor*. The verb is the linking verb *seems*, which merely links the description to the subject, without expressing any action.

The predicates we have seen have all been two or more words long. But sometimes, the predicate is simply a verb by itself:

* Jean-Marc sneezed.

In the above example, *Jean-Marc* is the subject, and the verb *sneezed* is the predicate.

**Does the subject always come before the predicate?**

No, the subject isn't always first. There are three situations in which the subject appears after the verb instead of before it.

1. In most questions:

* Are you ready?   
  (The subject *you* appears after the verb *are*.)
* Did I forget to feed my iguana again?   
  (The subject *I* is placed after the first half of the verb*did forget*.)

2. In many sentences beginning with *here*or*there*:

* Here comes the jury.  
  (The subject *jury* appears after the verb *comes*.)
* There were fifteen cats and an eviction notice on Janet's front porch.  
  (The subject *fifteen cats and an eviction notice* is placed after the verb*were*.)

3. In some sentences beginning with one or more prepositional phrases:

* Across the clearing and through the stream ran the frightened deer.  
  (The subject *deer* comes after the verb *ran*.)

Being able to recognize subjects and predicates is a useful skill, because they are the building blocks of complete sentences.