

Analysis of a sentence

We have already seen that a simple sentence has only one subject and one predicate. The subject refers to the person or thing about which something is said. The predicate is that part of the sentence that says something about the subject.

Study the following examples:

Fire burns. (Subject – fire, predicate – burns)

The birds sing. (Subject – the birds, predicate – sing)

The President visited Africa. (Subject – the president, predicate – visited Africa)

Barking dogs seldom bite. (Subject – barking dogs, predicate – seldom bite)

You can see that the subject may consist of one word or several words, but it must always have a noun or pronoun in it. In the same way, the predicate may consist of one word or several words, but it must always have a verb in it.

The main word in the subject is called the subject-word or simple subject.

Different kinds of subjects

The subject is always a noun or a word or phrase that does the work of a noun.

Money is the root of all evil. (Here the subject is the noun money.)

They have admitted their fault. (Here the subject is the pronoun they.)

The disabled are God's special children. (Here the subject is an adjective used as a noun.)

To err is human. (Here the subject is a to-infinitive.)

Slow and steady wins the race. (Here the subject is the phrase 'slow and steady'.)