Grammar: Complements

What are they?
How do I find them?
Complement Vocabulary

- **Complement**: a word or word group that completes the meaning of the verb.
- **Direct Object**: a noun, pronoun or word group that tells WHO or WHAT receives the action of the verb.
- **Indirect Object**: a noun, pronoun or word group that sometimes appears in sentences containing direct objects.
- **Predicate nominative**: a subject complement that renames the subject.
- **Predicate adjective**: a subject complement that describes the subject.
Every sentence has a subject and a verb, right? In addition, the verb often needs a complement to complete its meaning. A complement may be a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective.

Dr. Spock earned.

This sentence is incomplete—what did he earn?

Dr. Spock earned an award for his environmental research.

Better! We know what he earned—an award. Award is the complement (a direct object)

Dr. Spock was.

This sentence is incomplete—what was he?

Dr. Spock was a leader in environmental science.

Better! We now know he was a leader—a complement (a predicate nominative)
Direct Object (“DO”)

- The DO only follows an action verb.
- The DO is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. (They can also word group, but we won’t focus on those at the moment.)

If you can identify the SUBJECT and VERB in a sentence, then finding the DO—*if one exists*—is easy.

Just remember this simple formula:
Direct Object...try it out

On the third down, John quickly passed the ball to the receiver.

John (S) + passed (V) + what is being passed? = ball (DO)

Mary mowed the lawn after school.

Mary (S) + mowed (V) + what is being mowed? = lawn (DO)
A DIRECT OBJECT is a noun or pronoun—it will not be an adjective or other part of speech.

A DIRECT OBJECT receives the action performed by the subject.

A DIRECT OBJECT always follows a transitive action verb (a type of action verb).

A DIRECT OBJECT will not be a prepositional phrase or the object of the preposition.
Direct Object...a different take

Another way to look at it is that the SUBJECT does the VERB to the DO.

Say to yourself, “[subject]+[verb]+[who or what]”

The speeding sports car hit the Oak tree in front of my house.

“The car hit whom or what?”

“Tree” answers the question, so “tree” is the DO! Get it?

IMPORTANT! IF NOTHING ANSWERS THE QUESTION “WHO OR WHAT?”

THERE IS NO DIRECT OBJECT! You have an intransitive action verb.

The car sped past.

The car sped whom or what?

Nothing answers the question “who or what?”

“past” simply tells when—so the sentence has NO DIRECT OBJECT

“sped” is an intransitive action verb
Indirect Object (“IO”)

- An IO is *also a noun or pronoun*.
- The IO is different from a DO—IT TELLS WHO OR WHAT RECEIVES THE DO.

```
subject  verb   IO   DO

Keri gave Maddie a pencil.
```

- The IO is often used *between the verb and DO* and *does not* follow a preposition, such as "to" or "for."
- You *must* have a DO to have an IO.
- Make sure the sentence *contains both* an action verb and DO *before* looking for an IO.
Indirect Object...find it

Finding the INDIRECT OBJECT is as easy as 1-2-3.

My dad sent me a birthday card.

1. Start by finding the subject and verb of the sentence.
   "dad" is the subject performing the action of sending,
   so the action verb is "sent"

2. Ask yourself who or what received the action of the verb to determine the DO.
   What was sent? A card = DO

3. Determine the IO by asking yourself who or what receives the DO. Did you answer, "me"? If so, you are correct. The IO is "me" because "me" received the card.
1. Paul built a doll house for Hayley.

2. My mom made the teachers treats for the PTO meeting.

3. The club members held a party in the park.

4. The audience cheered their favorite actors during the play.

5. Miss Dempsey gave the students merits for helping with the assembly.
6. The priest told his congregation a story about his mission work.


8. Terri really dialed a wrong number last night.

9. The University Club awarded Jenny a scholarship for academic achievement.

10. I wish you great success in this grammar exercise.
Subject Complements

**Predicate Nominative**
- A noun or pronoun
- ALWAYS FOLLOWS A LINKING VERB
- Renames the subject

**Predicate Adjective**
- An adjective
- ALWAYS FOLLOWS A LINKING VERB
- Describes the subject
Subject Complements

What’s the trick to finding the PN or PA? Check to see if your verb is functioning as a linking verb.

1. Identify the subject and replace the verb with an equal sign.
2. It should make sense, you are renaming or describing the subject—you have a linking verb.

Let’s see how it works...

During student elections, John became class president.
John = class president

Do you see how the linking verb “became” renames the subject?

Mary grew tired.
Mary = tired

Do you see how the linking verb “grew” describes Mary?

Kelly grew tomatoes.
Kelly = tomatoes

Hmm, the idea is not to call Kelly a tomato—so here grew is functioning as an action verb.
Subject Complements

Do you see that the key to finding the PN or PA is identifying whether you have a linking verbs?

Let me make it even easier for you. Simply remember the tip on the prior page and make a note card listing verbs that can function as linking verbs. Here they are...

**COMMON LINKING VERBS**
be     look     feel     taste
smell   sound   seem
appear   get     become
grow     stay     keep     turn
prove   go     remain
resemble

The verb “to be” can **FUNCTION AS LINKING VERBS**
is     am     are
was    were
be     being    been
REVIEW SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS: Find the subjects, verbs AND determine whether there is a PA or PN.

*Answers provided at end of notes—no peeking!*

1. This is a fine restaurant.
2. The Marliave Ristorante has always been my favorite one.
3. The prices at the Marliave seem reasonable and affordable.
4. The chefs are Esther DeFalco and her brother.
5. Their recipes are traditional.
6. The ingredients smell and taste fresh.
7. The pasta in their lasagna is homemade and light.
8. “Be careful when rolling out the pasta dough,” Esther says.
10. For the DeFalcos, the making of pasta remains an art.
Additional Resources

- Chapter 4 of your grammar book. An online version is available through the WriteSource. Information on accessing available on Judges English webpage and Edline English page.

- Verbs Rule note packet available on the Judges English Grammar tab.

- The website Grammar Bytes (also know as Chomp!Chomp) along with a few YouTube videos.
  - [http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/linkingverb.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/linkingverb.htm)
  - [http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/transitiveverb.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/transitiveverb.htm)
  - [http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/subjectcomplement.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/subjectcomplement.htm) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrJ_W1h1toM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrJ_W1h1toM)
  - [http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/directobject.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/directobject.htm) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrqprPQQWkQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrqprPQQWkQ)
  - [http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/indirectobject.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/indirectobject.htm) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrqprPQQWkQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrqprPQQWkQ)
REVIEW EXERCISE ANSWERS

1. Paul = subject / built = verb / house = DO
   (Remember a prepositional phrase is never the direct or indirect object—”for Haley” is a prepositional phrase.)

2. mom=subject / made = verb / teachers = IO / treats = DO

3. members = subject / held = verb / party = DO

4. audience = subject / cheered = verb / actors = DO

5. Miss Dempsey = subject / gave = verb / students = IO / merits = DO

6. priest = subject / told = verb / congregation = IO / story = DO

7. children = subject / prefer = verb / stories = DO

8. Terri = subject / dialed = verb / number = DO

9. University Club = subject / awarded = verb / Jenny = IO / scholarship = DO

10. I = subject / wish = verb / you = IO / success = DO

1. This is a fine restaurant(PN).

2. The Marliave Ristorante has always been my favorite one (PN).

3. The prices at the Marliave seem reasonable(PA) and affordable(PA).

4. The chefs are Esther DeFalco(PN) and her brother(PN).

5. The head chef tastes a sample food before serving. Here tastes refers to the action of tasting—so it is an action verb not a linking verb—NO PA or PN.

6. Their recipes are traditional(PA).

7. The ingredients smell and taste fresh(PA).

8. The pasta in their lasagna is homemade(PA) and light(PA).

9. “The lasagna pasta must be paper-thin(PA),” Vinicio points out.

10. For the DeFalcos, the making of pasta remains an art(PN).