

Royal Fireworks

Language Arts

by Michael Clay Thompson

The Magic Lens III

Sixth Edition

Compatible with The Magic Lens III Student Book Sixth Edition

Instructor Manual

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Instructor Section

Implementing Grammar in the MCT Curriculum

In my language arts curriculum, grammar is only one component. There are also vocabulary development programs, writing programs, and poetics instruction books. How do you arrange these different components for comprehensive student learning? What is the strategy?

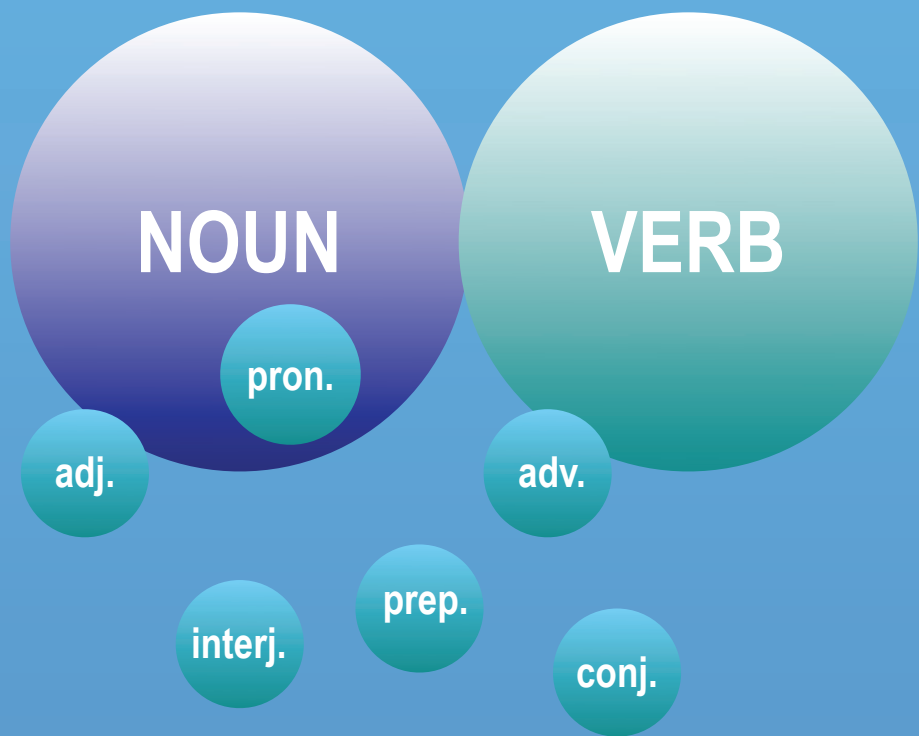
Grammar: Teach grammar first. *The Magic Lens III* is designed to be taught first, providing students with the language of punctuation, vocabulary, and writing instruction. Work your way to four-level analysis, and study grammar-based punctuation before embarking on writing instruction. Build that foundation. Continue doing four-level analysis all year; it only takes two minutes to do a four-level, so that is a perfect warm-up activity. In *4Practice III*, you will find enough four-level analyses to do three per week.

Vocabulary: The parts of speech are the instructions for vocabulary usage. You can begin doing a lesson of *The Word Within the Word III* each week from the beginning of the year, doing both grammar and vocabulary at the same time, but as soon as you have taught the parts of speech, use those eight words to talk about vocabulary. Mention the part of speech of every vocabulary word. Instead of saying, “What does the word *tortuous* mean?” say, “What does the adjective *tortuous* mean?” Discuss vocabulary usage in terms of its grammar. Notice that vocabulary lists are typically composed of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, with adverb forms being derived from adjectives. Whenever a student asks about how to use a word, always explain it using its part of speech, with examples. Emphasize the way dictionaries use the names of the eight parts of speech to explain usage.

Writing: Finish launching the grammar program before beginning the writing program. Teach the grammar terms; then do intense work with punctuation of grammar; then you can use the writing text, *Advanced Academic Writing III*, to teach the elements of writing. All of my writing programs depend upon a foundation of grammar. In a typical school calendar, you might do the writing assignments during quarters two through four, though students might begin reading the writing text earlier.

Poetics: The poetics curriculum is flexible in terms of when you can implement it. *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth* is the text that goes with *The Magic Lens III*, but it is not keyed to it in any way that dictates when it must be scheduled. An appealing strategy would be to wait until you finish the first major paper in the writing text, and then study the poetics book, using it as a source of ideas for research papers. In other words, students could write papers about poets that are included in *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth*.

LEVEL ONE



| | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------|----------------|------|-----|--------|-----|
| | She | decided | to | roll | the | shadow | up. |
| Parts of Speech | pron. | v. | -----n.----- | adj. | n. | adv. | |
| Parts of Sentence | subj. | AVP | -----D.O.----- | | | | |
| Phrases | ----- infinitive phrase----- | | | | | | |
| Clauses | -----one independent clause----- | | | | | | |
| | a simple declarative sentence | | | | | | |
| This sentence is from James M. Barrie's novel <i>Peter Pan</i> . | | | | | | | |





Adjectives *modify* nouns or pronouns.

Adjective (adj.): An adjective is a word that **modifies** a noun or a pronoun: the *howling* wind, the *tortuous* path, the *very* bottom, she was *satisfied*, he was *somber* and *petulant*. Why would we want to modify a noun or pronoun? Great writers warn us that the overuse of adjectives or adverbs can make sentences wordy and tedious. So instead of modifying nouns with adjectives, why not just use better nouns? Would it not be better to use nouns all the time and eliminate adjectives? Well, even if that were desirable, it would be impossible because we have only thousands of nouns—a hundred thousand or so—but there are billions of things in the universe. We need adjectives to describe things for which no precise nouns exist and to describe all of the things for which we do not have an exact noun. Adjectives also help us to express subtle differences between similar things. We say that adjectives modify nouns or pronouns, but notice that in most cases the pronoun means the noun, so even then the adjective really is modifying the noun.

Modify is more precise than describe. Sometimes we hear that adjectives *describe* nouns, but that is not an accurate expression. We can describe something without changing it. We should use the word *modify*. To modify is to change. How do adjectives modify nouns? Imagine a *placid* ocean. Think about the *placid* ocean until you can picture it in your mind. Now, imagine a *stormy* ocean. Does the second adjective modify (change) the ocean image that you have in your mind? The adjective changes the noun in the mind.

Notice that an adjective is *always* part of a binary system, like a moon circles a planet. The presence of an adjective implies the presence of its noun or pronoun. Every modifier modifies its modified. If you see *the* in a sentence, look for the noun; there has to be the *something*. A noun can do without an adjective, but an adjective cannot exist without a noun or pronoun. If a word is not modifying a noun or pronoun, it is not an adjective.

Three degrees of adjectives: Adjectives have a wonderful property. They can change **degree**. A pillow can be soft, softer, or softest. Wood can be hard, harder, or hardest. An idea can be good, better, or best. These three degrees of adjective intensity are known as the **positive** (good), **comparative** (better), and **superlative** (best) degrees. These degrees allow us to make clear comparisons between similar nouns:

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| positive | comparative | superlative |
| clear | clearer | clearest |

Proper adjectives: Proper adjectives are made out of proper nouns. *Greece* makes *Greek*. *Mexico* makes *Mexican*. When we convert the proper noun *Florence* into the proper adjective *Florentine*, we retain the capitalization. *The countertops were made from Florentine marble*. The reason the name of a school subject such as English or Spanish is capitalized and a name such as history or mathematics is not capitalized is that *English* and *Spanish* are proper adjectives made from the proper names of countries.

Verbal adjectives: Sometimes we use verb forms as adjectives to modify nouns or pronouns. We might use what we call a **participial** form, such as *patronizing*: *the patronizing speech*, or we might use the **infinitive** form of a verb, such as *to rectify*: *the problem to rectify*. In these cases, the word is an adjective, not a verb, because it performs the adjective function of modifying a noun or pronoun. We identify a word based on its function.

Number adjectives, such as *two* days or *nine* volumes, should be written out as words, rather than given as numerals. It is *two* days, not 2 days. Save 2 for math problems and other numeric purposes.

The articles— *a*, *an*, and *the*— are adjectives.

Articles: The **articles**—sometimes also called *determiners*—are the three adjectives *a*, *an*, and *the*, which modify nouns. The **definite article** is *the*, and the **indefinite articles** are *a* and *an*. Notice how perfect these names are. We are being definite when we ask about *the* game, but we are being indefinite when we ask about *a* game. The articles are little noun-alerts; they beep before nouns, letting us know that a noun is coming. The Latin *artus* meant joint; the articles break sentences into nouny segments, like an insect’s jointed leg, each segment beginning with a noun alert.

The archaeologist examined **a** fossil closely, trying to find **an** indication of **the** way in which **the** civilization had ended, hoping that **the** past would provide **an** answer.

Español: In Spanish—and other languages—there are masculine and feminine articles. Every noun is either masculine or feminine and is designated by a masculine definite article, *el*, or a feminine definite article, *la*. So whereas in English we simply say *the book* or *the window*, in Spanish we have to change gender between *el libro* and *la ventana*. The articles also change to agree with nouns’ singular and plural number:

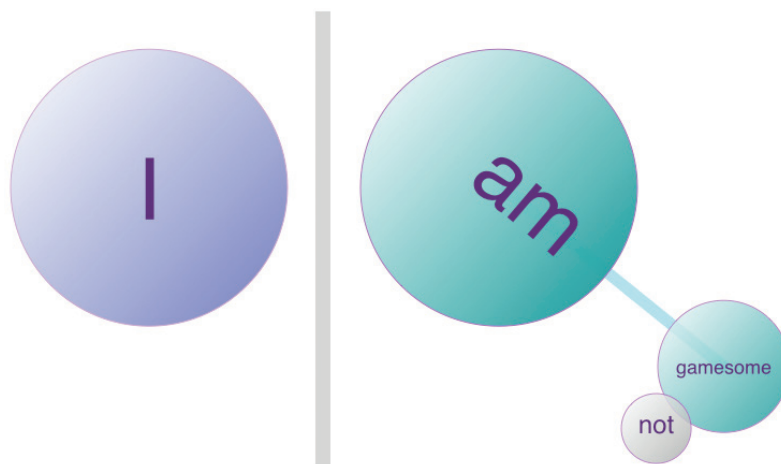
| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| the book | el libro |
| the books | los libros |
| the window | la ventana |
| the windows | las ventanas |

Good or well? The word *good* is a good adjective that may be used to modify nouns or pronouns well; the word *well* is usually an adverb that modifies verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. *The good leader delegates well.* We should not say “I do not feel well,” which means that one has no talent for feeling things! We should say “I do not feel good,” which uses the adjective *good* to modify the pronoun *I*. *Good friends keep confidences well.*

Adjectives from Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*: In his play of confrontation between Katarina and Petruchio, Shakespeare uses adjectives such as *haggard*, *stoic*, *credulous*, *tedious*, *amiable*, *craven*, *austere*, *currish*, *affable*, *pithy*, *effectual*, *peremptory*, *voluble*, *extempore*, and *bereft*.

An adjective from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*: Among the most effective adjectives in literature is this one, *gamesome*, from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, act I, scene ii, in which Brutus tells Cassius that he does not have the spirit of fun that Antony has:

I am not **gamesome**: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.



A Classic Adjective: *Odious*. The adjective *odious* is a word that is frequently found in the classics. Its use goes back hundreds of years. In his 1599 play *Much Ado about Nothing*, Shakespeare wrote that “Comparisons are odious.” Milton referred to “odious Truth” and to the “odious din of War” in *Paradise Lost*. In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, we read, “Pray do not talk to that odious man.” In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley’s character refers to “the scene of my odious work.” In Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, we learn that “the odious Captain Rook did smell of tobacco,” and in Henry James’s *The American*, we read that “You have been odiously successful.” One of the best *odious* sentences comes from Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim*: “The perforated pipe gurgled, choked, spat, and splashed in odious ridicule of a swimmer fighting for his life.”



Adjectives
from William Shakespeare's
Hamlet

HAMLET, I.iv.

My fate cries out,
And makes **each petty** artery in this body
As **hardy** as **the Nemean** lion's nerve.

GHOST, I.v.

I could **a** tale unfold whose **lightest** word
Would harrow up **thy** soul, freeze **thy young** blood....

HAMLET, II.ii.

I have of late—
but wherefore I know not—lost **all my** mirth,
forgone **all** custom of exercises, and indeed
it goes so heavily with **my** disposition
that **this goodly** frame **the** earth seems to me **a sterile** promontory,
this most **excellent** canopy, **the** air,
look you, **this brave o'erhanging** firmament,
this majestic roof fretted with **golden** fire—
why, it appears **no other** thing to me than
a foul and **pestilent** congregation of vapors.

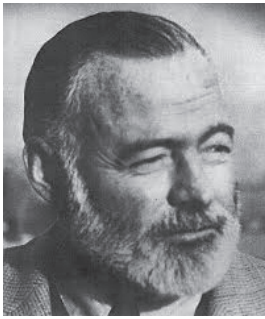
HAMLET, III.iv.

Look you now, what follows:
Here is **your** husband, like **a mildewed** ear
Blasting **his wholesome** brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on **this fair** mountain leave to feed,
And batten on **this** moor? Ha! Have you eyes?

HAMLET, IV.i.

Alas, **poor** Yorick!
I knew him, Horatio: **a** fellow of **infinite** jest,
of most **excellent** fancy: he hath borne me
on **his** back **a thousand** times.



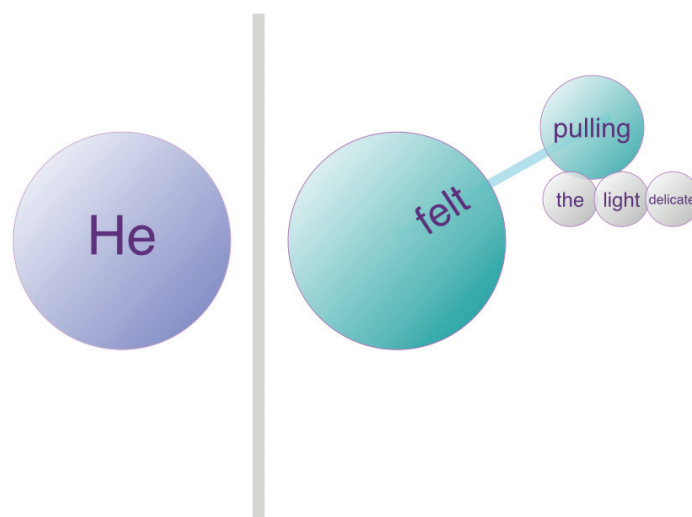


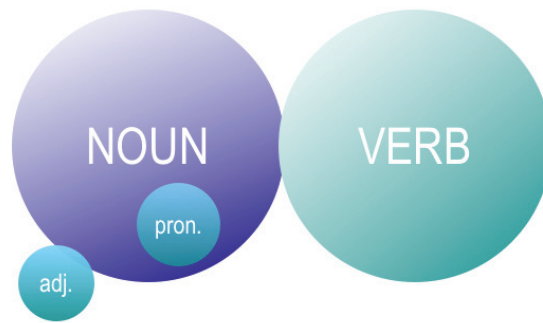
From Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*:

He felt **the light, delicate** pulling and then **the harder** pull.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|------|----|-------|------|------|------|----|
| Parts of Speech | pron. | v. | adj | adj. | adj. | n. | conj. | adv. | adj. | adj. | n. |
| Parts of Sentence | subj. | AVP | -----compound D.O.----- | | | | | | | | |
| Phrases | -----gerund phrase----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| Clauses | -----one independent clause----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| | a simple declarative sentence | | | | | | | | | | |

The old man begins to catch the fish, and Hemingway's sentence is filled with adjectives that tell the story. Notice that *harder* is a comparative degree adjective.





A verb shows action or being
or links a subject
to a subject complement.

A scholarly paradox: In order to explain verbs (the Latin *verbum* means word), we must use words that we will not define until later in the text. Your study process must be active and circular. You can read ahead to look up a term, and you can review this section later for deeper understanding. In this introduction we cannot learn everything about verbs; the subject is too vast, and even grammarians differ in their terminology, but we can learn a great deal.

Verb (v.): Sentences are not about nothing. Each sentence is about its subject, and the word for that subject will be a noun or a pronoun, but how does the sentence say something about the noun or pronoun? The verb does that. The **verb** is the main word about the noun; the verb tells what the noun is doing, or that the noun exists, or what the noun is equal to. Most verbs show actions or equations. If the verb is an **action** verb, then it might show the noun's action on a direct object: *Thoreau **examined** the leaf.* An action verb might show simple action not on a direct object: *Thoreau **examined** thoughtfully.* If the verb is **linking**, then it might link the noun to a subject complement: *Euclid **was** a mathematician.* Again, most verbs show **actions or equations**. The noun does something, or it equals something.

Isabella **saw** her. Isabella **is** she.

Linking verbs link. This is one of the most important concepts in grammar. Action verbs show the subject acting: *Byron **wrote** the poem.* In contrast, linking verbs link; they say that two things are the same; they make equations: *Byron **is** Shelley's friend.* In the sentence "Byron has a quick temper," *is* *has* an action verb or a linking verb? Well, do you mean that Byron *is* a quick temper? No? Then the verb is not linking. **If it does not link, it is not linking.** When the verb links, it creates an equation between two terms, and the linking verb is the equals sign.



Very soon, the very reason: Let us remind ourselves that the word *very* is only an adverb if it is modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. If it is modifying a noun, as in *at the very edge of the universe*, then *very* is an adjective. The words *adverb* and *adjective* refer to functions; what part of speech a word is depends on what it is doing.

Adverbs in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables*: A good friend of Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne used a mammoth vocabulary in his novels. In his somber classic novel *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne used many strong adverbs, such as *acutely*, *fain*, *thither*, *anon*, *ostentatiously*, *heretofore*, *prodigiously*, *lugubriously*, *affably*, *profoundly*, *wistfully*, *indefeasibly*, *irrefragably*, *irrevocably*, *indefatigably*, *sedulously*, *preternaturally*, *obstreperously*, and *obsequiously*. Are there some that you do not know?

A Classic Adverb: *Grotesquely*. Both the adjective *grotesque* and its adverbial variation *grotesquely* are important in the classics of American and British literature. Harriet Beecher Stowe described something as “grotesquely ornamented” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In *Ethan Frome*, Edith Wharton described the “grotesquely muffled groups.” W.E.B. DuBois, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, wrote that “The Big House stands in half-ruin, its great front door staring blankly at the street, and the back part grotesquely restored for its black tenant.” Ralph Ellison, in *Invisible Man*, wrote, “I shook him violently, seeing his head wobble grotesquely.” And in *Grendel*, John Gardner wrote, “I scream, facing him, grotesquely shaking hands.”

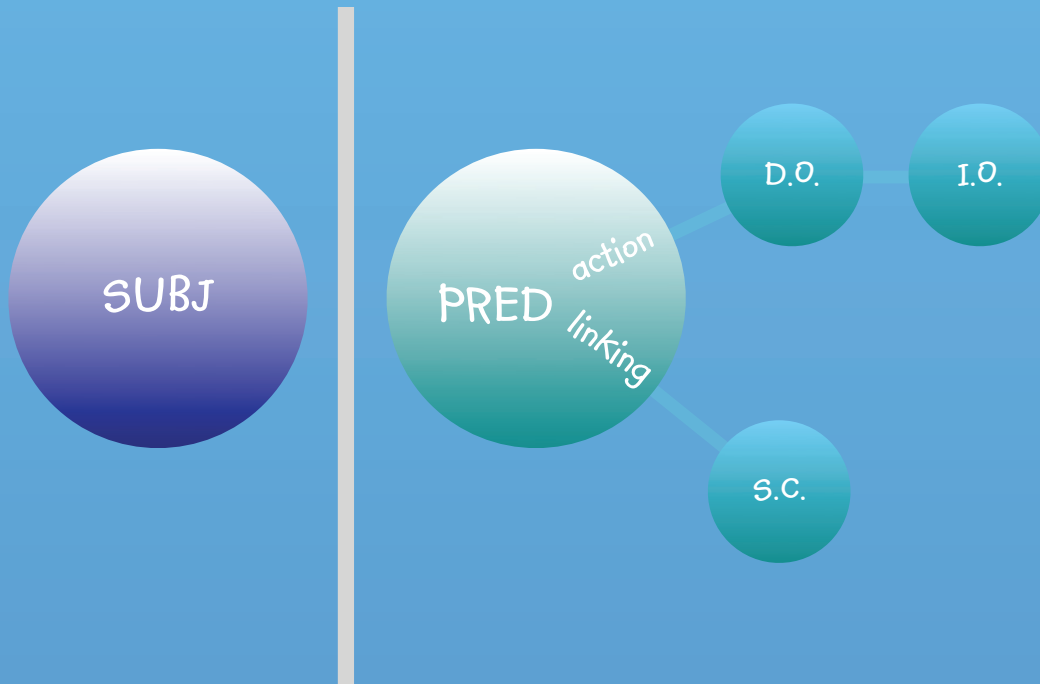
A Language Illustration from my *Alice, Peter, and Mole* trilogy: Here is a beautiful sentence from Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*. Note the adverb that modifies the adjective *uppish*:

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| Instead, | he | was | so | uppish | and | inflated.... |
| adv. | pron. | v. | adv. | adj. | conj. | adj. |
| subj. LVP | | | ~~~~~compound S.C.~~~~~ | | | |
| no phrases | | | | | | |
| ~~~~~independent clause~~~~~ | | | | | | |

Grahame uses the power of the compound to give complexity and substance to this subject complement.



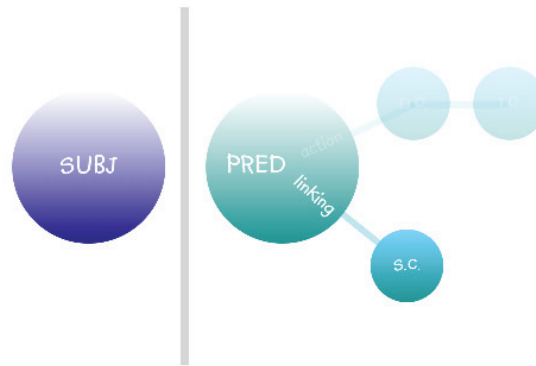
LEVEL TWO



| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | It | was | a | she | one, | this | time. |
| Parts of Speech | pron. | v. | adj. | adj. | n. | adj. | n. |
| Parts of Sentence | subj. | LVP | | | S.C. | | |
| Phrases | no phrases | | | | | | |
| Clauses | -----one independent clause----- a simple declarative sentence | | | | | | |

This sentence from Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* illustrates the way a linking verb helps to construct an equation between a subject and a subject complement, but it also has a most unusual use of *she*, normally a pronoun but here used as an adjective to modify the noun *one*.





The subject complement is the noun, pronoun, or adjective that is linked into an equation with the subject by a linking verb.

Subject complement: A subject complement is a noun, subject pronoun, indefinite pronoun, or adjective that complements the subject; it is **linked to the subject by a linking verb**. The subject complement, in a sense, renames the subject. *Galileo was Kepler's **colleague**.* Notice that the subject complement does precisely what its name implies; it complements (completes) the subject because it makes our knowledge of the subject more complete than it would otherwise have been. Subject pronouns can be subject complements because a subject is a subject.

Remember that the main linking verb is *to be*, but there are other tricky linking verbs that look like action verbs at first: *It **smells** fragrant. The cherries **taste** divine. He **seems** imperious.*

When the subject complement is a noun or pronoun, we call it a **predicate nominative**; when the subject complement is an adjective, we call it a **predicate adjective**. In this text, however, we will focus on the main term **subject complement** to reinforce the use of subject pronouns.

- subject complement noun:** The scientist is an **astronomer**.
- subject complement pronouns:** The challengers of the theory were **she** and **I**.
- subject complement pronoun:** It is **everyone** in the room.
- subject complement adjective:** I am **perplexed** about the events.

An Equation

An equation: We touched on the equation principle in the section about verbs, but let us now return to it. The key to understanding subject complements is to see a subject complement as part of an equation, with the linking verb as the equals sign. **The subject complement equals the subject.** The subject complement *is* the subject re-expressed. **Linking verbs link**, so the left term is the same as—is equal to—the right term.

| A | = | B |
|-----------|--------------|--------------------|
| subject | linking verb | subject complement |
| Jefferson | was | the author. |
| I | am | she. |
| Integrity | is | crucial. |
| Everybody | felt | exculpated. |
| It | smelled | delectable. |

This logic seems obvious when you first examine it, but it can be tricky if you do not focus on the equation. Which of the sentences below does not contain a subject complement?

- The painting looked **shadowy**.
- The physicist was an experienced **professional**.
- We soon became **aware** of the complexity.
- Science demands extreme **accuracy**.
- Newton looked **validated** afterward.

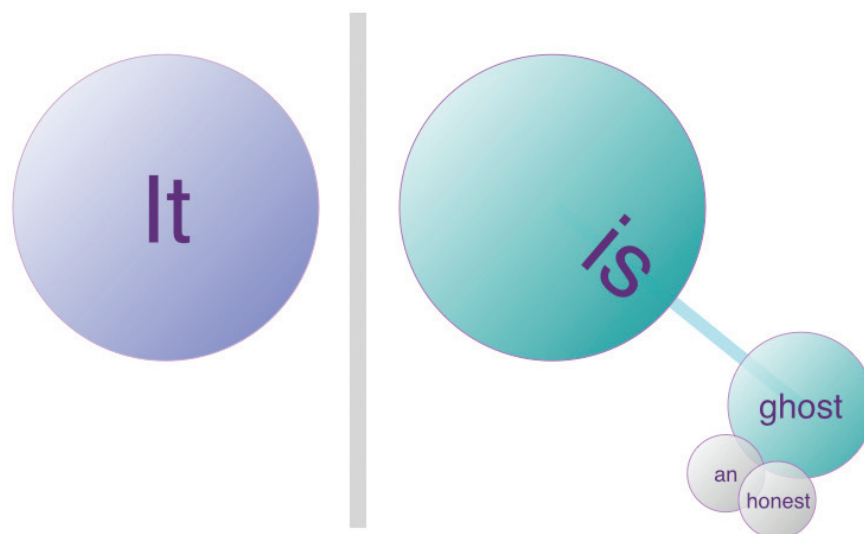
The fourth sentence is the only one that does not have a subject complement. The sentence does not mean that science *is* accuracy. It is not an equation. The verb *demand*s is not a linking verb.



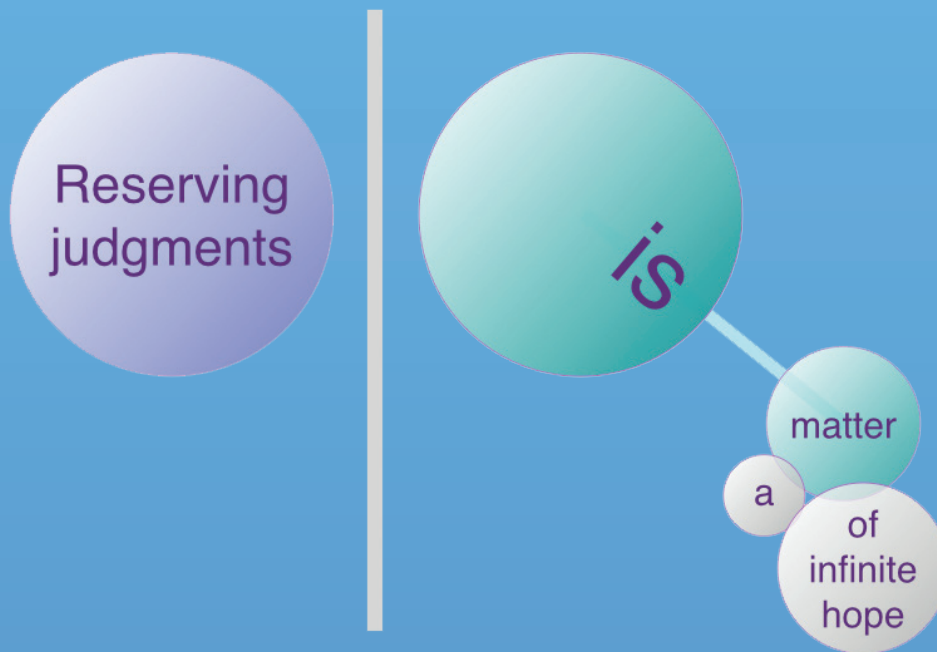
Object complement: There is another term that we should note because it is sometimes mistaken for one of the main parts of sentence: the **object complement**. An object complement is a noun, object pronoun, or adjective that follows and completes the meaning of the direct object. *I offered him **lemonade**. She painted the background **black**.*

The Boolean (if, then) logic of sentence analysis: When you analyze the parts of a clause, begin by looking for a one-two thought: a subject/predicate set. Find the subject and its verb. Is the verb action or linking? *If* the verb is an action verb, *then* there might be a direct object. (You need not look for a subject complement because subject complements go only with linking verbs.) *If* there is a direct object receiving the verb's action, *then* look between the direct object and the action verb for an indirect object. *If* the verb is a linking verb, *then* there might be a subject complement. (You need not look for a direct object because direct objects go only with action verbs.) Once you have completed analyzing the clause, proceed to the next clause, and repeat the process. Notice that everything hinges on whether the verb is action or linking.

Hamlet and his father's ghost: In act I, scene v of *Hamlet*, Hamlet speaks to Horatio and Marcellus, who are anxious to know about Hamlet's conversation with his father's ghost. Hamlet, however, does not want to reveal the essence of his shocking conversation. He merely replies, "It is an honest ghost—that let me tell you." In this sentence, *ghost* is a subject complement, and the sentence is in the form of an equation.



LEVEL THREE



| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|----|-----|------|------------------------|-------|------|----|
| | Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. | | | | | | | |
| Parts of Speech | n. | n. | v. | adj. | n. | prep. | adj. | n. |
| Parts of Sentence | -----subj.----- | | LVP | | S.C. | | | |
| Phrases | -----gerund phrase----- | | | | -----prep. phrase----- | | | |
| Clauses | -----one independent clause----- | | | | | | | |
| | a simple declarative sentence | | | | | | | |
| | This sentence from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s <i>The Great Gatsby</i> uses a gerund phrase to make a beautiful subject. | | | | | | | |



A verbal is a verb form used as a different part of speech.

Verbal phrase: A verbal is not a verb; it is a former verb doing a different job. **Gerunds**, **participles**, and **infinitives** are the three kinds of verbals. Gerunds are nouns made of verbs, participles are adjectives made of verbs, and infinitives are nouns or modifiers made of verbs. In other words, when we change a verb into a different part of speech, we call it a **verbal**. Verbals are nouns, adjectives, or adverbs made out of verbs.

A verbal can be a single word, or it can join with other words to become a verbal phrase. As an example, if I take the verb *was gesticulating* and saw off the helping verb *was* so that I only have *gesticulating* left, I can use this ex-verb as a noun. I can say *Gesticulating wildly was how she usually communicated*. In that sentence the subject *Gesticulating* is a verbal, a gerund. It is not yet a verbal phrase. I can make it a verbal phrase by adding words to it: *Gesticulating with her hands emphasized her point*.

Verbals are fun because they are so creative and energetic. Verbals are not verbs in sentences; they are ex-verbs, but they still have a verby quality, a verbiness, that gives them energy and force. Verbals are still verby enough that they can have their own objects, even when they are being used as nouns! Example: *Commandeering the ship was a brave move for the sailor*. The gerund phrase *Commandeering the ship* is the subject of the sentence. Notice that *ship* is the object of the noun/gerund *Commandeering*. If the object of the verbal is a personal pronoun, it must be an object pronoun and not a subject pronoun because **an object is an object**:

Right: *Thanking you and me was the reason for his visit*.

Wrong: *Thanking you and I was the reason for his visit*.

The key is to remember that a phrase acts **as a single part of speech**; this means that it can also be **a single part of sentence**. In other words, an entire phrase might be the subject of the sentence. It might be the direct object. We have to think of the group of words as one word.

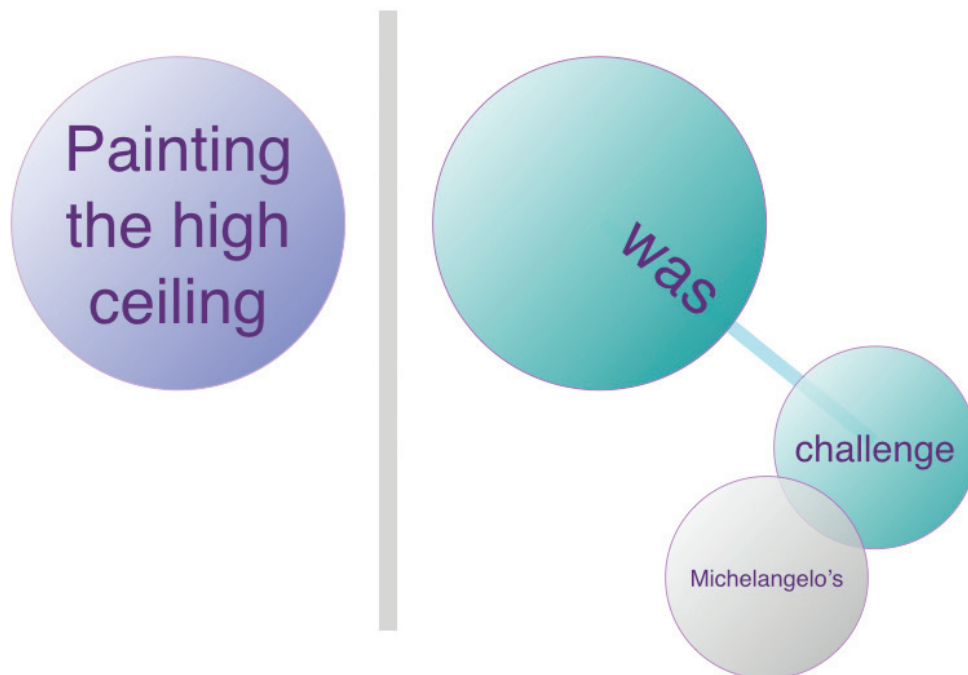
People sometimes think verbals are difficult to learn, but there are only three kinds, and each one can be defined in a single sentence. They are far simpler than team sports or complicated games. The difficulty is a myth, an illusion. Concentrate, and you will learn them quickly.

A gerund is an *-ing* verb form used as a noun.

Gerund: A **gerund** is a noun made out of an *-ing* verb or an *-ing* verb made into a noun—two ways of saying the same thing. All kinds of subjects and objects may be made out of gerunds or gerund phrases. A gerund might be by itself, or it might join with other words to make a **gerund phrase**. *Researching* is interesting. *Researching deeply* is enriching. *She loves researching*. If you do not understand gerunds, you do not fully understand nouns. In this sentence, *painting* is a gerund:

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Painting | the | high | ceiling | was | Michelangelo's | challenge. |
| n. | adj. | adj. | n. | v. | n. | n. |
| -----subj.----- | | | | LVP | | S.C. |
| -----gerund phrase----- | | | | | | |

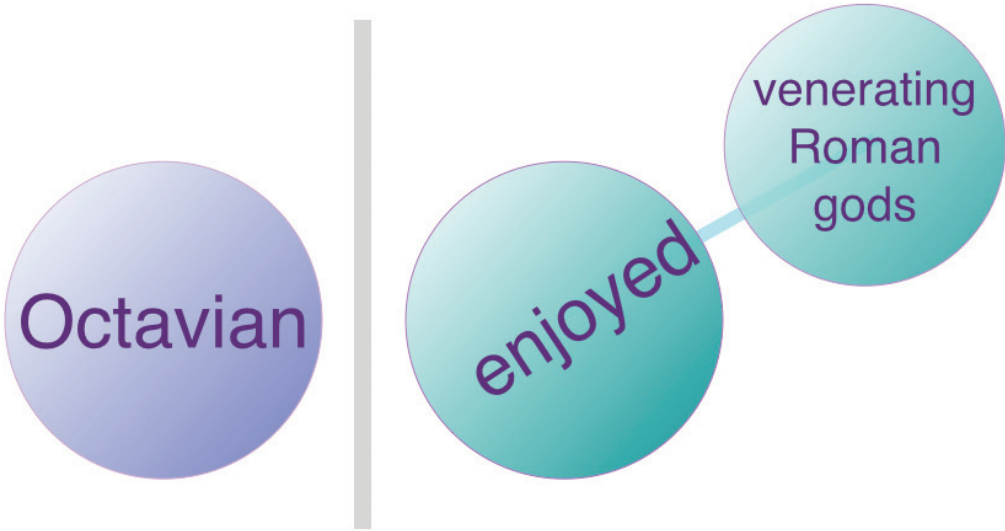
The entire gerund phrase is the subject. It acts like a single noun.



Let us look at a few more variations of gerund phrases. We have seen a gerund phrase used as the subject of the sentence; now let us look at one that serves as the direct object:

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Octavian | enjoyed | venerating | Roman | gods. |
| n. | v. | n. | adj. | n. |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| subj. | AVP | -----D.O.----- | | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| -----gerund phrase----- | | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | |

The entire gerund phrase is the direct object. It acts like a single noun. Note that on line one of the analysis, we identify *venerating* as a noun. It is a noun because it is the direct object, and by definition a direct object is a noun or pronoun. We identify it based on what it is doing here—its function—not based on where it came from.



In this image we see that the entire gerund phrase, *venerating Roman gods*, acts like a single part of speech, like a noun, and serves as the direct object of the action verb. With this device we can create beautiful and complex nouns and use them as subjects or objects in our ideas.

A participle is *any verb form* used as an adjective.

Participial phrase: A **participle** is an adjective made out of any verb form. Note that gerunds always end in *-ing*, but participles can end in *-ing*, *-ed*, *-en*, or any verb form. Participles always act as adjectives to modify nouns or pronouns. A participle might be by itself, or it might join with other words to make a **participial phrase**:

a participle: **The tilting column began to crumble.**

a participle: **Jane tended to his broken leg.**

a participle: **A cracked shutter let in a finger of light.**

A **participial phrase** is a participle that has its own modifiers or its own object:

a participial phrase: **Wearing the scarlet A, Hester looked at Pearl.**

a participial phrase: **Chillingworth watched Dimmesdale sleeping restlessly.**

a participial phrase: **Pearl, murmuring cheerfully, played in the water.**

The introductory participial phrase: There is a special type of participial phrase that we must master because when used correctly, it is one of the most powerful elements that we can bring into our writing, and when used incorrectly, it makes us sound foolish. The **introductory participial phrase** is a participial phrase that comes at the beginning of the sentence, that modifies the subject, and that is set off by a comma:

Hiding a secret, Rochester courted Jane.

Holding to her moral standards, Jane left Thornfield Hall.

The introductory participial phrase lets us inject energy and power into the sentence, but if we break the rules, we get disaster—a **misplaced modifier**:

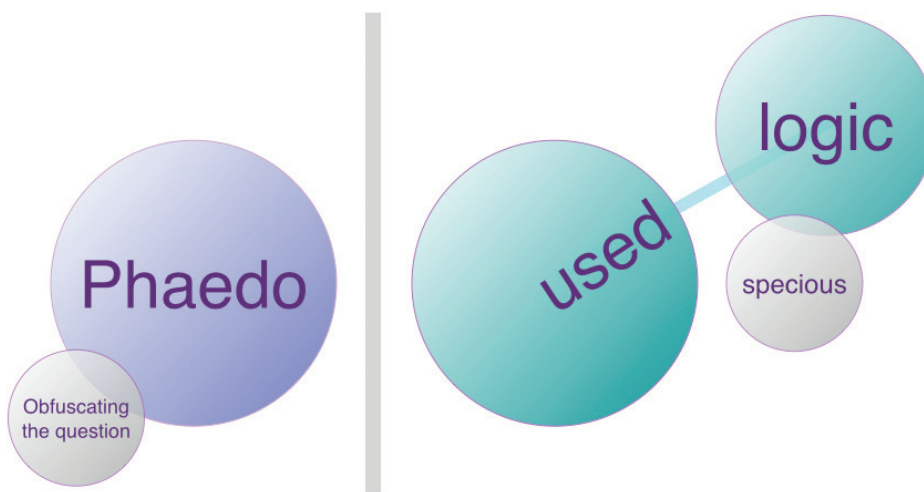
Glowing luminously, the chemist studied the beaker.

Draped in expensive silks, the slave bowed to the emperor.

A participial phrase is a group of words acting as an adjective, and so we identify the participle as an adjective. Here the participle is *obfuscating*, which modifies the subject noun *Phaedo*. Phaedo was a character in one of Plato's *Dialogues*; in this dialogue, Socrates discusses the afterlife with him.

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Obfuscating | the | question, | Phaedo | used | specious | logic. |
| adj. | adj. | n. | n. | v. | adj. | n. |
| | | | subj. | AVP | D.O. | |
| -----participial phrase----- | | | | | | |

Here is a classic **introductory participial phrase** acting as an adjective, modifying the subject of the sentence, and set off by a comma. The sentence has a past tense action verb *used* that sends transitive action to the direct object.



It can be difficult at first to realize that a verbal is not a verb in the sentence. After all, a word such as *obfuscating* certainly sounds verby. The trick is to find the real verb, which here is *used*. For the real verb you can always identify the verb's tense, but notice that the participle *obfuscating* does not form a tense and does not have a subject. It is important to see this common pattern: the introductory participial phrase, modifying the subject, set off by a comma.

An infinitive is a noun or modifier (adj. or adv.) made from the *to* form of the verb.

Infinitive phrase: An **infinitive** is the general *to* form of the verb made into a noun, adjective, or adverb. This general form of the verb is expressed with the word *to*: *to hope*, *to placate*, *to languish*, *to importune*. Sometimes the *to* is implied, and that is called a **bare infinitive**: *I watched Mattie (to) confound her opponent*. The infinitive is named for the fact that it is not (*in*) limited (*fin*) in tense/time. Because the infinitive is not limited to a tense, it is never used as a true predicate; we never say, for example, *I to enjoy birdwatching*.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| infinitive as noun : | To dig for artifacts is exacting work. |
| infinitive as adjective : | The artifact to unearth is in the desert. |
| infinitive as adverb : | I wish to unearth evidence of earlier civilizations. |

A noun? If an infinitive can be a noun, then that means that an infinitive phrase can be the subject of the sentence: *To carry the burden yourself is unnecessary*. An infinitive phrase can be anything any other noun can be.

To think is one word: We regard an infinitive as one word. In our four-level analysis, an infinitive such as *to think* is a single word, whereas a prepositional phrase such as *to Patagonia* is two words. Hamlet's *To be or not to be* is considered to be four words!

No split infinitives: Because an infinitive is only one word, we do not split infinitives with other words. Splitting an infinitive usually means inserting an adverb between the two parts of the infinitive. If we take the infinitive *to ignore* and split it with the adverb *deliberately*, we have *to deliberately ignore*, which is a split infinitive. It is better to put the adverb outside the infinitive: *to ignore deliberately*.

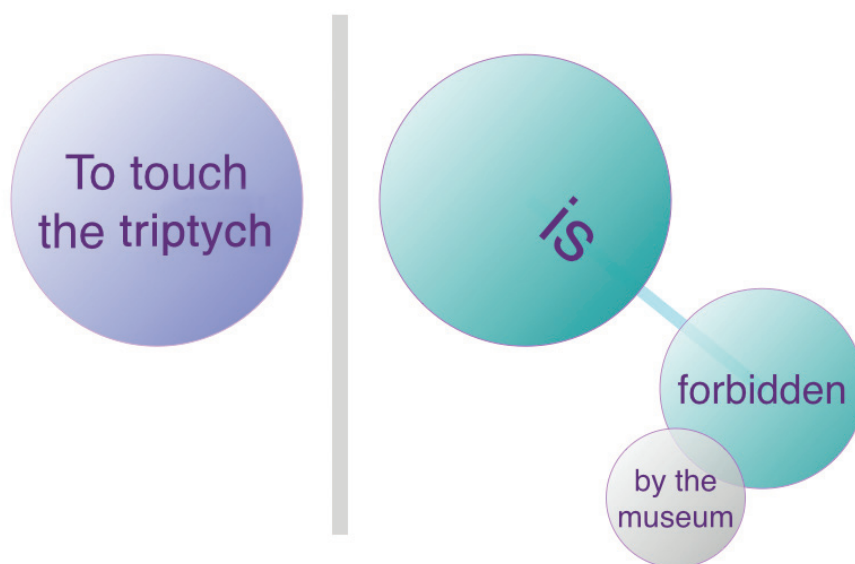
Wrong: **Alexander taught us to never settle for less.**
Right: **Alexander taught us never to settle for less.**



An infinitive phrase as a noun and the subject of the sentence: Because infinitive phrases can be nouns, we find them in the usual noun places, such as the subject of the sentence. Here we see an infinitive phrase, *To touch the triptych*, acting as one word, as a noun. In this sentence *triptych* is the **object of the infinitive**. Remember that an infinitive is one word, so here *To touch* is a noun.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| To | touch | the | triptych | is | forbidden | by | the | museum. |
| -----n.----- | | adj. | n. | v. | adj. | prep. | adj. | n. |
| -----subj.----- | | | | LVP | S.C. | | | |
| -----infinitive phrase----- | | | | | -----prep. phrase----- | | | |

Notice that the entire infinitive phrase is the subject, as though it were one word; a phrase *acts like a single part of speech*. Notice that the infinitive *To touch* is one word, a noun.

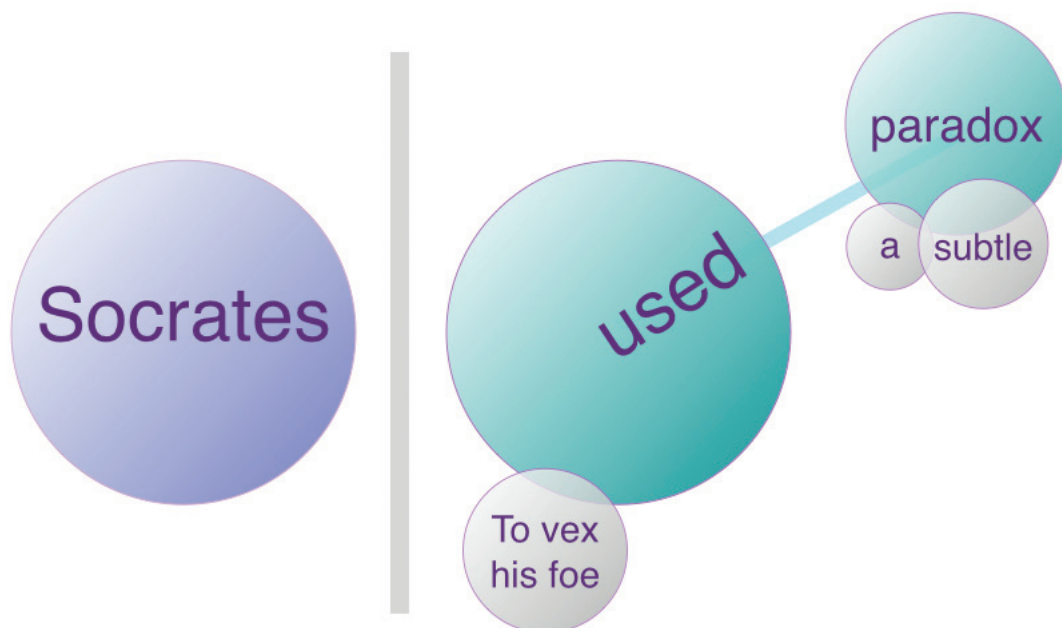


To emphasize: It would be wrong to say that *To touch* is the subject of the sentence or that *triptych* is the subject of the sentence. The subject is *To touch the triptych*; the whole phrase is the subject. A phrase acts like a single part of speech.

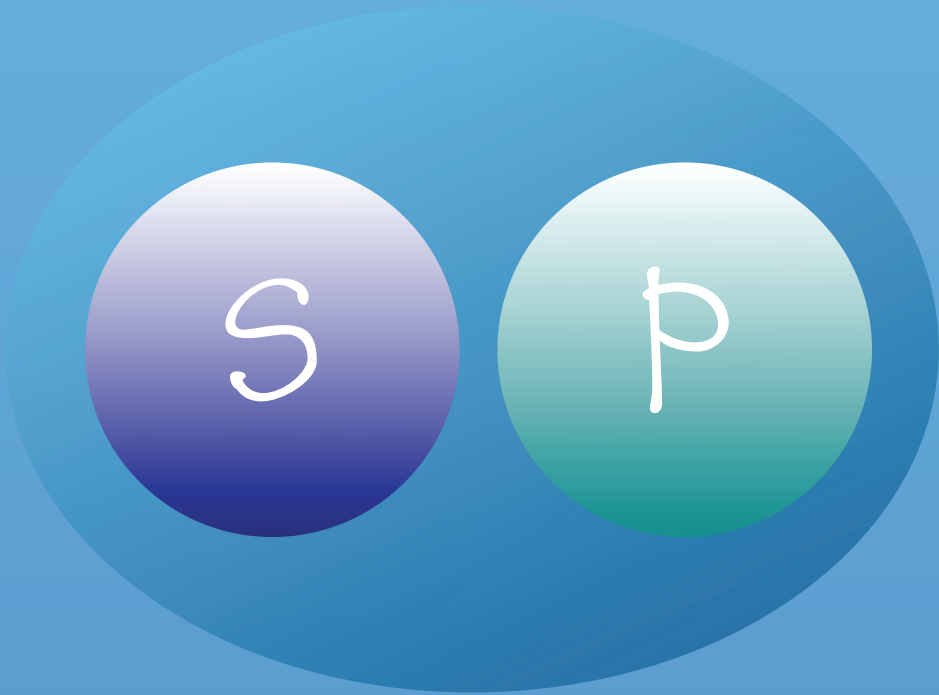
An infinitive phrase as a modifier: Infinitive phrases also can be modifiers—i.e., adjectives or adverbs. Adjective: *Mort is the man **to paint the house**.* Adverb: *He lives **to catch trout**.*

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|
| To | vex | his | foe, | Socrates | used | a | subtle | paradox. |
| -----adv.----- | | adj. | n. | n. | v. | adj. | adj. | n. |
| | | | | subj. | AVP | D.O. | | |
| -----infinitive phrase----- | | | | | | | | |

Here an infinitive phrase acts as an adverb to modify the verb.



LEVEL FOUR



| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------|----|------|------------------------------|-------|-----|----|------|
| | As he entered the labyrinth, Theseus gripped Ariadne's thread. | | | | | | | | |
| Parts of Speech | conj. | pron. | v. | adj. | n. | n. | v. | n. | n. |
| Parts of Sentence | subj. | AVP | | D.O. | | subj. | AVP | | D.O. |
| Phrases | no phrases | | | | | | | | |
| Clauses | -----dependent clause----- | | | | -----independent clause----- | | | | |
| | a D,I complex declarative sentence | | | | | | | | |



An adjective clause: In addition to the ID and D,I complex sentences, in which the dependent clause acts like an adverb, there are also complex sentences in which the dependent clause acts like an adjective or even a noun. For example, if we say “The critic who insulted Rafael offended the others,” the independent clause is *The critic offended the others*, and the dependent clause *who insulted Rafael* acts as an adjective to modify the subject *critic*. In this case the dependent clause comes neither first nor last but in the middle of the independent clause. We put adjective clauses right after the noun that they modify.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| The | magnifico | who | insulted | Rafael | offended | all | of | the | artists. |
| adj. | n. | pron. | v. | n. | v. | pron. | prep. | adj. | n. |
| subj. | | | AVP | | | D.O. | | | |
| | | subj. | AVP | D.O. | | | | | |
| -----prep. phrase----- | | | | | | | | | |
| -----independent clause----- | | | | | | | | | |
| (-----dependent clause-----) | | | | | | | | | |
| a complex declarative sentence | | | | | | | | | |

A noun clause: A dependent clause also can serve as a noun.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|
| What | Brunelleschi | did | next | evoked | a | sense | of | wonder. |
| pron. | n. | v. | adv. | v. | adj. | n. | prep. | n. |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | | |
| subj. | | AVP | | | | | | |
| -----subj.----- | | | | AVP | | D.O. | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | ----prep. phrase---- | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | | |
| -----dependent clause----- | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | -----independent clause----- | | | | |
| a complex declarative sentence | | | | | | | | |

A complex sentence with an adjective clause

From William Shakespeare's
Romeo and Juliet

act I, scene iii

Juliet: **It is an honour that I dream not of.**

