



The secret to subject/verb agreement lies in acute awareness of the true subject and its simple predicate (the verb) as a pair and in always looking for the true subject, no matter what other words or phrases intervene. If we let LVP stand for linking verb predicate, we can present a subject/verb agreement challenge this way:

The	display	of	Greek	statues	is	impressive.
adj.	n.	prep.	adj.	n.	v.	adj.
subj.					LVP	S.C.

In this example we see that when a prepositional phrase separates the subject from its verb, the verb does not match the adjacent object of the preposition; it still matches the subject. The abbreviation S.C. stands for subject complement, which we will study later in this chapter. We begin to see why **good writers try to put their subjects and verbs next to each other.**

Español: We can gain interesting insights through comparative grammar. In Spanish every sentence has a subject/predicate set, but the subject and its predicate often are one word! Of course in English we can have a one-word imperative sentence, such as “Push!” But the English sentence gives little information about the subject. English verbs do not vary through conjugations significantly: I push; you push; he, she, or it pushes; they push; we push; you push; they push. In Spanish, on the other hand, *each person of the verb is different*, and so the verb includes the subject! The Spanish verb *tener* means to have:

tengo: I have	tenemos: we have
tienes: you have	teneis: you have
tiene: he/she/it has	tienen: they have

So whereas in English we could never say “Has a book” because that would be a sentence fragment lacking a subject, in Spanish we can say “*Tiene un libro,*” and the verb will stand alone as a powerful combination subject-predicate. This inclusion of subjects within verbs gives Spanish efficiency and a possibility for emphasis by including a separate pronoun.



The **direct object** is the noun or pronoun that receives the action of the transitive action verb.

Direct object: A direct object is a noun, object pronoun (*me, you, him, her, them, it, us, you, them*), or indefinite pronoun that receives the action of the **action verb**: *Homer writes **stories**. I asked **someone**. She helped **you and me**.* When there is a direct object, we call the action verb **transitive** because the verb carries a transit of energy from the subject to the object; when the action verb does not act on a direct object, we call the action verb **intransitive**. Only action verbs can be transitive or intransitive; linking verbs are neither. Notice that subject pronouns may not be used as direct objects because **a subject is a subject, and an object is an object**. You cannot say *Amelia helped you and I*; it must be *Amelia helped you and me*. The direct object is the object of direct action. **Passive voice action verbs** do not have direct objects because their subjects are receiving action, not doing it: *The enemy **was conquered** by Caesar.*

Action is good: Sentences that have direct objects are interesting. They have strength because they have action; the subject is doing something. The subject of the **active voice transitive action verb** is doing something to something else, and this holds readers' attention.

transitive action verb: The hungry traveler **gobbled** his food.

intransitive action verb: The hungry traveler **gobbled** noisily.

passive voice action verb: The food **was gobbled** noisily.

linking verb: The traveler **was** hungry.

