



GoBack

Level Two Definitions

Parts of Sentence

Before we begin a systematic practice of two-level analysis, it is important to memorize the major definitions that apply. GoBack is a memorization game. You are asked the definitions of the terms, and if you miss one, you have to go back to the beginning! You can use these definitions for the major terms in the **parts of sentence**. First, go back and review the definitions of the parts of speech, and then commit these definitions to memory:

- sentence:** a group of words that has a subject and its predicate and that makes a complete thought
- fragment:** an incomplete thought
- subject:** the noun or pronoun that the sentence is about
- complete subject:** the subject and all of the words and phrases that belong to it
- predicate:** the words that are about the subject
- simple predicate:** the verb
- complete predicate:** the verb and all of the words and phrases that belong to it
- direct object:** the noun or object pronoun that receives the action of the action verb. Object pronouns are used for direct objects. An adjective cannot be a direct object.
- indirect object:** the noun or pronoun that is located between the action verb and the direct object and that is indirectly affected by the action. Object pronouns are used for indirect objects.
- subject complement:** the noun, pronoun, or adjective that is linked to the subject by a linking verb, forming an equation. Subject pronouns are used for subjects and subject complements.
- predicate nominative:** a subject complement that is a noun or pronoun
- predicate adjective:** a subject complement that is an adjective

Parts of Sentence:

Punctuation, Usage, and Grammar

Before we turn our attention to Level Three, phrases, let us highlight the more important rules that apply specifically to the **parts of sentence**. For a complete review of these rules, consult the appendix at the end of the book. In some cases we saw these errors at the parts of speech level, but now we are looking at them from a parts of sentence perspective.

PUNCTUATION

comma (,):

between direct objects in a list: Eggbert ate eggs, eggs, eggs, and eggs.

NOT between compound direct objects: He ate eggs and bacon.

between subject complements in a list: He was angry, tired, and bored.

NOT between compound subject complements: He was angry and tired.

between listed subjects/predicates: Sleepy, Doc, and Dopey were mopey.

NOT between compound subjects/predicates: Sleepy and Dopey were mopey.

NOT between subject and verb: Wrong: July, is named for Julius Caesar.

semicolon (;):

between parts of sentence in a list if the items themselves contain commas:

Get me grits; green, growing grass; and grippers.

colon (:):

before a list that is not a compound direct object or subject complement:

Bring this list: apples, paddles, dappled plaids.

NOT before a direct object: Sleepy saw: grass and grippers.

The issue here is that we do not separate ordinary compounds with commas: not compound subjects, not compound verbs, not compound direct objects, not compound subject complements. We want these compounds to be together. Only if there is a list of three items or more do we then put commas in. The **ultimate punctuation error for parts of sentence** is to put a comma between the subject and its verb. We might enclose certain elements in commas if they intervene between the two, but in an ordinary sentence we would rather be boiled in oil than use a comma to break a subject and verb apart.

USAGE

It's is the contraction of the subject and predicate *it is*: *It's fun to understand Stanley*. **Its** is a possessive adjective or pronoun: *The dog ate its food, growling*. In an academic paper, you would never use *it's* as the subject and predicate of one of your sentences because there are cosmic laws against the use of contractions. Defy these laws at your peril.

Myself and **yourself** should be used as reflexive or intensive pronouns but **not as direct objects**. "I, myself, believed the Visigoth" is correct usage, but "She asked John and myself if we had the chariot" is not. It would be correct to say "She asked John and me if we had the chariot."

They're is the contraction of the subject and predicate *they are*: *They're feeding rhinos grits*. **Their** is a possessive adjective: *They're feeding their giraffes*. **There** is an adverb of place: *They're feeding their elephants there*. The vital concern is that you do not use an adjective or adverb when you intend a subject and predicate. Avoid contractions in academic writing, and this problem begins to fade.

Who is a subject pronoun: *Who is with the guest?* **Whom** is an object pronoun: *To whom do you wish to give the chisel?* In other words, **who** can be a subject of a verb or a subject complement; **whom** can be a direct object, indirect object, or anything else called an object. The key here is to remember Thompson's Unified Pronoun Rule: **A subject is a subject, and an object is an object**. This involves the application of two groups of pronouns to the parts of sentence. If you do not know your objects and subjects, then you will not be able to put the pronouns in their correct places.

Who's is the contraction of the subject and predicate *who is*: *Who's going to ask the citizen?* **Whose** is a pronoun or adjective: *Whose words these are, I think I know*. In academic writing we would never use *who's* because we do not use contractions.

There are two issues here: contractions and cases. There is a series of catastrophes that awaits you if you try to contract subjects and predicates in academic writing. It is essential that you grasp, right now, the importance of using **complete words instead of contractions**. If you do that, you will avoid many errors that involve contractions of subjects and verbs such as *it's*, *who's*, and *they're*. Do not use contractions. The other issue is one of **pronoun case**, of subjects versus objects. You must see the parts of sentence, other than the predicate, as either subjects or objects. That will allow you to use pronouns with academic precision.