Subject and Object
Complement

Lesson 11
What is a complement?

In grammar, a complement is a word, phrase or clause that is necessary to complete the meaning of a given expression.

Examples:
- The boy seemed happy.
- The dog is angry.
- That sounds like heaven.
- The tea tastes foul.

To make them complete: add a complement.

Example:
- The boy seemed happy.
- The dog is angry.
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Lesson 11 – Subject and Object Complement

Two types of Complements

1. OBJECT COMPLEMENT

Study the following sentences:

They made Harry Chairman.

The President appointed him Governor.

In sentence 1, Harry is the object of the transitive verb made. But if you say ‘they made Harry’, the sense is incomplete. In addition to the object Harry, we need another word to complete the meaning of the verb made. The word Chairman which completes the meaning of the sentence is called a complement. Since it says something about the object it is called an **object complement**.
An **object complement** is a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective which follows a **direct object** to rename it or state what it has become.

Verbs of making (e.g., to make, to create) or naming (e.g., to name, to call, to elect) often attract an object complement. In the examples below, the object complements are shaded and the direct objects are in bold.

- To make **her** happy
- To name **her** Heidi

However, lots of verbs can take an object complement. For example:

- To consider **someone** stupid
- To paint **something** purple
- To catch **somebody** stealing

An object complement is not always one word. It could be a phrase. For example:

- I found **the guard** sleeping in the barn.
- We all consider **her** unworthy of the position.
Identify the object complements in the sentences.

1. Now I call Minnesota home.
2. My sister named the pig Boss.
3. Sandy tagged him a friend.
4. I found that class a challenge.
5. The teacher called student a liar.
6. Mike considers TV a waste of time.
7. Nancy considered the car a lemon.
8. She calls Michael Jackson a great dancer.
9. The coach considers last game a success.
10. The minister pronounced the couple man and wife.
11. The team appointed Mike leader of our group project.
12. Some circumstances can make ordinary people heroes.
13. My brother called the salesperson charlatan and a fraud.
14. Mike considers his education an investment in his future.
15. The director will name Mike most improved singer at the year-end banquet.
2. SUBJECT COMPLEMENT

A subject complement is the adjective, noun, or pronoun that follows a linking verb. Read these examples:

Brandon is a gifted **athlete**.
*Brandon* = subject; *is* = linking verb; *athlete* = noun as subject complement.

It was **he** who caught the winning touchdown Friday night.
*It* = subject; *was* = linking verb; *he* = pronoun as subject complement.

Brandon becomes **embarrassed** when people compliment his skill.
*Brandon* = subject; *becomes* = linking verb; *embarrassed* = adjective as subject complement.

Brandon's face will turn **red**.
*Face* = subject; *will turn* = linking verb; *red* = adjective as subject complement. [*Will turn* is linking because if you substitute this verb with an equal sign, the sentence still makes sense.]
Lesson 11 – Subject and Object Complement

Two types of Subject Complements

• Predicate Noun / Nominative
• Predicate Adjective

1. Predicate Noun / Nominative - The Completer

A predicate noun is a single noun or a noun phrase that renames the subject of a sentence and follows a form of the verb “to be” or another linking verb. Forms of the verb “to be” include:

- is, was, am, are, be, being, been, has been, may be, and were

Other verbs that may be linking verbs or action verbs include:

- smell, taste, feel, sound, grow, seem, remain, become, continue, appear, turn, and stay

Mr. Smith is a doctor.

For the next twenty years, we remained friends.
2. Predicate Adjective - The Modifier

Adjectives modify nouns, which includes describing them and giving more information about them, like their composition, their origin, your opinion of them and their purpose.

A predicate adjective is very similar to a predicate noun in that it completes the predicate and follows an intransitive verb. These are verbs like: *am, is, was, were, has been, are, smell, remain, seem, sound, stay, continue, become, and grow*

Instead of renaming the subject, it modifies it. Here are some sentences with the predicate adjective underlined.

Her performance was phenomenal.  Antarctica is cold, barren and frozen.
Lesson 11 – Subject and Object Complement

Grammar Activity

Identify the subject complement determine whether they are predicate noun (PN) or predicate adjective (PA).

1. Ginger is president of the student council.
2. Jim is taller than his brother.
3. The girls were happy to help me.
4. Stephanie has been a cheerleader.
5. Joe is a student at Smith High School
6. Mrs. Johnson is the principal of our school.
7. My favorite subject is Math.
8. James is a good guy.
9. He remained cool.
10. Swimming is fun.
11. Microsoft is a company.
12. This sounds great!
13. Lisa has become quite successful.
14. The little child seemed excited.
15. He can get really tired.

Examples:

Mr. Smith was a teacher at our Junior High.
Subject: Mr. Smith  Verb: was  PN/PA: teacher (PN)

The flowers seemed dead.
Subject: flowers  Verb: seemed  PN/PA: dead (PA)
Each of the following sentences contains a complement. Identify the complement in each sentence, and note whether it is a subject complement or an object complement.

1. Pablo is extremely intelligent.
2. I find him intelligent.
3. Sheila eventually became my best friend.
4. Our neighbor's dogs are very dangerous.
5. Ginger's hair dye turned the water pink.
6. They made me secretary of the association.
7. The jury found him guilty.
8. We chose him our leader.
9. We painted the ceiling blue.
10. You are making me angry.
11. Paula is a good dancer.
12. That book made her famous.
13. Dorothy named her parakeet Onan.
14. The Romans wanted to crown Caesar king.
15. We found the house abandoned.
The End