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What image comes to your mind when someone uses the word **subject** in a sentence? If something is the **subject** of a discussion, debate, talk, conversation, or sentence, it is what that activity or the sentence revolves around. In this post, we will understand what a subject is, how it looks like, and the different types of subjects in English. A subject of a sentence is a part that the sentence revolves; it is what the sentence focuses on. In linguistics, the subject of a sentence is a person that does an action or a person/thing that about whom/which the sentence gives information about. Examples: 1. Jacob calls me in the morning. (Focusing on the subject and what he does) 2. One of my friends called me last night. (Focusing on who called me) 3. I have invited all of them. (Focusing on the subject performing an action) In these sentences, we are focusing on the doer of the action: subject. Now, let's study some examples where the subject does not perform an action, where the sentence gives information about the subject by renaming it (using a name or modifying it (using an adjective)). Ex - This place has been beautifully decorated. The person or people who have done this are not important. This sentence is in the passive voice; the subject (this place) will be the direct object in the active voice. (Subject = this place) Ex - Monica was given a secret task to do. Monica doesn't do the action of giving here in the sentence; she receives it. The sentence is in the passive voice. (Subject = Monica) 1. Jacob is a dancer. (renaming the subject) 2. My sister is my best friend. (renaming the subject) 3. Jon and Monica were enemies. (renaming the subject) 4. You are talented. (modifying the subject) 5. Mangesh has been very supportive. (modifying the subject) 6. My friends were quite rich back in the day. (modifying the subject) In the first three examples, we are giving a name to the subject using a noun or a noun equivalent. Jacob = a dancer. My sister = my best friend Jon and Monica = enemies In the last three examples, we are describing the subject with an adjective. You = talented Mangesh = very supportive My friends = quite rich back in the day We can also talk about the mental state, emotional state, or possessional state of the subject using stative verbs. Let's study some examples to understand this. 1. Jon loves talking to kids. (talking about the emotional state of the subject) 2. I understand the gravity of this gravity. (talking about the cognitive state of the subject) 3. We own this house. (talking about the possessional state of the subject) Here, the subject is not performing a dynamic action; we are just showing the state the subject is in. What is a subject in English? There are three types of subjects in English: Simple subject Compound subject Complete subject Types of subjectsExplanationExamplesSubject in the exampleSimple subject is a noun or pronoun without any modifiers in it.1. Jon is my best friend.2. We love you.3. Some people want to meet you.4. The story of the movie was fascinating.1. Jon,2. we,3. people,4. storyCompound subject is a combination of two or more subjects (of any type) together.1. Jon and I live together.2. My father and I don't see eye to eye.3. Jon, Conor, and Tim are not going on the trip.1. Jon and I.2. My father and I.3. Jon, Conor, and Tim Complete subject is a combination of a simple subject and the modifiers that come right before or after it.1. My friends are waiting for me.2. Someone from your class has been messaging me.3. Some people want to meet you.4. The story of the movie was fascinating.1. My friends 2. Someone from your class 3. Some people 4. The story of the movieDifference between a simple subject, compound subject, and complete subject chart A simple subject is a one-word subject. It does not include any modifiers. Examples: Simran has everything she needs. India is the biggest democratic country in the world. Jacob loves pancakes. The man in the white coat is a doctor. The best dancer of this group was Ronny. Examples: New Delhi is the capital of India. The Taj Mahal is one of the seven wonders of the world. Justin Bieber is my sister's favourite singer. Here, the subject is a proper noun. It does not have any modifiers. A complete subject is a combination of a simple subject and the words that modify it. Examples: 1. The movie was amazing. Simple subject = movieModifier = theComplete subject = the movie 2. A wise man once said that money is an illusion. Simple subject = manModifier = a, wiseComplete subject = a wise man 3. Some people just make excuses for their failures. Simple subject = peopleModifier = someComplete subject = some people 4. People living in this area are very poor. Simple subject = peopleModifier = living in this area (present participle phrase)Complete subject = people living in this area 5. The man in the blue coat teaches History here. Simple subject = manModifier = the, in the blue coatComplete subject = the man in the blue coat A complete subject is formed using a simple subject and one or more modifiers. Here are the ways to form a complete subject: Pre-modifier/s + simple subject Simple subject + modifier/s Pre-modifier/s + simple subject + post-modifier/s Pre-modifier + simple subject My friends love me. (Premodifier = my) A school is being built here. (Premodifier = a) That car is more expensive than our house. (Premodifier = that) His performance was amazing. (Premodifier = his) A few people have gathered here. (Premodifier = a few) Three women were hit by his car. (Premodifier = three) Simple subject + post-modifier People in my village support each other. (post-modifier = in my village) Events of such nature kept happening. (post-modifier = of such nature) Girls protesting outside the college are from different parts of the country. (post-modifier = outside the college) Pre-modifier + simple subject + post-modifier The man looking at us looks strange. (premodifier = the, post-modifier = looking at us) The goal of this gathering is to raise money for some poor kids. (premodifier = the, post-modifier = of this gathering) The movie that we watched the other day opened my eyes in many ways. (premodifier = the, post-modifier = that we watched the other day) A compound subject is a combination of two or more (generally two) simple subjects or complete subjects. It is joined by a coordinating conjunction, usually with 'and', 'nor', and 'or'. Examples: Mohit and Rohan are best friends. Jon and Max came to see me the other day. Susan or I can go there and talk to the management about this. The teachers or the management can solve this problem. Some green vegetables, milk, sugar, and flour are needed for this dish. A compound subject can also be joined with correlative conjunctions such as 'not only...but also', 'Both...and', and 'neither...nor'. Neither the doctors nor the patients were happy with the ongoing protests. Both the police and the protestors are working together. Not only my parents but I am also in support of this rule. Note: when 'neither...nor' and 'either...or' form a subject, the verb follows what comes after 'nor'. Neither the students nor the teacher is excited about the new rules of the school. Either you or she is coming with me. The following things can act as the subject of a sentence: Noun/Noun phrase Noun clause Pronoun Gerund/Gerund phrase Infinitive/Infinitive phrase Money can buy happiness, some say. Democracy is the strongest pillar of this country. Courage is what you need to show. My money is not your money. A dog bit him. Some of your friends don't appreciate what you do. Click here to master noun phrases in English. What I want is love. Who called you yesterday was a friend of mine. Why he left that job is still a mystery to me. I love teaching English. Everyone loves Ashish. That is a beautiful house. Teaching is my passion. Smoking can kill you. Running keeps me fit. Click here to master gerunds in English. Playing with kids makes me happy. Going there alone was a bad decision. Starting an NGO for the poor is one of the things I want to do. Click here to master gerund phrases in English. To smoke can kill you. To dance is my passion. NOTE: gerunds are preferred as a subject. Smoking can kill you. Dancing is my passion. Click here to master infinitives in English. To open a school is my dream. To leave her there alone was very stupid of you. To be an army officer is my goal. Click here to master infinitive phrases in English. Related lessons: Find the subject in the following sentences and also mention its types: Everything I do has a reason. You look amazing. Some of you are really creative. These dogs are my friends. A man in a black suit was standing next to your car. This guy's driving is crazy. Some brown people living in this area are filthy rich. Your approach to this game is strangely good. She and I don't live together now. Either your friends or you can come. Answers: 1. Simple subject = everythingComplete subject = everything I do 2. Simple subject = you 3. Simple subject = some Complete subject = some of you 4. Simple subject = dogsComplete subject = these dogs 5. Simple subject = manComplete subject = a man 6. Simple subject = drivingComplete subject = this guy's driving 7. Simple subject = peopleComplete subject = some brown people living in this area 8. Simple subject = approachComplete subject = your approach to this game 9. Compound subject = she and I 10. Compound subject = either your friends or you Do share the lesson with others to help and support. Feel free to ask your doubt or question in the comment section. What is the difference between a simple and a complete subject?The difference between a simple subject and a complete subject is that a simple subject is a noun/pronoun and does not include any modifiers, and a complete subject is a combination of a simple subject and its pre and post-modifiers. What are the 3 types of subjects?There are 3 types of subjects in English: 1) Simple subject (Ex - Joanna loves me,2) compound subject (Ex - Joanna and Riya love me,3) Complete subject (Ex - The girl in the blue dress loves me) How many types of subjects are there in English?Simple, compound, and complex are the 3 types of subjects we have in English. 1. You are amazing. (simple subject)2. Your house is huge. (complete subject = your house, simple subject = house) 3. You and your sister are amazing at arts. (compound subject) Have a question or need deeper clarity? Drop it in the comments — I personally answer your questions/doubts. If you found this lesson valuable, share it with peers or learners who will benefit. Let's raise the standard of how we learn English — together. Looking for personalised coaching to elevate your English, communication, and life skills? I offer 1-on-1 mentorship that integrates advanced English fluency with emotional intelligence, confidence building, and personality development — designed to help you grow not just as a speaker, but as a powerful individual. Reach out at to get started. On YouTube and Instagram, we break down real conversations, dive into pop culture, share quick grammar hacks, and do the things your textbook never could. Follow now — and start learning smarter. WordReference Random House Learner's Dictionary of American English © 2025sub+ject /n, adj. /səb'dʒɪkt, v. səb'dʒɛkt/USA pronunciation n. [countable] that which forms a basic matter of thought, discussion, etc.:He keeps changing the subject and refuses to stick to the topic. Educationa branch of knowledge as a course of study:Which subjects are you taking this semester? Literature, Philosophy, something or someone written about or represented in writing, art, or music:That beautiful model was the subject for a number of Rodin's sculptures. Governmentone who owes allegiance to a king or queen or other head of state:The king will provide new services for his loyal subjects. Grammarone of the two main parts of a sentence (the other being the predicate) that is a noun or group of words acting like a noun, which usually refers to the one performing the action or being in the state expressed by the predicate: The subject of the sentence 'Jesse shot the sheriff' is Jesse. a person, animal, or corpse that is an object of medical or scientific treatment or experiment, adj. being under the rule, control, or influence of something:The warriors ruled harshly over their subject people.[be + + + to]We are subject to the rules and regulations in effect. open or exposed to; likely to get or receive:[be + + + to]Those silly ideas are subject to public ridicule. v. to bring under rule, control, or influence:[+ + object]The weaker tribes were subjected by another warlike race. to expose to:[+ + object]to subject metal to intense heat. to make vulnerable to attack by (something); expose:[+ + object]to subject yourself to ridicule. prep. phrase subject to, depending on; dependent on:His hiring is subject to your approval. sub+ject-ion, n. [uncountable]See -jec-. WordReference Random House Unabridged Dictionary of American English © 2025Sub+ject (n., adj. sub/jɪkt.v. səb'jɛkt')USA pronunciation n. that which forms a basic matter of thought, discussion, investigation, etc.:a subject of conversation. Educationa branch of knowledge as a course of study:He studied four subjects in his first year at college. a motive, cause, or ground-a subject for complaint. Literature, Philosophythe theme of a sermon, book, story, etc. Music and Dancthe principal melodic motif or phrase in a musical composition, esp. in a fugue. Fine Artan object, scene, incident, etc., chosen by an artist for representation, or as represented in art. Governmenta person who is under the dominion or rule of a sovereign. Governmenta person who owes allegiance to a government and lives under its protection:four subjects of Sweden. Grammarin English and many other languages) a syntactic unit that functions as one of the two main constituents of a simple sentence, the other being the predicate, and that consists of a noun, noun phrase, or noun substitute which often refers to the one performing the action or being in the state expressed by the predicate, as He in He gave notice, a person or thing that undergoes or may undergo some action:As a dissenter, he found himself the subject of the group's animosity, a person or thing under the control or influence of another. a person as an object of medical, surgical, or psychological treatment or experiment. a cadaver used for dissection. PhilosophyLogic,that term of a proposition concerning which the predicate is affirmed or denied. Philosophy that which thinks, feels, perceives, intends, etc., as contrasted with the objects of thought, feeling, etc. the self or ego. PhilosophyMetaphysics,that in which qualities or attributes inhere; substance,adj. being under domination, control, or influence (often fol. by to), being under dominion, rule, or authority, as of a sovereign, state, or some governing power; owing allegiance or obedience (often fol. by to), open or exposed (usually fol. by to):subject to ridicule, being dependent or conditional upon something (usually fol. by to):His consent is subject to your approval. being under the necessity of undergoing something (usually fol. by to):All beings are subject to death. liable; prone (usually fol. by to):subject to headaches. v.t. to bring under domination, control, or influence (usually fol. by to), to bring under dominion, rule, or authority, as of a conqueror or a governing power (usually fol. by to), to cause to undergo the action of something specified; expose (usually fol. by to):to subject metal to intense heat. to make liable or vulnerable; lay open; expose (usually fol. by to):to subject oneself to ridicule. [Obs.]to place beneath something; make subjacent. Latin, as above Old French sugetter Latin subjectiāre, frequentative of subicere; replacing Middle English suget(t)en Late Latin subjectum grammatical or dialectical subject, noun, nominal use of neuter of subjectus; replacing Middle English suget, as above; (verb, verbal) Latin, as above; (noun, nominal) Old French Latin subjectus placed beneath, inferior, open to inspection, origin, originally past participle of subicere to throw or place beneath, make subject, equivalent, to sub- sub- + -jec-, combining form of jacere to throw + -tus past participle suffix; replacing Middle English suget (adjective, adjectival) 1275-1325 sub+ject+ +-ble, adj. sub+ject+ +-bly+ +y, n. sub+ject+ed+ly, adv. sub+ject+ed+ness, n. subject+less, adj. subject+like, adj. 1. 4. Subject, theme, topic are often interchangeable to express the material being considered in a speech or written composition. Subject is a broad word for whatever is treated in writing, speech, art, etc.:the subject for discussion.Theme and topic are usually narrower and apply to some limited or specific part of a general subject. A theme is often the underlying conception of a discourse or composition, perhaps not put into words but easily recognizable:The theme of a need for reform runs throughout her work.A topic is the statement of what is to be treated in a section of a composition:The topic is treated fully in this section. 3. reason, rationale, 17. subordinate, subservient, 20. contingent. Collins Concise English Dictionary © HarperCollins Publishers: subject /n /səb'dʒɪkt/ the predominant theme or topic, as of a book, discussion, etc any branch of learning considered as a course of study a word, phrase, or formal expression about which something is predicated or stated in a sentence; for example, the cat in the sentence The cat catches mice a person or thing that undergoes experiment, analysis, treatment, etc a person who lives under the rule of a monarch, government, etc an object, figure, scene, etc, as selected by an artist or photographer for representation that which thinks or feels as opposed to the object of thinking and feeling; the self or the mind a substance as opposed to its attributesAlso called: theme a melodic or thematic phrase used as the principal motif of a fugue, the basis from which the musical material is derived in a sonata-form movement, or the recurrent figure in a rondo the term of a categorical statement of which something is predicated an originating motifchange the subject = to select a new topic of conversation adj /səb'dʒɪkt/ (usually postpositive) and followed by to: being under the power or sovereignty of a ruler, government, etc: subject peoples showing a tendency (towards): a child subject to indiscipline exposed or vulnerable: subject to ribaldry conditional upon: the results are subject to correction adj /səb'dʒɪkt/subject to = (preposition) under the condition that; we accept; subject to her agreement vb /səb'dʒɪkt/ (transitive) (followed by to) to cause to undergo the application (of): they subjected him to torture (often passive) followed by to: to expose or render vulnerable or liable (to some experience); he was subjected to great danger (followed by to) to bring under the control or authority (of): to subject a soldier to discipline rare to subdue or subjugate rare to present for consideration; submitEtymology: 14th Century; from Latin subjectus brought under, from subicere to place under, from sub- + jacere to throwsub+jectable adj sub+jecta+ility n Also found in: Thesaurus, Medical, Legal, Financial, Idioms, Encyclopedia, Wikipedia. (səb'jɛkt, -jɪkt) adj. 1. Being in a position or in circumstances that place one under the power or authority of another or others: subject to the law. 2. Prone; disposed: a child who is subject to colds. 3. Likely to incur or receive; exposed: a directive subject to misinterpretation. 4. Contingent or dependent: a vacation subject to changing weather. n. 1. One who is under the rule of another or others, especially one who owes allegiance to a government or ruler. 2. a. One concerning which something is said or done; a person or thing being discussed or dealt with: a subject of gossip. b. Something that is treated or indicated in a work of art. c. Music A theme of a composition, especially a fugue. 3. A course or area of study: Math is her best subject. 4. A basis for action; a cause. 5. a. One that experiences or is subjected to something; the subject of ridicule. b. A person or animal that is the object of medical or scientific study: The experiment involved 12 subjects. c. A corpse intended for anatomical study and dissection. d. One who is under surveillance: The subject was observed leaving the scene of the murder. 6. Grammar The noun, noun phrase, or pronoun in a sentence or clause that denotes the doer of the action or what is described by the predicate. 7. Logic The term of a proposition about which something is affirmed or denied. 8. Philosophy a. The mind or thinking part as distinguished from the object of thought. b. A being that undergoes personal conscious or unconscious experience of itself and of the world. c. The essential nature or substance of something as distinguished from its attributes. tr.v. (səb-'jɛkt) sub+ject-ed, sub+ject-ing, sub+jects 1. To cause to experience, undergo, or be acted upon: suspects subjected to interrogation; rocks subjected to intense pressure. 2. To submit to the authority of: peoples that subjected themselves to the emperor. [Middle English, from Old French, from Latin subjectus, from past participle of subicere, to subject; sub-, sub- + jacere, to throw; see ye- in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.] sub+ject-ion (səb-'jɛk-shən) n. Synonyms: subject, matter, topic, theme These nouns denote the principal idea or point of a speech, a piece of writing, or an artistic work. Subject is the most general: "Well, honor is the subject of my story" (Shakespeare). Matter refers to the material that is the object of thought or discourse: "This distinction seems to me to go to the root of the matter" (William James). A topic is a subject of discussion, argument, or conversation: "They would talk of ... fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakespeare" (Oliver Goldsmith). Theme refers especially to an idea, a point of view, or a perception that is developed and expanded on in a work of art: "To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme" (Herman Melville). See Also Synonyms at dependent.American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. those under the dominion of a reigning prince, collectively—Wilkes.Dictionary of Collective Nouns and Group Terms. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Want to thank TFD for its existence? Tell a friend about us, add a link to this page, or visit the webmaster's page for free fun content. Link to this page: This will soon make him odious to his subjects, and becoming poor he will be little valued by any one; thus, with his liberality, having offended many and rewarded few, he is affected by the very first trouble and imperilled by whatever may be the first danger; recognizing this himself, and wishing to draw back from it, he runs at once into the reproach of being miserly.Freedom from the domination of the great tradition could only be found by seeking new subjects, and such freedom was really only illusory, since romantic subjects alone are suitable for epic treatment.(heaven knows it is not exorbitant in its requirements!); for although I well know how hard it is for a man of genius with a seriously underrated subject to maintain serene and kindly relations with the men who underrate it, and who keep all the best places for less important subjects which virtue usually procures. The rest of his acquaintances, not interested in him, still, if he overwhelms them with wrath and disdain, he cannot expect them to heap honors on him.No man can be a competent legislator who does not add to an upright intention and a sound judgment a certain degree of knowledge of the subjects on which he is to legislate.And the different forms of government make laws democratical, aristocratical, tyrannical, with a view to their several interests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the justice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a breaker of the law, and unjust.To such an extent had Natasha left herself go that the way she dressed and did her hair, her ill-chosen words, and her jealousy- she was jealous of Sonya, of the governess, and of every woman, pretty or plain- were habitual subjects of jest to those about her.The public are, in general, very ready to adopt the opinion, that he who has pleased them in one peculiar mode of composition, is, by means of that very talent, rendered incapable of venturing upon other subjects. The effect of this disinclination, on the part of the public, towards the artificers of their pleasures, when they attempt to enlarge their means of amusing, may be seen in the censures usually passed by vulgar criticism upon actors or artists who venture to change the character of their efforts, that, in so doing, they may enlarge the scale of their art.Of things themselves some are predicable of a subject, and are never present in a subject.I had just finished writing "The End of the Tether" and was casting about for some subject which could be developed in a shorter form than the tales in the volume of "Youth" when the instance of a steamship full of returning coolies from Singapore to some port in northern China occurred to my recollection.I positively refuse to read her, as I positively refuse to listen to her, whenever she attempts to return to that one subject. Now give me the letter back.' I gave it back, and saw it torn up before my face.Thus much by way of introduction, for I could not but just touch upon this subject, though I could not go into a complete investigation of it, as if properly belongs to another question. The us at present suppose so much, that a man's happiest life, both as an individual and as a citizen, is a life of virtue, accompanied with those enjoyments which virtue usually procures. 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