

The Sentence Machine: Building Blocks of Communication

Materials Needed

- Paper or Notebooks (or a large whiteboard/chalkboard)
- Pencils, pens, or markers (different colors if available)
- 30 Index Cards or small slips of paper
- Optional: Timer
- Optional: Scissors and glue (for the "You Do" activity)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Identify the two essential parts of a complete sentence: the Subject and the Predicate.
2. Construct five or more simple, complete sentences correctly matching subjects and verbs.
3. Apply proper capitalization and ending punctuation to your sentences.

Success Criteria

You know you are successful when you can build a sentence where the subject and predicate work together perfectly, and it starts with a capital letter and ends with a strong punctuation mark.

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook: What Happens When a Robot Talks Too Fast?

Imagine a robot trying to tell you something important. Instead of saying, "The batteries need charging," it just blurts out, "Batteries... charging... the." Does that make sense? Not really! That's what happens when we use fragments instead of complete sentences.

Question for Discussion: Why is it important that we use complete, clear sentences when communicating, whether we are texting, telling a story, or writing a report?

Reviewing the Blueprint

Every complete sentence is like a machine with two essential parts. If either part is missing, the machine breaks down. Today, we are learning the blueprint for building strong, clear sentences.

II. Body: Building the Sentence Machine (35 minutes)

A. I Do: Modeling the Parts (10 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Direct Instruction & Visual Modeling

Part 1: The Subject (Who or What?)

The Subject is the noun or pronoun doing the action. It tells us WHO or WHAT the sentence is about. Ask yourself, "Who is performing the action?"

- **Example 1:** The brave knight rode a horse. (WHO rode?)
- **Example 2:** The blue spaceship landed softly. (WHAT landed?)

Part 2: The Predicate (The Action)

The Predicate is the verb and everything that follows it. It tells us WHAT the subject is doing or what happened to the subject.

- **Example 1:** The brave knight **rode a horse**. (What did the knight do?)
- **Example 2:** The blue spaceship **landed softly**. (What did the spaceship do?)

Modeling Complete Sentences: The Line Test

On the board or paper, write several examples. Draw a clear vertical line separating the Subject from the Predicate. Show how both parts are needed.

- **My brother | is practicing the drums.** (Complete)
- **Practicing the drums.** (Fragment – Missing the Subject!)
- **My brother.** (Fragment – Missing the Predicate/Action!)

B. We Do: Guided Practice - Sentence Surgery (15 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Hands-On Group Activity (Adaptable to solo/pair work)

Activity: Index Card Sentence Scramble

Prepare 15 Subject Cards and 15 Predicate Cards. (If teaching one student, prepare them ahead of time.)

Subject Card Examples (Blue Ink): The gigantic dinosaur, My sneakers, A famous writer, All the planets, The curious cat, I, We

Predicate Card Examples (Green Ink): snored loudly in the attic, explored the deep ocean, needs a new coat of paint, ran quickly past the mailbox, spin around the sun, wrote a captivating novel, enjoyed the picnic

1. **Sorting:** Mix up all 30 cards. Learners sort them into two piles: Subjects (Blue) and Predicates (Green).
2. **Matching & Building:** Learners take one card from each pile and try to create a logical, complete sentence.
3. **Verification:** Read the created sentence aloud. Does it make sense? Does it have a Subject (Who/What?) and a Predicate (Action/What they did?)?

Formative Assessment Check: Circulate and listen to the combinations. If a combination is nonsensical (e.g., "The curious cat | spin around the sun"), gently ask, "Does that action match that subject? What might the cat do instead?"

C. You Do: Independent Practice - The Sentence Machine Project (10 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Creative Application & Autonomy

Task: Create Your Five Perfect Sentences

Choose a topic you love (e.g., skateboarding, science fiction, your favorite animal, or a historical event). You must write five complete sentences about that topic. You will label the Subject and Predicate in each one.

1. Write Sentence 1.
2. Draw a line dividing the Subject from the Predicate.
3. Circle the first letter (to ensure capitalization).
4. Box the ending punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
5. Repeat four more times.

Success Criteria Reminder: Did you use a Subject AND a Predicate? Did you use correct capitalization and punctuation?

III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

Recap and Review

Ask learners to share one of the sentences from their Sentence Machine project. As they share, the rest of the group (or the instructor/parent) must correctly identify the Subject and the Predicate.

Key Takeaway Question: If you wrote a sentence that only said, "Jumped high over the fence," what is the missing essential component, and why?

Summative Assessment: Exit Ticket

On a half-sheet of paper (or in your notebook), complete the following two tasks. This must be completed individually and without help.

1. Write one original complete sentence about your day so far.
2. Underline the Subject once and the Predicate twice.

Differentiation and Extension

Scaffolding (Support for learners needing assistance):

- Provide a laminated checklist of the three core elements (Capital, Subject, Predicate, Punctuation) to refer to during the "You Do" task.
- Allow the learner to use simple, one-word subjects (e.g., He, She, Bronson, Dogs).

Extension (Challenge for advanced learners):

- **Compound Sentences:** Challenge the learner to write two sentences and connect them using a conjunction (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and a comma. (e.g., "The rain fell heavily, but we still played outside.")
- **Adding Modifiers:** Ask them to enhance their five sentences by adding at least two adjectives (describing words) to the subject and two adverbs (how/when/where words) to the predicate.