

Assessing Language: Grade 6

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Writing from Speaking

People did not always communicate by the written word. At first grunts, groans, and gestures helped early humans explain ideas. Eventually, symbols or letters made ideas more lasting.

When letters are combined, words are formed. However, using words in certain patterns can produce different outcomes, or meanings. For example, the word *spring* can refer to a time of year, a source of water, or a metal coil. The word *trunk* can mean a part of an elephant's body, a part of a car, or a storage chest. Likewise, the word *light* can have several meanings. Light can refer to the weight of an object, a bulb or lamp that provides light, or daylight versus darkness. It all depends on how a person puts the words together in order to convey one's thought.

Combining words in particular patterns can produce a complete thought.

EXAMPLES: In the dim **light** of the early **spring** morning, Father and I packed our fishing gear in the **trunk** of the car.

The elephant lowered his **light** load to the ground and dipped his **trunk** into the cool water of the **spring**.

Remember, combining words *can produce* a complete thought, but one must combine the words in a special way. For example, does this word pattern, *his the spring dipped trunk elephant the in*, tell you anything? Probably not. However, if you rearrange the words in a certain pattern you can express an idea that makes complete sense. Ask yourself, who or what did something? (Call this the **subject**.) Then ask, what was done, or what happened? (Call this the **predicate**.)

Once rearranged in a particular order or pattern (*The elephant dipped his trunk in the spring*), you have a word pattern that makes sense. Thus, a sentence must contain a subject and a predicate in order to communicate a complete thought.

Place periods after the sentences below and write the words *complete sentence* on the line. For those groups of words that do not form a complete thought, write whether a subject or a predicate is needed to make the thought complete.

1. A girl ran quickly down the stairs _____

2. Waited for three days _____

3. I never said that _____

4. Everyone in the room _____

5. It was a long trip _____

Subjects & Predicates

I. The following are all complete sentences. Place a vertical line between the **subject** and the **predicate**. Remember the subject is usually a noun or pronoun; the predicate is a verb or a form of the word **be (is, am, are, was, or were)**. Then circle the simple subject and double underline the verb. The first one has been done for you.

1. Several small birds | were trapped in the chimney.
2. The smoke rose in small grey puffs from the campfire.
3. No one heard the explosion in the tunnel.
4. Our class president attended the convention in Chicago.
5. Everyone in the building and on the sidewalk could feel the tremor.

II. The simple subject does not always come first. Look carefully and circle the simple subject and double underline the verb. The first one is done for you.

1. Through the fog, the sun | was shining weakly.
2. On the shelf was the torn doll.
3. She has washed all the soiled clothing.
4. Out of the cage flew the beautiful parakeet.
5. Quickly, four of the boys offered her their chairs.
6. The small, frightened kitten hid under the chair.
7. Up from his seat jumped Harry.

III. Supply subjects or predicates, or both, to the following. Choose whatever is needed to make the following complete sentences.

1. are visiting friends in California

2. the plastic model of the Eiffel Tower

3. on the table in the kitchen

4. the lawn mower and the rake

Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, or thing. There are two types of nouns: **common** and **proper**. A common noun is the name of **any** person, place, or thing.

girl city dog day building

A proper noun is the name of a **particular** person, place, or thing. A proper noun always begins with a capital letter.

Jane Chicago Fido Sunday Empire State Building

- I. Read the following sentences carefully. Circle each common noun and draw two lines under each proper noun. The first one has been done for you.
1. The salesman handed the hat to Mr. Johnson.
 2. Dr. Miller drove his new Ford to our house.
 3. Our team should not have been beaten by the Orioles.
 4. Minneapolis and St. Paul are twin cities.
 5. The large dog chased Bill down Elm Street.
 6. Uncle Fred took his children to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial.
 7. He operates an elevator in the Buder Building.
- II. Read each noun below. If it is a common noun, write **common** on the blank after the word. If it is a proper noun, write the noun and put in capital letters where they should be.
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. mountain _____ | 6. book _____ |
| 2. atlantic ocean _____ | 7. valentine's day _____ |
| 3. town _____ | 8. school _____ |
| 4. lake _____ | 9. spain _____ |
| 5. rocky mountains _____ | 10. ohio river _____ |

There are different kinds of common nouns. A **concrete noun** names something that you can see or touch.

key man bird rain flower building river

An **abstract noun** names a quality, condition, or idea; that is, things that *cannot* be seen or touched.

truth honor freedom honesty

- III. Underline each noun in these sentences. Divide a separate sheet of paper into two columns. Label one column **Abstract Nouns** and the other, **Concrete Nouns**. Write each noun that you have underlined in the correct column.
1. The soldier won a medal for his bravery.
 2. That artist has real talent.
 3. His honesty and courage have brought him much happiness.
 4. He overcame his fear and climbed the mountain.
 5. Our country believes in freedom and justice for all men.