

In order to locate the subjects we should begin by locating the verbs. Perhaps you are already fairly sure of the verbs. Some points to remember are:

1. Many words that come from verbs and are somewhat like verbs do not make a statement or ask a question or give a command.
 - a. Expressions like **to go, to think, to employ** are never part of the verb; they are infinitives.
 - b. No "ing word" (going, thinking, employing) can by itself be a verb; it must be helped by an auxiliary verb.

Helen **is going** to the party. (verb)

From the window we watched the stream of cars **going** past. (not a verb)

2. The word **there** is never the subject and is never part of the verb. It may be used simply to introduce the statement, and it is then called an **expletive**.

There are two extra pencils in the drawer. (The subject of the verb **are** is **pencils**.)

3. The word **not** is never a part of the verb. It is an **adverb** usually, and it frequently separates the words that form the verb. Other adverbs, also, may separate parts of the verb.

She **would not have gone** if she **had not been invited**.

The building **was completely destroyed** by the storm.

Even when **not** is part of a contraction, it does not become part of the verb.

It **doesn't need** more explanation

She **couldn't come** to school today.

4. Some of the most common auxiliaries which form part of the verb are: **am, is, are, was, were, been, shall, will, should, would, can, could, may, might, do, does, did, have, has, had, must**.

TO FIND THE SUBJECT OF A VERB, always ask the question "Who?" or "What" and then say the verb. If you are thinking clearly, the answer will always be the subject.

Examples:

The president appointed the committee.

"Who appointed?"—*President* is the subject.

An accident happened at the corner.

"What happened?"—*Accident* is the subject.

On the corner stood a tall policeman.

"Who stood?"—*Policeman* is the subject.

PRACTICE:

Turn to the sentences from Treasure Island in Section 1, p. 4. Underline each verb with one straight line and underline each subject with one wavy line.

SUGGESTIONS:

The word you underline as a verb **must** have a subject. It might be you understood, but only in a command or a request.

The words **who, which, and that** are often subjects. Watch for them!

There are 11 verbs in the first 4 sentences

Sometimes the same noun or pronoun serves as subject for two or more verbs (the compound verb).

Also two or more nouns or pronouns may be subjects of one verb (the compound subject).