Subject-Verb-Object Sentences

The basic building blocks of any sentence are the subject, verb, and object. In English, sentences are written in **SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) order**. Any complete sentence must have at least one subject and one verb. Recognizing these elements of a sentence will help your writing and your analysis.

In order to identify the Subject, Verb, and Object of a sentence:

Step 1: Identify the action or form of “to be” (is, are, am, etc.). This is your **verb**.

Step 2: Ask who or what did this action. This is your **subject**.

Step 3: Find who or what received this action. This is your **object.**

Example:

“I draw his dreams.” (p. 23)

N.B. The “his” of “his dreams” modify, meaning they describe, but aren’t, the subject or object.

Step 1: **draw** is the action. (Verb)

Step 2: **Junior (I)** did the drawing. (Subject)

Step 3: Rowdy’s (his) **dreams** received the drawing. (Object)

This is where analysis comes in. Why does Junior draw Rowdy’s dreams (turn to page 23)?

Sometimes the **subject** or **object** is implied, meaning it doesn’t actually appear in the sentence. This often happens with commands.

Example:

“‘Use your tears. Use your pain. Use your fear.’” (p. 144)

Step 1: **use** is the action. (Verb)

Step 2: **Junior/the team** are supposed to do the using. (Subject)

Step 3: **tears** received the using. (Object)

Alright, time to practice. Identify the **Subject, Verb, and Object** of each sentence (write S, V, and O above each word). There can be more than one Subject, Verb, and Object in every sentence. Indicate any implied subjects or objects:

1. “Rowdy fought everybody.” (p. 18)

2. “You can do it.” (p. 189)

3. “You’re a warrior.” (p. 55)

4. “But when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it.” (p. 5)

5. “But we reservation Indians don’t get to realize our dreams. We don’t get those chances. Or

choices. We’re just poor. That’s all we are.” (p. 13)

6. “Poverty doesn’t give you strength or teach you lessons about perseverance. No, poverty only

teaches you how to be poor.” (13)

7. “We are so disappointed,” my mother said.

“We are so disappointed *in you,*” my father said.

8. “If you stay on this rez,” Mr. P said, “they’re going to kill you. I’m going to kill you. We’re all

going to kill you. You can’t fight us forever.” (43)

9. She looked at me and sniffed.

SHE SNIFFED! (73)

10. “Your sister is dead because you left us. You killed her.”

Now we’re going to try analyzing one of these sentences as a class:

Class Example:

Now try analyzing one of these sentences by yourself or with a partner: