

A large, dark silhouette of an acacia tree stands prominently in the center-left of the frame. The tree's canopy is wide and flat, with intricate branch structures. The background is a vibrant sunset sky, transitioning from a bright yellow near the horizon to a deep orange at the top. The sun is partially obscured by the tree's trunk, creating a glowing effect. In the distance, a thin line of smaller trees and a dark horizon line are visible against the bright sky.

KAMALI ACADEMY

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GRAMMAR

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## What Is A Sentence?

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A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought.

The subject of the sentence tells whom or what the sentence is about. The predicate tells what the subject is or does. As long as a sentence contains both of these parts, it may be as brief as two words. Adding more information to the subject or predicate expands the sentence and makes it interesting. Remember to begin a sentence with a capital letter and end it with a punctuation mark.

**Incomplete Sentence:** The African continent.

**Complete Sentence:** The African continent is the second largest.

**Subject:** *The warriors fought.*      **Predicate:** *A lion lives in a pride.*

**Try It!**      Draw one line under each subject and two lines under each predicate.

1. African people originated in Africa.
2. The Nile River flows south to north.
3. The largest desert in the world is the Sahara Desert.
4. Scientists found the oldest human remains in Africa.
5. Africans created the first calendar.
6. Our African ancestors valued nature highly.
7. The living, dead, and unborn were respected.
8. The Dogon people of Mali discovered Sirius B.
9. A tree without roots cannot stand.
10. The oral tradition transmitted culture.

**Write It!**      What do you think of when you think of Africa? Write a description of your thoughts. When you read it over, check to see that you have used complete sentences.

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## Statements and Questions

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Two of the four kinds of sentences are called **declarative** and **interrogative**.

Both kinds of sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a punctuation mark. You can give variety and emphasis to your writing by using different kinds of sentences. A declarative sentence makes a statement and ends with a period (.). An interrogative sentence asks a question and ends with a question mark (?).

**Declarative:** Malcolm X was born Omaha, Nebraska.

**Interrogative:** What was Malcolm's birth name?

**Try It!** Label each sentence as **declarative** or **interrogative**. Write the correct end punctuation for each sentence.

1. El-hajj Malik El-Shabazz was born Malcolm Little \_\_\_\_\_
2. Elijah Muhammad taught Malcolm X \_\_\_\_\_
3. When was Malcolm born \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did Malcolm visit Africa \_\_\_\_\_
5. Earl Little, his father, followed Marcus Garvey \_\_\_\_\_
6. Malcolm married Betty Shabazz \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you like Malcolm \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was Malcolm's dream job as a child \_\_\_\_\_
9. Malcolm fought for the liberation of African people \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are you as brave as this warrior \_\_\_\_\_

**Write It!** Which is your favorite Malcolm X quote? Write a poem that describes the meaning of the quote. Be sure to include both statements and questions?

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## Combining Sentences: Compound Subjects and Predicates

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Two sentences that have the same subject or predicate may be combined into a single sentence.

Using compound subjects and compound predicates is a way to combine sentences and make your writing flow. A sentence may have both a compound subject and a compound predicate. You can combine some of your sentences in the following way:

### Combining Subjects:

Amilcar led a revolt. I led a revolt, too.

Amilcar and I led revolts.

### Combining Predicates:

Wangari fought for women. She planted trees.

Wangari fought for women and planted trees.

**Try It!** On a separate sheet of paper, combine each compound subject or predicate using *and* or *or*. Underline the word that joins the parts of the compound.

1. Kunta Kinte never lost his culture.
2. *Sankofa* was interesting. It was exciting too.
3. Lumumba watched the movie. I watched it, too.
4. *NightJohn* is about slavery. *Roots* is about slavery.
5. African movies move you. African movies inspire you.
6. Students should study our movies. Students should learn from our movies.
7. We support movies that support our best. We watch movies that show our best.
8. Documentaries are informational. Documentaries are great.
9. *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* is a great movie. *The Warrior Queen* is as well.
10. Jamal finished making his movie. I finished mine. too.

**Write It!** What is your favorite movie about the Black experience? Write a brief summary of the movie and your thoughts about it. Be sure to use compound subjects and predicates when you can.

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## **Combining Sentences: Compound Sentences**

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You can combine sentences that have related ideas using a comma and the word *and*, *or*, or *but*. Try combining sentences that have similar or related ideas. Your writing will be smoother, and the connections between your ideas will be easier to understand.

### **Combining Sentences:**

Nia loves cookies. I love making them for her.

Nia loves cookies, and I enjoy making them for her.

**Try It!**      Combine each pair of sentences using a comma and *and*, *or*, or *but*.

1. Marriage is not simply about the individuals. Marriage is not only about love.
2. African men and women must come together. They must love each other.
3. Black families must be whole. We will continue to lose if they are not.
4. We can live alone. Living together will make us stronger.
5. African men protect their families. African men provide financial and emotional stability.
6. A relationship is about two souls coming together. It is about bringing two purposes together.
7. Words are important. Actions mean more.
8. Marry someone with a similar vision. Be sure to support each other.
9. Relationships grow with attention, commitment, and investment. Without these things, they die.
10. Teach a man and you teach an individual. Teach a woman and you teach a nation.

**Write It!**      What would be your relationship advice to your 25 year-old self? What should you do and not do?

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## Simple and Complete Subjects

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The **complete subject** of a sentence contains all the words that tell whom or what the sentence is about.

Get to know the subject: study the examples below.

**Simple Subject:** *Rebellions* happened often.

**Complete Subject:** *Those fighters* had great courage.

Notice that the simple subject may also be the same as the complete subject.

**Try It!** Draw two lines under the simple subject and one line under the complete subject.

1. Europeans kidnapped Turner's mother from Africa.
2. Nat Turner grew up on a plantation in Virginia.
3. The young boy learned to read at an early age.
4. Turner accepted Christianity and became a preacher.
5. A harsh overseer forced Turner to run away.
6. He experienced visions while in the woods.
7. An eclipse in February of 1831 prompted Turner to begin a rebellion.
8. The revolt lasted three days.
9. Turner and company killed fifty-seven whites.
10. The uprising intensified the anti-slavery movement.

**Write It!** What do you think are the most important traits of a leader? Write a description of your favorite leader. When you have finished, circle the simple subject in each sentence. Underline the complete subject.

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## Singular and Plural Nouns

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A **singular noun** names one person, place, thing, or idea.

A **plural noun** names more than one person, place, thing, or idea. Knowing the rules for forming plural nouns is part of the writer's craft.

Add *s* to form the plural of most nouns.

mask/masks costume/costumes

Add *es* to form the plurals of nouns that end in *s*, *ss*, *x*, *ch*, or *sh*.

rebus/rebuses dress/dresses box/boxes patch/patches

Add *s* to form the plural of a noun that ends with a vowel and *y*.

boy/boys day/days delay/delays toy/toys

Change the *y* to *i* and add *es* to form the plural of a noun that ends with a consonant and *y*.

party/parties county/counties jury/juries story/stories

**Try It!** Draw a line under the singular nouns in each sentence. Then write the plural form of each noun.

1. The soldier must know his enemy. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The day will last long. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The battle was won quickly. \_\_\_\_\_
4. A match lit the fire. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The party lasted until daybreak. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The story teaches great lessons. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Family is an army. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The boy declared his alliance. \_\_\_\_\_
9. The box was filled to the brim. \_\_\_\_\_
10. The warrior keeps his cool. \_\_\_\_\_

**Write It!** What do you think the Afrikan proverb, "a warrior without war will war against self" mean? Write your answer and give examples. Make sure you've used plural nouns correctly.

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## Proper Nouns

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- A proper noun names a particular person, place, thing, or idea.
- Proper nouns begin with a capital letter.

Using proper nouns where they are appropriate makes your writing specific and factual. Compare the sentences below.

That is a *place* on another *continent*.  
*Cameroon* is a country in *Africa*.

We read the *book* and enjoyed the class.  
We read *Two Thousand Seasons* and enjoyed the class.

**Try It!** Draw a line under each common noun. Draw two lines under each proper noun.

1. Patrice Lumumba served as Prime Minister of the Congo.
2. Officials deported Marcus Garvey from the port of New Orleans.
3. Booker T. Washington, a leader, founded Tuskegee University.
4. In 1964, Malcolm X took a pilgrimage to Mecca.
5. Ida Be Wells exposed lynchings across the United States.
6. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm's family soon moved to another state.
7. The Kwame Nkrumah Center to Ghana inspired me.
8. We should all be leaders like Yaa Asantewaa.
9. Egypt was originally called Kemet.
10. Fannie Lou Hamer led students and activists in Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement.

**Write It!** Where would you like to go? Who would you like to meet? Write a journal entry about three places you'd like to go and three people you'd like to meet.

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