SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

There are two types of subject complements. Both types occur in the predicate after the linking verb (am, are, is, was, were, will be, been). The predicate includes the verb, verb helpers, modifiers, and other words that modify or rename the subject. The first type of subject complement is called a *predicate nominative* or *predicate noun*. It appears after a linking verb and renames the subject. You can see the difference between the appositive and the predicate nominative below:

Example: The scientist, an *aquanaut*, is able to record the data.

(The word *aquanaut* renames the subject and is set off by commas, so it’s an appositive.)

Example: The scientist is also an *aquanaut*, able to record the data.

(Here, the word *aquanaut* renames the subject but follows a linking verb; therefore, it is a predicate nominative or noun.)

The second type of subject complement is a *predicate adjective*. In the following examples, you can see the difference between an adjective that
occurs before the subject noun and an adjective that occurs in the predicate after a linking verb:

Example: The plentiful nutrients are important to the health of the reef.

(Plentiful is an adjective modifying the subject nutrients, and important is a predicate adjective that follows the linking verb are and modifies the subject nutrients.)

Example: The nutrients are plentiful and important to the health of the reef.

(Plentiful and important are adjectives located in the predicate. Both follow the linking verb are and modify the subject, nutrients.)

The subject complement (whether it is a predicate nominative or predicate adjective) is diagrammed as follows:

\[
\text{subject} \quad \underline{\text{verb} \ \backslash} \quad \text{subject complement}
\]

A slanted back slash is used between the verb and the subject complement to indicate that the subject complement (although located
in the predicate) actually modifies the subject.

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**Exercise 6: Diagramming Subjects, Verbs, and Subject Complements**

_Aquarius: The World’s Only Underwater Laboratory_

**Directions:** Print the following exercise. In each sentence, underline the subject complement and write on the line provided whether it is a predicate nominative (PN) or a predicate adjective (PA). Then add the subject, verb, and subject complement to the diagram frames provided. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a national undersea research endeavor. **PN**
   
   
   __NOAA__ is __endeavor__

2. The Aquarius is an underwater habitat. **___**
   
   
   ____________

3. The scientists are comfortable at a depth between 55 and 120 feet. **___**
   
   
   ____________

4. The Aquarius is 43 feet long, 13 feet wide, and 16.5 feet high. **___**
   
   
   ____________
5. The Aquarius, situated at Conch Reef off Key Largo, was the only operational undersea habitat for scientific research in the world.

6. Underwater scientists are explorers in an alien environment.

5. Coral reefs are the tropical rain forests of the sea.

8. The underwater laboratory is more than adequate for “saturation diving.”

9. Aquarius’ predecessor was Hydrolab in the United States Virgin Islands.
10. The Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium is trained to conduct sophisticated underwater experiments. ____

Adapted from: