

Annotation Instructions

In the following, you are asked to annotate a set of simple sentences. All those sentences have in common that their main verb has a negative polarity (e.g. *hate*, *criticize*, *dislike*, *long*, *miss*, *fail* etc).

The subject of the main verb will always be the neutral word *they*.

Your task is to consider the sentiment of the subject towards the object. By sentiment, we understand the view, opinion or emotion that the subject has towards a particular entity. The sentiment can either be positive, negative or neutral.

Here is an example:

- [They subject] **dislike** [these things object].

In that sentence the main verb is *dislike*, *they* is the subject and *these things* is the object. The subject has a negative sentiment towards the object.

It is important for you to understand that although you will always be given a verb with negative polarity, the sentiment of the subject towards the object may vary. It does not have to be negative. For example, in the following sentence, the subject has a **positive sentiment** towards the object:

If someone steals something, then they usually want it to possess. We equate this with a positive sentiment. The word *steal* may convey a negative polarity. However, this negative polarity is evoked by the speaker of the utterance condemning the action of the subject as something illegal/immoral.

- [They subject] **stole** [these things object].

Admittedly, most negative verbs also denote a situation in which the subject has a negative sentiment towards the object (e.g. *dislike*, *criticize*, *forbid* etc.), however, there is also a significant proportion in which there is a positive sentiment towards the object, as in the case of *stealing*, *lamenting* or *enforcing* something.

In this task we are particularly interested in identifying **negative verbs that convey a **positive sentiment** of the subject towards the object. You are to decide whether a negative verb conveys such sentiment or not.**

There will also be many sentences in which the main verb has more than one object. You will always be asked to judge the sentiment towards the object fulfilling the role of the *patient*. In order to facilitate the annotation, the object being the patient will be enclosed by square brackets, so you know which constituent you have to focus on. In the following sentence, the square brackets indicate that *these things* is the object you should consider (rather than the prepositional object *from a woman*):

- They **stole** [these things] from a woman.

There will also be objects that are entire clauses/propositions:

- They **dislike** [being asked by their loved ones to donate money].

In that sentence, you should consider the sentiment of the subject towards the entire phrase *being asked by their loved ones to donate money*. The subject may have a positive sentiment towards parts of the phrase (e.g. *their loved ones*) but they have a negative sentiment towards the entire phrase which describes a situation. They dislike the situation of being asked to donate money, particularly if they are asked by their loved ones.

You should also avoid focusing on the inherent polarity of the object. That polarity may not coincide with the sentiment of the subject towards it. For example, in the following sentence, the object has obviously a negative polarity:

- They **boast** [with the dreadful crimes they have committed].

However, the subject has a positive sentiment towards the object. If someone boasts with something, then they are usually proud of it – in other words – they consider it something positive. It may even be something we, as the reader, may consider immoral or illegal, such as *dreadful crimes*. Stalking represents a similar situation. If some person A stalks some other person B, then person A actually has a positive sentiment towards person B (irrespective of the fact that we condemn stalking as a reprehensible behavior).

There may also be sentences with verbs that actually describe a change in attitude on the part of the subject. In these situations, you should assess the present attitude and not the previous attitude. For example, the following sentence suggests that, at present, the subject is positive towards the object in the sense that they gave in:

- They **surrendered** [to the evil occupying forces].

The situation may have been different in the past. (It may also change in the future.) However, we are not interested in that. Therefore, in the previous sentence, we would conclude that the subject has a positive attitude towards the object.

The previous sentence suggests that we have **a wide notion of sentiment**. Your annotation should become easier if you equate **positive sentiment** with “the subject wants the object”, “the subject takes a subordinate role to the object” or “the subject tolerates the object to happen”.

There may be some verbs in this survey with which you are less familiar. Of course, you are free to consult a dictionary to clarify the meaning. For instance, you could consult:

<https://www.macmillandictionary.com>

In case a verb has more than one meaning, it is important that you always focus on the meaning of the verb which is used in the sentence we provide to you.