Faulty Predication

Don’t let the fancy name fool you. This is actually a fairly common problem in student writing and not so hard to fix.

Let’s start at the very beginning ...

All sentences are made up of parts. (If you can learn the parts of a cell, you can learn the parts of a sentence.)
The two most basic parts are the subject and the predicate.

The subject does the action

and the predicate is acted upon.

Soooooo...  

Look at the following sentence:

Spiderman rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin.
Subject

Spiderman

Predicate

rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin

See????
Now that you have the subject and predicate part down, you need to know one additional thing:

**Predicates can sometimes contain more than one verb or verb phrase.**

Take a look at the following sentence:

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Spiderman rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin and won her love forever.
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We are dealing with two verb phrases in this sentence:

1. **rescued** Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin
2. **won** her love forever.

Now what if I did this:
Spiderman rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin and her fervent love forever.

I have a problem here. “Her fervent love forever” doesn’t go with the 1\textsuperscript{st} part of the sentence.

Spiderman

1. \textbf{rescued} Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin
2. her fervent love forever.

Spiderman \textbf{rescued} Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin

This works.

Spiderman \textbf{her fervent love forever}

This doesn’t work - and it’s supposed to. How could we fix it?
Spiderman rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin and won her fervent love forever.

We could put a verb back in there. Notice that both verbs have to be the same tense.

Spiderman rescued Mary Jane Watson from the evil Green Goblin, winning her fervent love forever.

Or we could add a different kind of phrase, one that modifies, or gives incidental information about a noun, in this case Spiderman.

Because this is not considered part of the predicate – the part that contains the verb of the subject -- the phrase doesn’t need to go with the subject Spiderman. (In case you’re interested, this is known as a
participle phrase. This is a type of phrase that contains a verb, but its main purpose is more like an adjective — in other words, it modifies a noun.

Warning!!

If this is information overload, you can ignore this part.
Now, let’s review.

The subject of a sentence does the action.

*Peter Parker* uses his identity to hide his supernatural abilities.

The predicate of a sentence is the part that contains the verb(s).

*Peter Parker* uses his everyday identity to hide his supernatural abilities.

Sometimes a predicate contains two or more verbs.

*Peter Parker* uses his everyday identity to hide his supernatural abilities and maintains a disguise to hide his supernatural identity.
This predicate has 2 verbs, *uses* and *maintains*.

**When this happens both “parts” of the predicate must go, or agree with, the subject.**

Peter Parker

1. **uses** his everyday identity to hide his supernatural abilities
2. **maintains** a disguise to hide his supernatural identity

Now you know how to avoid

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