subject, v.

Pronunciation:  Brit. /səbˈdʒɛkt/; U.S. /səbˈdʒɛkt(t)/

Forms:

α. ME isubieecte (past participle), ME subjectid (past tense), ME–16 subiect, ME–16 subiecte, 15 subgect (past participle), 15 subiect (past participle), 15 subject, 15– subject, 16 subjecte; Scottish pre-17 subgek, pre-17 subieckit (past participle), pre-17 subiect (past tense and past participle), pre-17 subiect, pre-17 subiek, pre-17 subjeckit (past participle), pre-17 subjecte, pre-17 17– subject.

β. ME sochete, ME soget, ME sogete, ME soogete, ME sugete, ME sugete.

γ. 16 subiet.

Frequency (in current use):


Etymology: Probably partly (i) < (a) Middle French subjecter, subjecter, subgeter to subjugate, hold in submission (c1300 in Old French; compare Anglo-Norman sugester (12th cent.)),

and its etymon (b) classical Latin subiectāre to throw up from below, to apply below, in post-classical Latin also to subordinate (14th cent. in British sources), to provide with a subject (frequently from 14th cent. in British sources), frequentative formation < subicere (see SUBJECT adj.);

partly (ii) < classical Latin subject-, past participial stem of subicere (see SUBJECT adj.);

partly (iii) < SUBJECT adj.;

and partly (iv) < SUBJECT n.

Compare Spanish sujetar, †subjetar (15th cent.), Portuguese sujeitar (1561), Italian soggettare (a1642 as subbiettare). In Middle English prefixed and unprefixed forms of the past participle are attested (see γ- prefix).

I. Senses related to SUBJECT adj. I.
   1.

   a. transitive. To make (persons, a nation or country) subject to a conquering or sovereign power; to bring into subjection to a superior; to subjugate. Chiefly with to, †unto. Also reflexive. Now somewhat archaic and rare.

   • a1382 Bible (Wycliffite, E.V.) (Douce 370) (1850) 2 Chron. xxvii. 10 The sonis of Juda and of Jerusalem hee wiln subjecten [L. subjicere] to yow seruaunts and hond wymmen.
   c1410 tr. R. Higden Polychron. (St. John’s Canbr.) (1879) VII. 169 He forseide Haroldke, kyng of Norway..subjectid [L. subjugavit] unto hym Denmark.
   1530 J. PALSGRAVE Lesclarcissement 742/1 They be nowe subjected to the emperour.
   a1540 in Bannatyne Misc. (1855) III. 38 Efter that the Romanis subjectit the Britones.
1565 in J. H. Burton Reg. Privy Council Scotl. (1877) 1st Ser. I. 362 Doand that in thame lys to subject the hail stait of the commoun weill.

1603 R. JOHNSON tr. G. Botero Hist. Descr. Worlde 162 Some of them haue subiected themselves to this crowne.

1651 T. HOBBES Leviathan II. xix. 95 Men..consequently may subject themselves, if they think good, to a Monarch.

1667 J. MILTON Paradise Lost XII. 93 God in Judgement just Subjects him from without to violent Lords.

1684 J. EVELYN Diary anno 1646 (1955) II. 518 Should the Swisse..be subj<e>cted to France or Spaine.

1798 W. OPPENHEIM tr. Geogr. & Statist. Act. Cisalpine Republic 423 The Valley Pollicella..obtained great privileges from the Venetians, in consequence of its having been the first valley which subjected itself to that state.

1812 R. SOUTHEY in Q. Rev. Dec. 328 By abolishing that system in the countries which he has subjected, and by necessitating its abolishment in others.

1903 R. MAYR in H. F. Helmolt World's Hist. VII. i. 57 The Schmalkaldic League..was joined by the largest and most influential cities, which unconditionally subjected themselves to their ancient enemies, the ruling princes.

2005 G. WOOLF in K. Galinsky Cambr. Compan. Age Augustus II. v. 118 All territory west of the Phasis and the Euphrates has been subjected to the Romans and rulers appointed by them.

b. transitive. To make subject or bring into subjection to the rule, government, power, or service of a superior.


?1540 in tr. Erasmus Dialoge Two Persons To Rdr. sig. fvi He willeth every soule to be subiected to the hygher power and obeyent to theyr prynce.

1552 ABP. J. HAMILTON Catech. Pref. All subieckit to the seruice of ane lord.


1589 True Coppie Disc. Late Voy. Spaine & Portingale (1881) 81 They bee of so base a mould, as they can verie well subject themselves to any government.

1661 T. FULLER Worthies (1662) Derb. 233 A meek..man, much beloved of such who were subjected to his jurisdiction.

1693 J. DRYDEN tr. Last Parting of Hector & Andromache in Examen Poeticum 464 I see thee, in that fatal Hour, Subjected to the Victor's cruel Pow'r.

1752 London Mag. Feb. 98/1 There was..a great party for subjecting their native country to the tyrannical power of the pope of Rome.

1798 M. NOBLE Lives Eng. Regicides I. 216 Sir Thomas..subjected the whole country to the jurisdiction of the parliament.


1839 T. KEIGHTLEY Hist. Eng. II. 42 Subjecting them to an unheard of tyranny.

1834 J. H. NEWMAN Lect. Hist. Turks i. 85 The service to which they were subjected was no matter of choice.
1902 A. LANG *Hist. Scotl.* II. 354 He had subjected the Kirk men to the king's ordinances, and...had taught that presbyteries were 'a foolish invention'.

1999 K. TERRACIANO in J. C. LAURSEN *Relig. Tolerance* vi. 113 Mendieta protested the treatment of natives in the colonial system, especially the excessive compulsory labor service to which they were subjected.

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a. *transitive.* To make submissive or dependent; to bring into a state of subordination. Now chiefly reflexive. Also †*intransitive* with implied object.

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1605 *Famous Hist. Capt. Stukeley* sig. F3 To be threatened and subjected by him.

1667 J. MILTON *Paradise Lost* viii. 607 Yet these subject not.

1920 L. M. SMITH *Early Hist. Monast. Cluny* x. 108 Christ, who deigned to subject Himself to His mother, commanded men to honour their parents.

1998 A. RUBENSTEIN *Bad Lang., Naked Ladies, & Other Threats to Nation* ii. 46 The stereotypical traditional women...subjected themselves to their husbands, fathers, and sons.

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1620 T. Venner Via Recta vii. 114  Such as respect their health, and can subject their appetite.
1660 R. Coke Justice Vindicated 15  Subjecting all their passions and affections.
1737 Hist. Wks. Learned Aug. 156  It ought to be every ones chief Aim to subject his Passions.
1777 F. Carter Journey Gibraltor to Malaga II. 428  This teaches them early in life to subject their passions.
1896 O. S. Marden Pushing to Front x. 157  A gentleman...subjects his appetites, refines his tastes, subdues his feelings, controls his speech, and deems every other as good as himself.
1904 C. E. Orr Gospel Day I. xiv. 303  The true, devoted Christian...will so subject his appetites and passions, that his whole conduct in every respect will be an adornment of the doctrine of God his Savior.

†3. intransitive. To be or become subject, submit to. Obsolete.

c1475 (• ?c1400) Apol. Lollard Doctr. (1842) 76 (MED)  New law techiþ þat no prest nor clerk ow to soget to no seculer lord.
1622 T. Scott Belgicke Pismire 1  The Creatures subjected to his gouernment, in their voluntarie obedience.
1624 W. Bedell Copies Certaine Lett. v. 90  Shee kils with the spirituall sword, those that subiect not to her.
1644 P. Hunton Vindic. Treat. Monarchy iv. 20  He is unresistible, and to be subjected to actively in lawfull things.
1720 R. Wodrow Corr. (1843) II. 477  His Majesty's government, which they most heartily pray for, and subject to in all things they possibly can.

II. Senses related to SUBJECT n. II.

†4. transitive (in passive). To be attributed to, inhere in a subject (SUBJECT n. 5). Obsolete.

c1400 J. Wyclif Sel. Eng. Wks. (1871) III. 405 (MED)  Po sacrament of þo chalis may opinly shewe, ffirst, swettenesse of wyne and, aftir, sournesse..Lord, wheþer swettenesse and sournesse ben sogettid in figure!
c1450 (• 1410)  J. Walton tr. Boethius De Consol. Philos. (Linc. Cathedral 103) 93 (MED)  Aperteynþ..oght to þe?..Darst þow reioyen þat þey in the be As þing subiectid in þy propre kynde? Art þou depeynted, semeþ in þy mynde, Wiþ floures of þe firste somer sesoun?
1606 B. Jonson Hymnæai i  It is a noble and iust advantage, that the things subjected to Vnderstanding have of those which are objected to Sense.
1649 Br. J. Taylor Great Exemplar III. xiii. §13  When the relations are subjected in persons religious, and holy.
1659 J. Pearson Expos. Apostles Creed iv. 381  That all the sufferings of our Mediatour were subjected in his human nature.
1690 J. Norris Christian Blessedness 92  For such and such Vertues as subjected in Man.

5. transitive. Logic. To make the subject of a proposition. Cf. SUBJECTION n. 10. rare.

1628  T. Spencer Art of Logick 129  How they be predicatet, and how subiectet.
III. Senses related to subject adj. II.

6. transitive. To lay open or expose to the incidence, occurrence, or infliction of something; to make liable to something. †Also occasionally: to make susceptible to, predispose to.

7. transitive. To bring under the operation of an agent, agency, or process; to submit to certain treatment; to cause to undergo or experience something physically.
1723 T. Rymer *Gen. Representation Reve'al'd Relig.* 60 He disposes the various Revolutions in the Condition of his Church; subjecting it sometimes to Clouds and Storms, Persecutions and Corruptions.

1793 J. Smeaton *Narr. Edystone Lighthouse* (ed. 2) §196 The work will always be dry, or subjected only to the rain.

1794 R. J. Sullivan *View of Nature* I. 59 The polar parts being subjected to a colder medium, would be more compressed.

1801 *Encycl. Brit.* Suppl. II. 357/2 One knows not how to subject to the laws of our perceptions that which is absolutely independent of them.

1838 T. Thomson *Chem. Org. Bodies* 274 The alcohol is then to be separated by subjecting the matter to strong pressure in cloth.

1842 J. C. Loudon *Suburban Horticulturist* 94 This branch of garden management..has been subjected to scientific inquiry.

1855 A. Bain *Senses & Intellect* II. ii. 459 Subject the same persons to an extremely faint exhalation of the same substance.

1857 F. M. Müller *Sci. Relig.* (1873) 125 When people began to subject the principal historical religions to a critical analysis.

1907 J. H. Patterson *Man-eaters of Tsavo* xix. 208 Just after this caravan had moved on we were subjected to some torrential rain-storms.

1920 *Marine Insurance: Hearings before Subcomm. Merchant Marine & Fisheries* (66th U.S. Congr. 1st Sess. House) 101 If that cargo is discharged at some intermediate point, and they put it on the open dock, subjecting it to exposure and subjecting it to damage by rain, [etc.].

1955 *Eng. Digest* June 44/2 Corporal of Horse Pomfret..subjected us to a dispassionate scrutiny.

2005 *N.Y. Times Mag.* 25 Sept. 92/1 If the hydrogen economy is to liberate us from fossil fuels, hydrogen will probably be isolated by subjecting water to electrolysis, which separates the liquid into hydrogen and oxygen.

IV. Senses related to *subject* adj. III.

8.

†a. *transitive*. To place under something or in a lower position; to make subjacent to. Chiefly in *passive. Obsolete.*

1578 J. Banister *Hist. Man* v. f. 68* The rest of his way is subject vnder Vena caua.

1594 R. Carew tr. J. Huarte *Exam. Mens Wits* viii. 116 Spaine is not so cold as the places subject to the Pole.

a1676 M. Hale *Primitive Originat. Mankind* (1677) II. vii. 190 The like Volcans..happen sometimes in the Land subject to the Sea.

1807 J. Barlow *Columbiad* I. 30 O'er the proud Pyrenees it looks sublime, Subjects the Alps, and levels Europe's clime.

b. *transitive*. To lay before a person's eyes. With *to*. Now rare or merged in sense 7.

1720 A. Pope Verses Addison's Medals in *Wks.* 27 In one short view, subjected to our eye, Gods, Emp'rors, Heroes, Sages, Beauties lye.

1776 *Trial Maha Rajah Nundocomar for Forgery* 106/2 It would be highly improper that their books should be..subjected to curious and impertinent eyes.
1798  *Anti-Jacobin Rev.* (1799) Nov. 520  All human nature was subjected to his piercing eye.
1833  *Blackwood's Edinb. Mag.*  Oct. 550/1  The most enlightened man does not always think aright about what he truly sees; nor does he always see truly what is subjected to his eyes.
2002  Wu Hung *Making Hist.*  iv. 52  He used an extension cord to take pictures on the street...and see what people and the city look like when they were not subjected to his eyes.

**Phrases**

**to subject someone's neck to (also †unto) the yoke:** to place someone under the rule or control of someone or something.

c1592  *Faire Em*  sig. A3  A number such as we subiect Their gentle neckes vnto their stubborne yoke, Of drudging labour.
1641  J. Jackson *True Evangelical Temper* II. 120  To subject their necks to the yoak of Christ.
a1708  W. Beveridge *Private Thoughts Relig.* (1709) 71  He thus subjected his Neck to the Yoke of His own law.
1834  *Knickerbocker*  Jan. 6  Distinctly blazoning his purpose never to subject his own neck to this intolerable yoke.
1906  tr. in E. H. Blair et al.  *Philippine Islands*  XXXVI. 110  Upon being freed from the conjugal yoke she desired to subject her neck to that of religion.
2003  E. Leiva-Merikakis *Way of Disciple*  iii. 58  Only on condition that we willingly subject our neck to his yoke.

This entry has been updated (OED Third Edition, June 2012).