What are complements?

The label complement is applied to several different things.

A subject complement

A subject complement is a word or phrase which follows a copular verb. It either modifies the subject or denotes something identical to the subject.

The bold italic items in the following sentences are examples of subject complements.

Jane is an advocate.
Susie became a travel writer.
I am very excited.
Alice is in the office.

Object complement

An object complement is a phrase which follows a direct object. An object complement either modifies the object or denotes something identical to it.

I consider hang-gliding dangerous.
They appointed him monitor.
The complement of an adjective or a noun is a word or phrase which directly follows it.

Read the following sentences:

He is fond of his grand children. (Here the phrase ‘of his grand children’ is the complement of the adjective fond.)
Let’s get a bottle of wine. (Here the phrase ‘of wine’ is the complement of the noun bottle.)

Notes

The complement of a preposition is the same as the object of a preposition.

The cat is on the roof. (Here the phrase ‘the roof’ is the complement of the preposition on. It
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is also the object of the preposition on.)

The complement of a verb is the same as the object of a verb.

Jane bought a new car. (Here the phrase ‘a new car’ is the complement of the verb bought. It is also the object of the verb bought.)