The Sentence Diagram

A *sentence diagram* is a picture of how the parts of a sentence fit together. It shows how the words in the sentence are related.

**Subjects and Verbs**

To diagram a sentence, first find the simple subject and the verb (simple predicate), and write them on a horizontal line. Then, separate them with a vertical line.

**EXAMPLES**

- The reporter dashed to the fire.
  
  `reporter | dashed`

- Have you been studying?
  
  `you | Have been studying`

Notice that a diagram shows the capitalization but not the punctuation of a sentence.
Understood Subjects
To diagram an imperative sentence, place the understood subject you in parentheses on the horizontal line.

EXAMPLE

Listen to the beautiful music.

(you) Listen

Exercise 1 Diagramming Simple Subjects and Verbs
Diagram only the simple subjects and the verbs in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE 1. Midas is a character in Greek mythology.

Midas is

1. Midas ruled the kingdom of Phrygia.
2. One of the gods gave Midas the power to turn anything into gold.
3. Soon this gift became a curse.
4. Do you know why?
5. Read the story of King Midas in a mythology book.

Compound Subjects

EXAMPLES Vines and weeds grew over the old well.

Vines and grew

weeds

Either Daphne or Teresa plans to report on Thailand.

Daphne Either plans

Teresa or
Compound Verbs

**EXAMPLE**  We ran to the corner and barely caught the bus.

![Diagram of compound verb example]

**Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs**

**EXAMPLE**  Ken and LaDonna dived into the water and swam across the pool.

![Diagram of compound subject and verb example]

**Exercise 2**  **Diagramming Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs**

Diagram the subjects and the verbs in the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**  1. Nikki and Chris chopped the cilantro and added it to the salsa.

![Diagram of example sentence]

1. Mr. Carrington collects aluminum cans and returns them for recycling.
2. The students and the faculty combined their efforts and defeated the proposal.
3. The plane circled above the landing field but did not descend.
4. Pencil and paper are needed for tomorrow’s math assignment.
5. Angela and her costar prepared for the scene.
Adjectives and Adverbs

Both adjectives and adverbs are written on slanted lines below the words they modify.

**Adjectives**

**EXAMPLES**

- bright star
- a special person
- her favorite class

Two or more adjectives joined by a connecting word are diagrammed this way:

**EXAMPLE**

- a lovely and quiet place

---

**Exercise 3  Diagramming Adjectives**

Diagram the following word groups.

**EXAMPLE**

1. that old clock

1. mighty warrior
2. long, exciting movie
3. my final offer
4. short and funny story
5. the slow but persistent turtle

---

Reference Note

For information on *adjectives* and *adverbs*, see page 38 and page 61.

**HELP**

Possessive nouns and pronouns are diagrammed in the same way adjectives are.
**Adverbs**

**EXAMPLES**
- studies **hard**
- does **not** exercise **daily**

When an adverb modifies an adjective or another adverb, it is placed on a line connected to the word it modifies.

**EXAMPLES**
- extremely **strong wind**
- tried **rather** hard

---

**Exercise 4  Diagramming Adverbs**

Diagram the following word groups.

**EXAMPLE**
1. very seldom breaks

---

1. answered quickly
2. listened quite intently
3. dangerously sharp curve
4. may possibly happen
5. never plans very carefully

---

**Review A  Diagramming Sentences That Contain Adjectives and Adverbs**

Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**
1. The blue car quickly swerved left.
1. Our turn finally came.
2. We are definitely leaving tomorrow.
3. The anxious motorist drove too fast.
4. The shutters rattled quite noisily.
5. The new car had not been damaged badly.

**Objects**

**Direct Objects**

A direct object is diagrammed on the horizontal line with the subject and verb. A vertical line separates the direct object from the verb. Notice that this vertical line does not cross the horizontal line.

**EXAMPLE**

The rain cleaned the **street**.

![Diagram of direct object]

**Compound Direct Objects**

**EXAMPLE**

We sold **lemonade** and **oranges**.

![Diagram of compound direct object]

**Indirect Objects**

To diagram an indirect object, write it on a short horizontal line below the verb. Connect the indirect object to the verb by a slanted line.

**EXAMPLE**

The artist showed **me** his painting.

![Diagram of indirect object]
Reference Note
For information on compound indirect objects, see page 83.

HELP
Some sentences in Exercise 5 do not contain an indirect object.

Reference Note
For information on subject complements, see page 85.

Reference Note
For information on predicate nominatives, see page 85.

**Compound Indirect Objects**

**EXAMPLE** The company gave Jean and Corey summer jobs.

```
company | gave | jobs
         |      |      
         |      |      
The      |      |      
         |      |      
summer   |      |      
         |      |      
Jean     |      |      
         |      |      
Corey    |      |      
```

**Exercise 5** Diagramming Sentences That Contain Direct Objects and Indirect Objects

Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE** 1. They gave her a present.

```
They | gave | present
     |      |      
     |      |      
her   |      |      
```

1. The judges awarded the prizes.
2. Cara’s sister taught her the rules.
3. The cashier handed the children balloons.
4. Plácido Domingo signed photographs and programs.
5. Snow gives motorists and pedestrians trouble.

**Subject Complements**

A subject complement is placed on the horizontal line with the simple subject and the verb. The subject complement comes after the verb and is separated from it by a line slanting toward the subject. This slanted line shows that the complement refers to the subject.

**Predicate Nominatives**

**EXAMPLE** William Least Heat-Moon is an author.

```
William Least Heat-Moon | is | author
```

Chapter 19  Sentence Diagramming
**Compound Predicate Nominatives**

**EXAMPLE**  The contestants are *Joan* and *Dean*.

```
contestants are
The          Joan
             Dean
```

**Predicate Adjectives**

**EXAMPLE**  The river looked *deep*.

```
river looked deep
The
```

**Compound Predicate Adjectives**

**EXAMPLE**  This Chinese soup tastes *hot* and *spicy*.

```
soup tastes hot and spicy
This Chinese
```

**Exercise 6**  Diagramming Sentences That Contain Subject Complements

Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**  1. Some dogs are good companions.

```
dogs are companions
Some good
```

1. My shoes looked dusty.
2. Sir Francis Drake was a brave explorer.
3. The air grew cold and damp.
4. The chimpanzees seemed tired but happy.
5. My favorite months are September and May.
Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE** 1. That cockatiel is friendly.

![Diagram of sentence: That cockatiel is friendly.]

1. Her mother was an airplane mechanic.
2. Don and Maria rehearsed their parts.
3. The legend’s origin remains mysterious and strange.
4. My favorite Mexican foods are empanadas and enchiladas.
5. The girls made themselves bracelets and necklaces.

### Phrases

#### Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases are diagrammed below the word or word group they modify. Write the preposition that introduces the phrase on a line slanting down from the modified word. Then, write the object of the preposition on a horizontal line extending from the slanting line.

#### Adjective Phrases

**EXAMPLES**  
- paintings **by** famous artists

![Diagram of phrase: paintings by famous artists.]

- cloth **from** Costa Rica and Guatemala

![Diagram of phrase: cloth from Costa Rica and Guatemala.]

---

**Reference Note**

For information on **phrases**, see Chapter 5. For information on **prepositional phrases**, see page 96.

For information on **adjective phrases**, see page 97.
Adverb Phrases

**EXAMPLES** walked *along the road*

```
walked
  \______
     along
       road
```

went *with Hollis and Dave*

```
went
  \______
     with
       Hollis
       Dave
```

When a prepositional phrase modifies the object of another prepositional phrase, the diagram looks like this:

**EXAMPLE** camped on the side of a mountain

```
camped
  \______
     on
       side
             of
             a
```

**Exercise 7** Diagramming Prepositional Phrases

Diagram the following word groups.

**EXAMPLE**

1. drove through the Maine woods

```
drove
  \______
     through
       the
         Maine
```

1. invited to the celebrations
2. a glimpse of the famous ruler

Reference Note
For information on adverb phrases, see page 99.
3. one of the people in the room
4. drove to a village near Paris
5. wrote about the Vietnamese and their history

**Review C Diagramming Sentences That Contain Prepositional Phrases**

Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**
1. The steep slopes of the mountains are covered with forests.

![Diagram of Example 1]

1. The number of whales decreases annually.
2. Hundreds of animal species are being protected by concerned citizens.
3. Citrus fruits are grown in California and Florida.
4. Many historic events have been decided by sudden changes in the weather.
5. The defeat of the Spanish Armada resulted from a violent ocean storm.

**Verbals and Verbal Phrases**

**Participles and Participial Phrases**

Participles are diagrammed differently from other adjectives.

**EXAMPLE**
José comforted the **crying** baby.

![Diagram of Example of Participles]

---

Reference Note

For information on *verbals* and *verbal phrases*, see page 101.
Participial phrases are diagrammed as follows:

**EXAMPLE**  
Shaking the manager's hand, Teresa accepted her new job.

Notice that the participle has a direct object (hand), which is diagrammed in the same way that the direct object of a main verb is.

**Gerunds and Gerund Phrases**

**EXAMPLES**  
I enjoy swimming. [gerund used as direct object]

Being slightly ill is no excuse for missing two days of piano practice. [Gerund phrases used as subject and as object of preposition. The first gerund has a subject complement (ill); the second gerund has a direct object (days).]

Reference Note  
For information on participles and participial phrases, see pages 101 and 102.

Reference Note  
For information on gerunds and gerund phrases, see pages 105 and 106.
Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

**EXAMPLES**  
To write is her ambition. [infinitive used as subject]

He was the first one to solve that tricky problem. [infinitive phrase used as adjective]

Marge was hoping to go with us. [infinitive phrase used as direct object]

She called to invite us over. [infinitive phrase used as adverb]
Diagram the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**
1. I heard them **laughing**.

1. Taking that shortcut will cut several minutes off the trip.
2. I want to watch television tonight.
3. That is my cat licking its paws.
4. Checking the time, Wynetta rushed to the gym.
5. Did he go to the store to buy oranges?

**Appositives and Appositive Phrases**

To diagram an appositive or an appositive phrase, write the appositive in parentheses after the word it identifies.

**EXAMPLES**

Our cousin **lola** is a chemical engineer.

Jerry Seinfeld, **the popular comedian**, is also the author of a bestselling book.
Subordinate Clauses

Adjective Clauses
Diagram an adjective clause by connecting it with a broken line to the word it modifies. Draw the broken line between the relative pronoun and the word to which it relates.

**EXAMPLE**  The grade *that I got yesterday* pleased my parents.

![Diagram of adjective clause example]

**NOTE** A relative pronoun relates an adjective clause to the word the clause modifies. The relative pronouns are *that, which, who, whom, and whose.*

Adverb Clauses
Diagram an adverb clause by using a broken line to connect the adverb clause to the word it modifies. Place the subordinating conjunction that introduces the adverb clause on the broken line.

**EXAMPLE**  *When I got home from school,* I ate an apple.

![Diagram of adverb clause example]

**NOTE** An adverb clause is introduced by a subordinating conjunction. Some common subordinating conjunctions include *because, before, since, though,* and *whether.*
**Noun Clauses**

Diagram a noun clause by connecting it to the independent clause with a solid line.

**EXAMPLE**

Olivia knew *what she wanted*. [The noun clause is the direct object of the independent clause. The word *what* is the direct object in the noun clause.]

```
she || wanted || what

Olivia || knew   
```

When the introductory word of the noun clause does not have a specific function in the noun clause, the sentence is diagrammed in this way:

**EXAMPLE**

The problem is *that they lost the map*. [The noun clause is the predicate nominative of the independent clause. The word *that* has no function in the noun clause.]

```
that

they || lost || map

problem || is   
```

**Exercise 9**

**Diagramming Sentences That Contain Subordinate Clauses**

Diagram the sentences on the following page.

**EXAMPLE**

1. The box that contained the treasure was wooden.

```
box || was || wooden

The

that || contained || treasure

the
```
1. The test that we took on Friday was hard.
2. If I had not studied on Thursday night, I could not have answered half of the questions.
3. Our teacher announced what would be on the test.
4. Several friends of mine were not paying attention when the teacher gave the assignment.
5. Some of them did not know what they should study and are worried now about their grades.

**Sentences Classified According to Structure**

**Simple Sentences**

**EXAMPLE**  Tracy is building a birdhouse in industrial arts class. [one independent clause]

**Compound Sentences**

The second independent clause in a compound sentence is diagrammed below the first and is joined to it by a coordinating conjunction.

**EXAMPLE**  Darnell threw a good pass, but Clay did not catch it. [two independent clauses]
Exercise 10  Diagramming Compound Sentences

Diagram the following compound sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. A strange dog chased us, but the owner came to our rescue.

```
  dog  chased  us
    
  A strange     but
    
  owner  came  to  rescue
    
  the  to  our
```

1. I want a motorboat, but Jan prefers a sailboat.
2. The bus stopped at the restaurant, and all of the passengers went inside.
3. Our club is very small, but it is growing.
4. Shall we meet you at the station, or will you take a taxi?
5. In Arizona the temperature is often high, but the humidity always remains low.

Complex Sentences

**EXAMPLE**

Before they left the museum, Lester and Jessica visited the exhibit of masks from Nigeria and the Ivory Coast.

```
  Lester  visited  exhibit
       
  Jessica  the  of  masks
          
  they  left  museum  from
               
  Before  from  Nigeria

  they  left  museum
```

Reference Note

For information about coordinating conjunctions, see page 69.

Reference Note

For information on complex sentences, see page 145.
Diagramming Complex Sentences

Diagram the following complex sentences.

**EXAMPLE** 1. As night fell, the storm grew worse.

1. One book that has won a Pulitzer Prize is *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.*
2. Go whenever you like.
3. The satellite will be launched if the weather remains good.
4. The knight in black armor fought whoever would challenge him.
5. Alexander the Great, who conquered most of the known world, died at the age of thirty-three.

**Compound-Complex Sentences**

**EXAMPLE** Hamako, whose father is a musician, studies piano, but her cousin Akio prefers to play tennis. [two independent clauses and one subordinate clause]

Reference Note

For information on compound-complex sentences, see page 147.
Diagramming Sentences

Diagram the following sentences.

EXAMPLE 1. The room that Carrie painted had been white, but she changed the color.

```
(room) had been (white)
    /\       \\
   /          \
  /            \\
(Carrie) painted (that)
      \      /\  \
       \    /   \
        \  /    \\
          \_/      \\

she changed color
    /\       \\
   /          \\
  /            \\
  the
```

1. Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo were two important Mexican artists of the twentieth century.
2. Mom wanted to fly to Utah, but Dad and I wanted to drive there.
3. Our new neighbors, the Chens, come from Taiwan, which is an island off the coast of China.
4. For my report, I wrote about Katherine Anne Porter and Eudora Welty.
5. When I returned to the store, the purple shirt had been sold, so I bought the blue one.