

Lesson 1: Subjects and Verbs

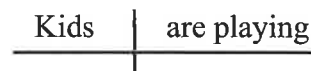
The easiest sentence diagrams have only **two lines, a horizontal line and a vertical line**, like this:



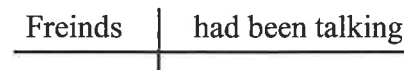
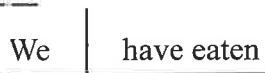
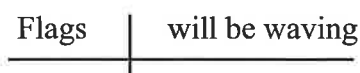
The subject goes on the left of the vertical line, the verb on the right. To diagram a sentence like *Kids play*, we place the subject *kids* on the left and the verb *play* on the right, like this:



Most verbs have quite a few forms. Some of the forms of the verb *play* are *are playing*, *do play*, *played*, *were playing*, *did play*, *will play*, *will be playing*, *have played*, *have been playing*, *had played*, and *had been playing*. A diagram of the sentence *Kids are playing* also has **only two lines**:

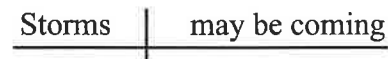


In fact, if you use any of these forms of the verb *play* with a noun or pronoun subject, you need **only two lines** to diagram the sentence. This is true for all sentences that consist of only a subject and a verb.



The verb forms *are playing*, *do play*, *were playing*, *did play*, *will play*, *will be playing*, *have played*, *have been playing*, *had played*, and *had been playing* include the **helping verbs** *are*, *do*, *were*, *will*, *will be*, *have*, *have been*, *had*, and *had been*. These helping verbs are sometimes called **auxiliary verbs**.

There is a special group of helping verbs called **modal auxiliary verbs**. These verbs are *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *should*, and *would*. Verb forms like *can play*, *may be playing*, and *must have played* occupy only one position in a sentence diagram. For example, *Storms may be coming* is diagrammed like this:



Now it's your turn to diagram some sentences.

1. Ducks waddle.

7. Birds were singing.

2. Rain is falling.

8. I will wait.

3. Someone called.

9. Katie had been running.

4. We will be listening.

10. Alan should be sleeping.

5. Isabel has been working.

11. You can go.

6. Brian must have walked.

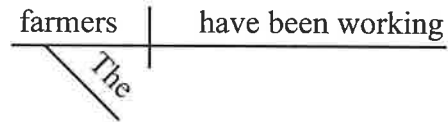
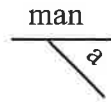
12. She may be worrying.

Lesson 2: Definite and Indefinite Articles

The is called a definite article. **A** and **an** are called indefinite articles. Articles come before nouns, which they are said to modify. *Modify* means to change in some way. *The man* is different from *man*, and *a man* is different from *man*; moreover, *the man* and *a man* are different from each other.

To diagram an article, place it on a diagonal line under the noun it modifies, like this:

A diagram of the sentence *The farmers have been working* looks like this:



Now it's your turn to diagram definite and indefinite articles.

1. The antelope is running.

7. The cats had been sleeping.

2. The parents must stay.

8. The students should have studied.

3. A breeze is stirring.

9. A coyote must have been howling.

4. The children were crawling.

10. A storm could be approaching.

5. A letter arrived.

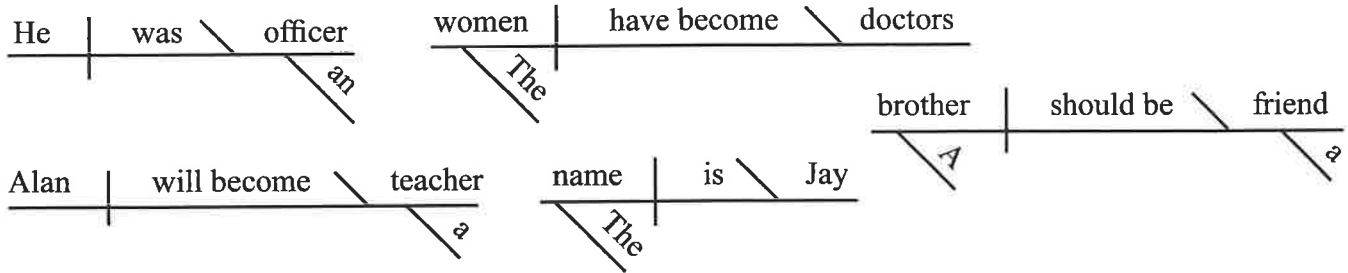
11. The wind had been blowing

6. An octopus was approaching.

12. The choir will be singing.

Lesson 3: Predicate Nominatives

A noun or pronoun that comes after a form of the verb *be* or *become* and repeats, identifies, or describes the subject is called a **predicate nominative**. In the following sentences, the predicate nominatives are underlined: *He was an officer.* *The women have become doctors.* *Anna will become a teacher.* *The name is Jay.* *A brother should be a friend.* In a sentence diagram, a predicate nominative appears after a backslash. Here are diagrams of the previous sentences:



Now it's your turn to diagram predicate nominatives.

1. We are neighbors.
2. The girls are becoming friends.
3. Rembrandt was an artist.
4. I could be a lifeguard.
5. The book has become a movie.
6. The friends had been enemies.
7. The teacher may be a coach.
8. We can be friends.
9. You could become a doctor.
10. The teacher had been an engineer.
11. Tiffany was a musician.

Review I: Lessons 1 - 3

1. You should eat.

7. The baby was sleeping.

2. A girl has won.

8. Mr. Kirby is a scientist.

3. The fish were guppies.

9. Children become adults.

4. The moth is flying.

10. Jacob is frowning.

5. The sun is a star.

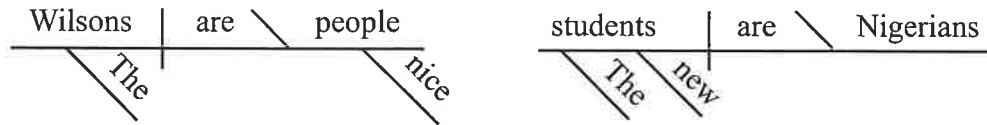
11. The raccoons will run.

6. Anna has been thinking.

12. Okinawa is an island.

Lesson 4: Attributive Adjectives

An adjective is a word that modifies (changes) a noun or pronoun by describing or limiting it. We have already seen (and learned to diagram) a special group of adjectives called articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*). Adjectives are words like *beautiful*, *nice*, *strange*, *wonderful*, *pleasant*, *important*, and *attentive*. **Attributive adjectives are adjectives that come right before nouns. They are diagrammed just like articles**, that is, on diagonal lines below the nouns they modify. Here are diagrams of the sentences *The Wilsons are nice people* and *The new students are Nigerians*.



When you diagram two or more modifiers of the same noun, **start on the left and put the modifiers in the order in which they appear in the sentence.**

Now it's your turn to diagram attributive adjectives.

1. Kelly was a strong swimmer.

6. The same orchestra will be performing.

2. The Yankees should be the best team.

7. Kristen was the best jumper.

3. The big game has begun.

8. A tiny seed can become a huge tree.

4. *Smithsonian* is an interesting magazine.

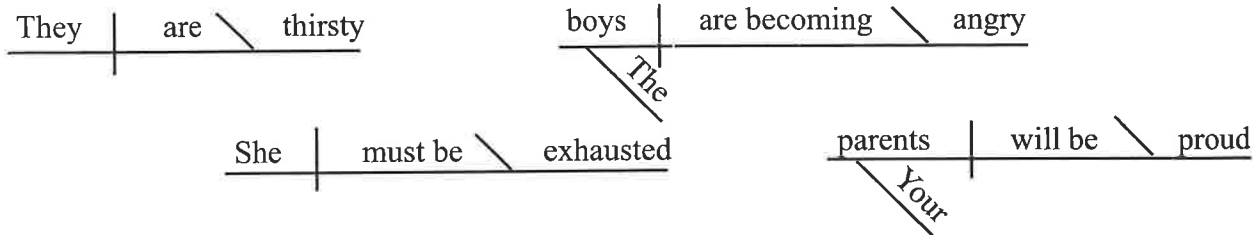
9. The famous museum had been a palace.

5. Pikes Peak is a famous mountain.

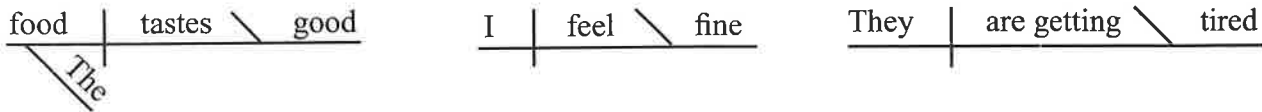
10. The unhappy child became a successful adult.

Lesson 5: Predicate Adjectives

You already know how to diagram an adjective that comes before the noun it modifies; such an adjective is called an attributive adjective. **An adjective that follows a linking verb like *be* or *become* and modifies the subject of the sentence is called a predicate adjective.** The predicate adjectives in the following sentences are underlined: *They are thirsty.* *The boys are becoming angry.* *She must be exhausted.* *Your parents will be proud.* Like a predicate nominative, a predicate adjective is preceded in a sentence diagram by a backslash.



Besides *be* and *become*, verbs like *feel*, *taste*, *smell*, *look*, *sound* and *get* (when it means *become*) can also be followed by predicate adjectives. Here are examples: *The food tastes good.* *I feel fine.* *They are getting tired.*

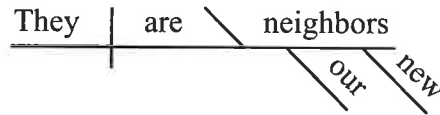


Now it's your turn to diagram predicate adjectives.

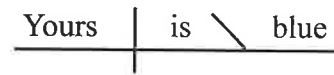
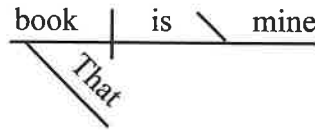
1. The flowers smell wonderful.
2. The wicked witch was ugly.
3. You should have been polite.
4. The cowardly lion became brave.
5. The children have been quiet.
6. They are becoming impatient.
7. The garden looks great.
8. Two teachers got sick.
9. We will be hungry.

Lesson 6: Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronouns *my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *our*, and *their* also modify nouns and are sometimes called pronominal adjectives. They are diagrammed exactly like other adjectives. The sentence *They are our new neighbors* is diagrammed like this:



There is another set of possessive pronouns: *mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, and theirs*. These possessives are always used separately from (never next to) the nouns they modify. They often appear in the predicate, as in the sentence *That book is mine*; however, they can also be subjects as in the sentence *Yours is blue*. Here are the diagrams of these sentences:



Now it's your turn to diagram possessive pronouns.

1. Their new car is a Chrysler.
2. Ours is a Nissan.
3. Your cousin has become famous.
4. His brother has been his best friend.
5. The red crayons are yours.
6. My grandfather was kind.
7. Our first president had been a successful general.
8. The gray jacket is mine.
9. Her other suitcase is blue.
10. The larger trophy will be ours.

Review II: Lessons 4 - 6

1. You must have been a beautiful baby.

7. Theirs is the big yellow house.

2. The green glass is mine.

8. Mary Cassat was an American painter.

3. Yours looks empty.

9. Their favorite game is Trivial Pursuit.

4. A Russian baby will become his new sister.

10. Your home may become your castle.

5. Washington was a strong, intelligent man.

11. This game is getting boring.

6. The evil Grinch became kind.

12. The last paper must be mine.

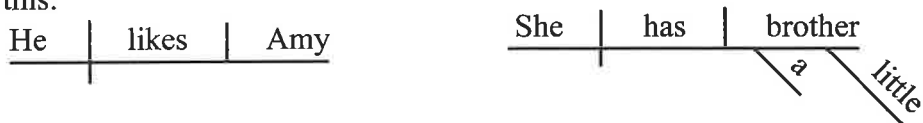
Lesson 7: Direct Objects

A noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb directly is called a direct object. Asking *whom?* or *what?* (not *to whom?*) immediately after a non-linking verb will help you find the direct object if there is one. Take the sentence *The Johnsons have a parrot*. Ask: The Johnsons have *what?* The answer, of course, is *a parrot*. *Parrot* is the direct object.

Let's try another one: *Amy likes her new neighbors*. Ask: Amy likes *whom?* The answer is *her new neighbors*. *Neighbors* is the direct object.

Not all non-linking verbs have direct objects. For example, the sentence *He is running to the store* contains the non-linking verb *is running*; however, you get no answer when you ask *He is running whom?* or *He is running what?* Therefore, the sentence has no direct object.

In a sentence diagram, a direct object is preceded by a vertical line that stands on the horizontal line. The sentences *He likes Amy* and *She has a little brother*, in which *Amy* and *brother* are direct objects, are diagrammed like this:

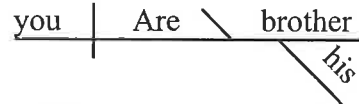


Now it's your turn to diagram direct objects. Be careful! Several sentences in this lesson have predicate nominatives, not direct objects.

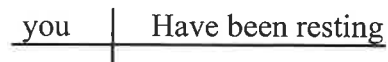
1. Our new principal drinks hot chocolate.
2. My friends have visited many great places.
3. She will be the new counselor.
4. The old church should have a taller steeple.
5. His favorite movie is *Nemo*.
6. The children spotted an unusual bird.
7. Her brother had a sore throat.
8. Their daughters had become prominent chemists.
9. The inexperienced pilot made a smooth landing.

Lesson 8: Questions

Questions often begin with a verb followed by the subject. Here is an example: *Are you his brother?* When diagramming such a sentence, put the subject first even though it is not the first word in the sentence, and capitalize the verb since it is the first word in the sentence, like this:



Some questions begin with a helping verb followed by the subject. When diagramming *Do you like artichokes?* and *Have you been resting?*, **do not separate the helping verb from the rest of the verb.**



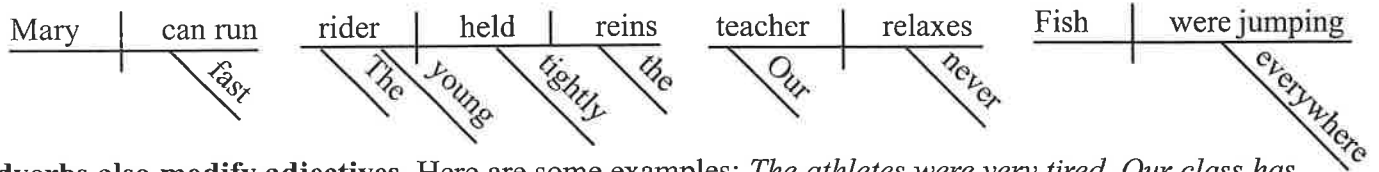
Punctuation is not included in diagrams.

Now it's your turn to diagram questions.

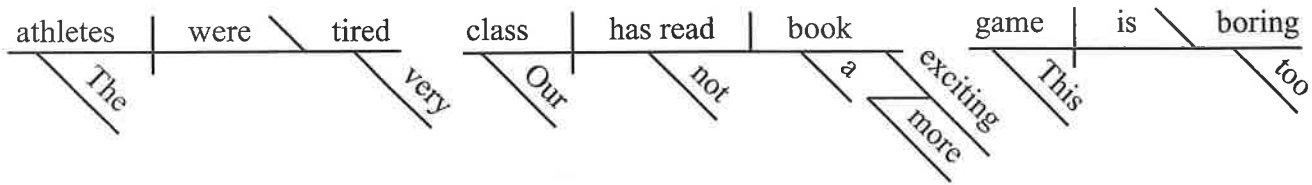
1. Do you have a dollar?
2. May I help you?
3. Are you a doctor?
4. Would your friend like some cake?
5. Was the baby sleeping?
6. Is that woman your mother?
7. Can we play?
8. Did anyone find a yellow folder?
9. Are you getting sleepy?
10. Does your father play chess?

Lesson 9: Adverbs

Words that modify verbs are called adverbs. The adverbs in the following sentences are underlined: *Mary can run fast. The young rider held the reins tightly. Our teacher never relaxes. Fish were jumping everywhere.* *Fast* tells how Mary can run, *tightly* tells how the young rider held the reins, *never* tells when the teacher relaxes, and *everywhere* tells where the fish were jumping. These sentences are diagrammed as follows:



Adverbs also modify adjectives. Here are some examples: *The athletes were very tired. Our class has not read a more exciting book. This game is too boring.* *Very* tells how tired the athletes were, *more* tells how exciting the book is, and *too* tells how boring the game is. Here are diagrams of these sentences:



Adverbs modify other adverbs, too, as in the following sentences: *The visitor spoke too softly. The cars are moving very slowly.*



Now it's your turn to diagram adverbs.

1. A rather tall man was running very fast.
2. Did you not find an extremely old coin?
3. The refugee could finally see his terribly sick brother.
4. Does the coffee taste too strong?
5. The very steep hill was quite slippery.
6. He does not speak carefully.
7. The sensitive child talks too softly.
8. Our principal is extremely kind.
9. She should write more often.
10. Jay always addresses his parents very politely.

Review III: Lessons 7 - 9

1. Do all caterpillars become butterflies?

7. Did you not see the old lighthouse?

2. Her mother held her hand tightly.

8. One horse was licking my face.

3. Your brother sounds very angry.

9. The tiny chimpanzee was playfully chasing its much larger brother.

4. They should finish the work quickly.

10. The hikers crossed the old bridge slowly.

5. My parents studied the map quite carefully.

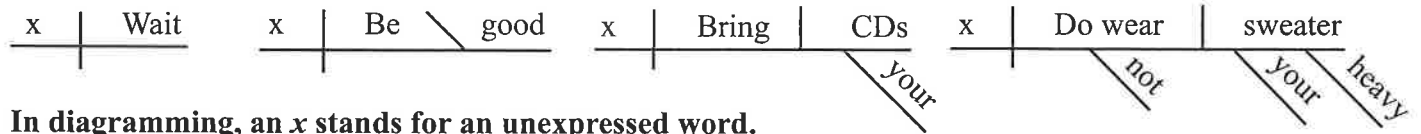
11. Are some frogs poisonous?

6. The very large flower smelled very bad.

12. Holly played the piano amazingly well.

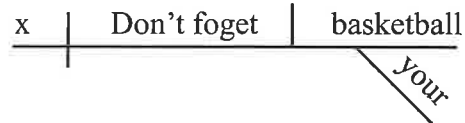
Lesson 10: Commands

A sentence that expresses a command or suggestion is called an imperative sentence. The subject of an imperative sentence is an unexpressed (understood, implied) *you*. Here are four imperative sentences and their diagrams: *Wait! Be good. Bring your CDs. Do not wear your heavy sweater.*



In diagramming, an *x* stands for an unexpressed word.

Contractions of verbs and the negative adverb *not* are not separated in diagrams. Here is an example:
Don't forget your basketball.



Now it's your turn to diagram imperative sentences.

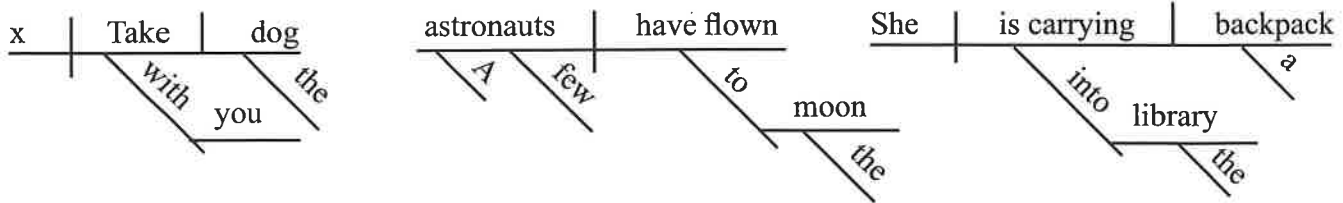
1. Drive carefully.
2. Read the directions.
3. Put the table here.
4. Don't shoot!
5. Sing the last line louder.
6. Don't drop the ball.
7. Be a hard worker.
8. Follow that car!
9. Don't follow too closely.
10. Get ready.

Lesson 11: Prepositional Phrases

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a **preposition** followed by a **noun or pronoun** that serves as its **object**. Most prepositions are short words. The expression “anywhere a mouse can go” will help you think of many prepositions. A mouse can go *on, in, into, to, out, over, under, around, down, up, between, etc.* Some prepositions, however, have nothing to do with direction, e.g., *at, with, without, for, after, since, and until.* These are not complete lists.

Remember that a preposition must have an object. In the sentence *They came down the stairs*, *down* is a preposition (its object is *stairs*), whereas in the sentence *They came down*, *down* is an adverb (it cannot be a preposition because it has no object).

Many prepositional phrases modify verbs. The prepositional phrases in the following sentences are underlined. *Take the dog with you. A few astronauts have flown to the moon. She is carrying a backpack into the library.*

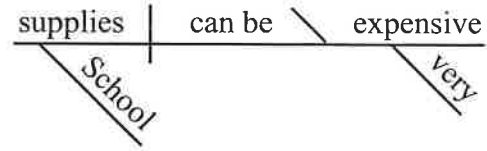
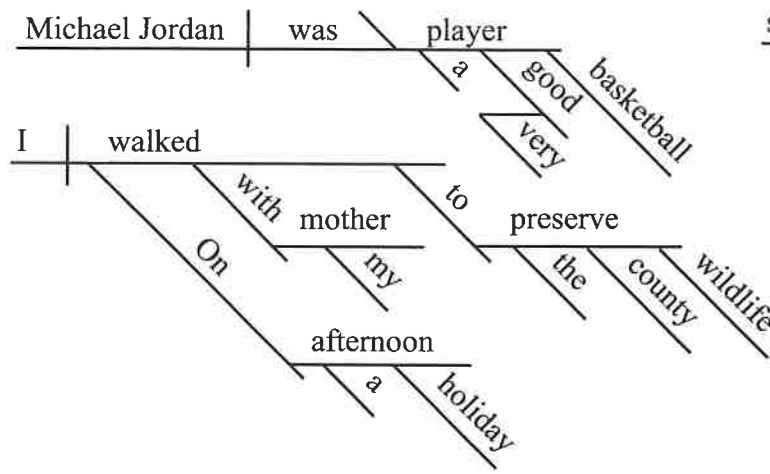


Now it's your turn to diagram prepositional phrases that modify verbs.

1. My dad put the pumpkins on the porch.
2. Can you hit a nail with a hammer?
3. The couple carried their suitcases into the airport.
4. Give the book to the teacher immediately.
5. Is Nick going to school tomorrow?
6. Stand in the corner!
7. Did you put the tickets in your purse?
8. In my dream I walked into a very large room.

Lesson 12: Nouns Used as Adjectives

Sometimes one noun can be placed before another noun, where it functions as an **attributive adjective**. These nouns are diagrammed exactly like other attributive adjectives. Here are some examples: *Michael Jordan was a very good basketball player.* *School supplies can be very expensive.* *On a holiday afternoon I walked with my mother to the county wildlife preserve.*



The third sentence has three prepositional phrases modifying the verb. These phrases are arranged from the left in the order in which they appear in the sentence. To make the best use of space on a page, you can extend the lines of a diagram well beyond the length of the word placed on it.

Now it's your turn to diagram nouns used as adjectives.

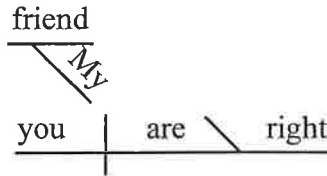
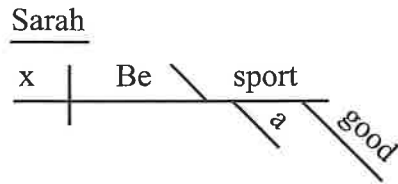
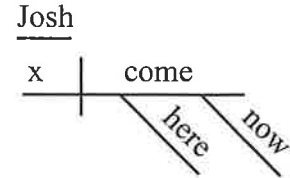
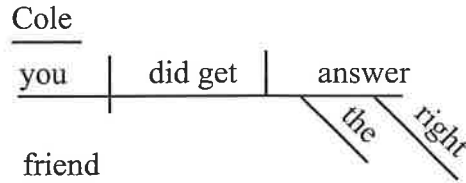
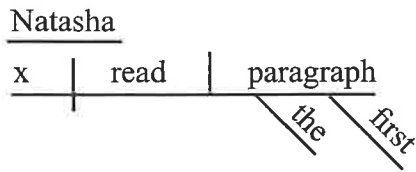
1. Are your parents going to the company picnic on Sunday?
2. Many children rushed to bookstores for the latest Harry Potter novel.
3. Restaurant food is becoming more nutritious.
4. Do Americans watch too many television commercials?
5. My book review is lying on the kitchen table.
6. The county champion shared her prize cake with her friends.
7. Our team won the holiday volleyball tournament.
8. The basketball fans are recovering after a miserable weekend trip.

Review IV: Lessons 10 - 12

1. The blind student must read with her fingers.
2. A good waiter serves food with a smile.
3. The German soccer fans flocked to the stadium for the big game.
4. You can't plug a lamp into a computer terminal.
5. Hold the other end with both hands.
6. The Eskimo mother carried her child on her back.
7. Holly has often skated in Central Park.
8. Take a sandwich to school for lunch.
9. Are your parents taking you to Epcot Center during the spring break?

Lesson 13: Direct Address

A noun of direct address is a name of a person or thing spoken to. This name can be an actual name (Jessica, Mr. Smith, Fido), a nickname (Moose, Rocket), an expression of relationship (daughter, Mom, friend), or another identifier (men, workers, team). A noun of direct address is set off by commas. **In a sentence diagram, a noun of direct address is placed on a horizontal line above the subject of the sentence.** Here are several sentences containing nouns of direct address: *Natasha, read the first paragraph. Cole, did you get the right answer? Josh, come here now! Be a good sport, Sarah. My friend, you are right.*

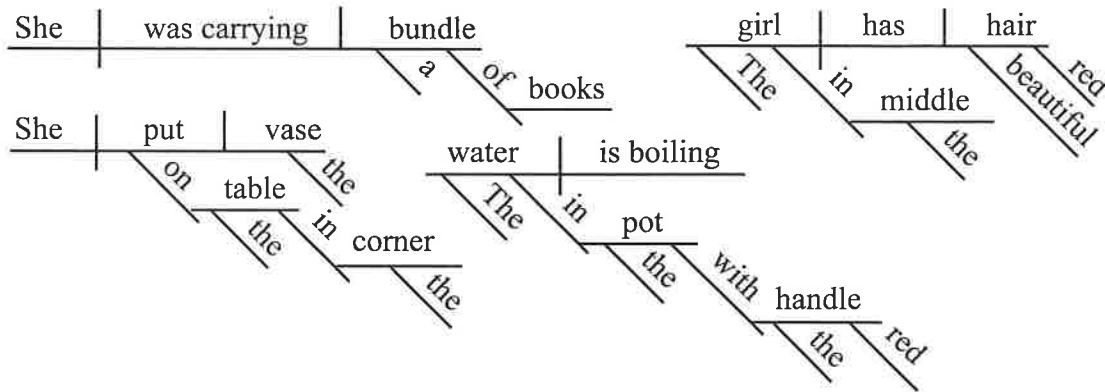


Now it's your turn to diagram nouns of direct address.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Grandma, can you help me with my homework?</p> <p>2. Be polite, children. (Can you also diagram <i>Be polite children?</i>)</p> <p>3. Tom, did you call Mother after school?</p> <p>4. Boys, you are making too much noise.</p> | <p>5. Don't go into that old building, girls.</p> <p>6. Jerry, show the pictures to your grandparents.</p> <p>7. Girls, don't sit on the ground.</p> <p>8. Are you writing on the desk, Susan?</p> |
|---|--|

Lesson 14: Prepositional Phrases (2)

Prepositional phrases that modify nouns are called adjectival prepositional phrases because they function as adjectives. Let's look at several adjectival prepositional phrases; these phrases are underlined in the following sentences: *She was carrying a bundle of books.* *The girl in the middle has beautiful red hair.* *She put the silver vase on the table in the corner.* *The water in the pot with the red handle is boiling.*



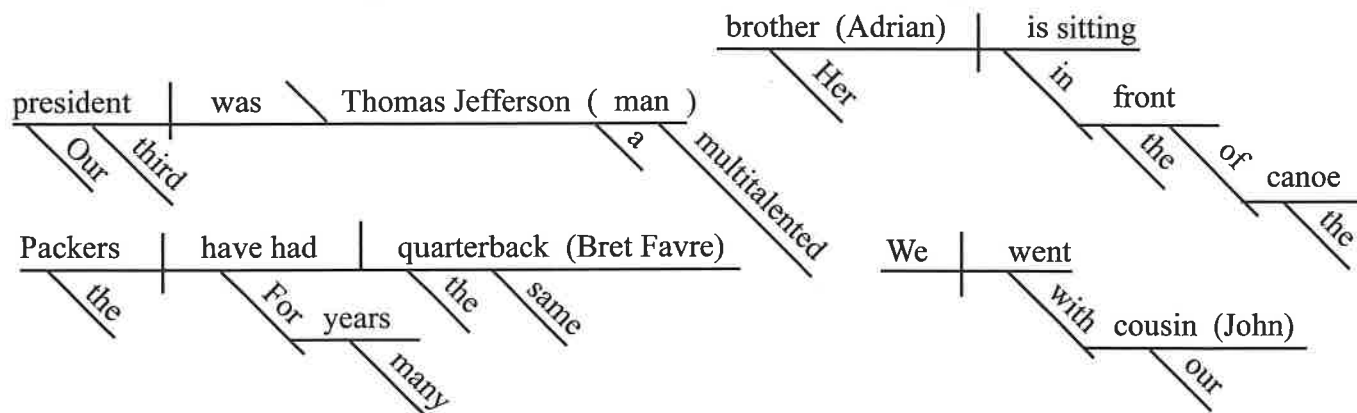
In a sentence diagram, an adjectival prepositional phrase is placed under the noun it modifies.

Now it's your turn to diagram adjectival prepositional phrases. Be careful! Some of the prepositional phrases in these sentences modify verbs, not nouns.

- Most people really liked the picture on the cover.
- With good weather the climbers will reach the top of the mountain in three days.
- Brendan, do you know the weight of a gallon of water?
- That large box under the bridge is his home.
- This picture on the wall survived the fire of the century.
- Most of the students did well on the first part of the test.
- Several passengers on the small boat became seasick.
- Today I bought ten neon tetras for the aquarium in the family room.

Lesson 15: Appositives

A noun or pronoun that comes right after another noun or pronoun and repeats or identifies it is called an **appositive**. In the following sentences, the appositives are underlined: *Our third President was Thomas Jefferson, a multitalented man. Her brother Adrian is sitting in the front of the canoe. For many years the Packers have had the same quarterback, Bret Favre. We went with our cousin John.* In diagrams, appositives are placed in parentheses right after the noun with which they are in apposition.



Now it's your turn to diagram appositives.

1. Mr. Jones, an animal trainer, will speak to our class tomorrow.
2. Missy Baker, a fourth grader, can throw a baseball from center field to home plate.
3. My cousin Jonathan should arrive at my house on Saturday.
4. Have you read the book *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*?
5. They gave the old football to Chuckie, a neighbor.
6. Zachary Taylor, the twelfth president of the United States, died after sixteen months in office.
7. Mr. Vincent, the recreation director, hired my sister Kelsey for the summer.
8. You may give the application to Ms. Dorsey, our receptionist.

Review V: Lessons 13 - 15

1. Come to the party, guys!

6. Matt, be honest.

2. Mom, a big black cat is sleeping on the hood of our car.

7. Christopher, open the door for your friend Justin.

3. Isn't the teacher with the big mustache your German teacher?

8. Did your class read the short story "The Gift of the Magi"?

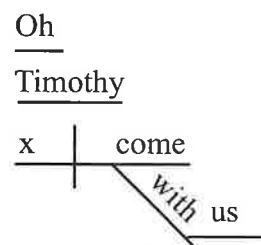
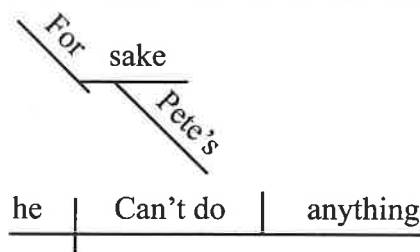
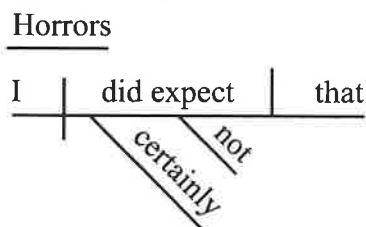
4. Rodrique, call your sister Liz for dinner.

9. From the top of the mountain they could see several villages.

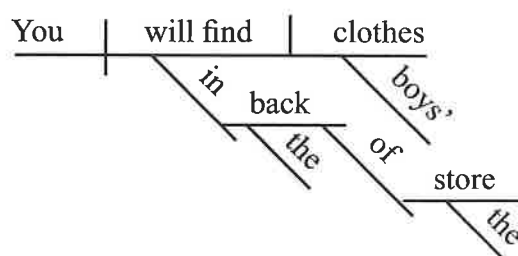
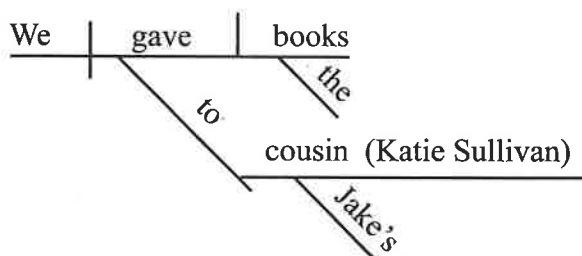
5. She saw Shannon Ray, a friend of her parents, at the mall yesterday.

Lesson 16: Interjections and Possessive Nouns

An interjection is a word or a phrase inserted in a sentence to show feeling or emotion, for example, *Gosh! Yippee! Great Caesar's ghost!* Interjections are diagrammed like nouns of direct address, that is, above and separate from the subject of the sentence. Here are sentences that are introduced by interjections: *Horrors! I certainly did not expect that. For Pete's sake! Can't he do anything? Oh, Timothy, come with us.* These sentences are diagrammed like this:



Possessive nouns are nouns ending in 's or s'. All possessive nouns function as adjectives and are diagrammed like adjectives. Here are two sentences that contain possessive nouns: *We gave the books to Jake's cousin, Katie Sullivan. You will find boys' clothes in the back of the store.* These sentences are diagrammed as follows:

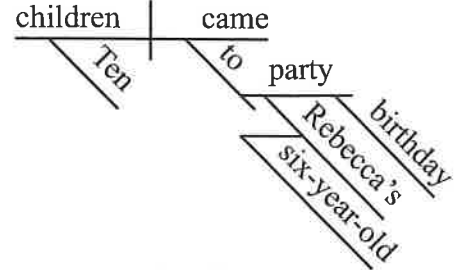
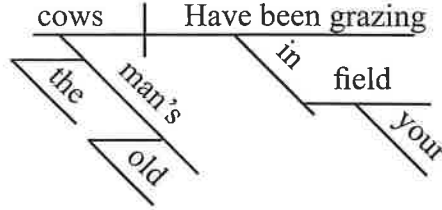
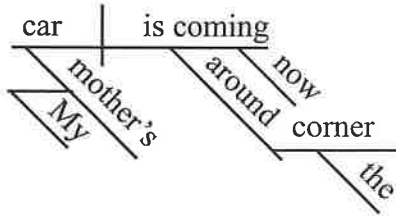


Now it's your turn to diagram interjections and possessive nouns.

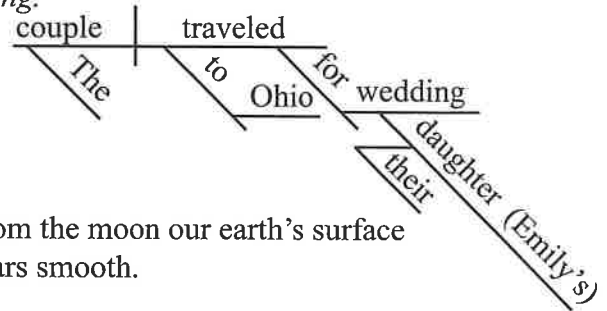
- Hurrah! Mrs. Martin's class has no test tomorrow.
- Hey, wait for Jody's brother!
- For heaven's sake! Don't they know our address yet?
- Oh no! You lost Dad's car keys.
- Good grief, Donna, did you see Mrs. Decker's purple hair?
- Well, Miss Burnett, did Wal-Mart's employee of the month really put women's jeans in the men's section?
- Alas, someone's child is dying at this moment.

Lesson 17: Possessive Nouns (2)

Possessive nouns can be modified by articles, adjectives, possessive pronouns, and other words. In diagramming, hook such a modifier onto the possessive noun, just as you do with adverbs that modify attributive adjectives and other adverbs. Check out these sentences and diagrams: *My mother's car is coming around the corner now.* *Have the old man's cows been grazing in your field?* *Ten children came to six-year-old Rebecca's birthday party.*



When a possessive noun has an appositive, only the appositive gets an apostrophe. Here is an example: *The couple traveled to Ohio for their daughter Emily's wedding.*



Now it's your turn to diagram modified possessive nouns.

1. Becky's older sister goes to a very famous university.

5. From the moon our earth's surface appears smooth.

2. A large get-well card was delivered by the sick boy's friends.

6. Before each door lay a Christmas tree's brown skeleton.

3. I like the salt-water aquarium in our doctor's office.

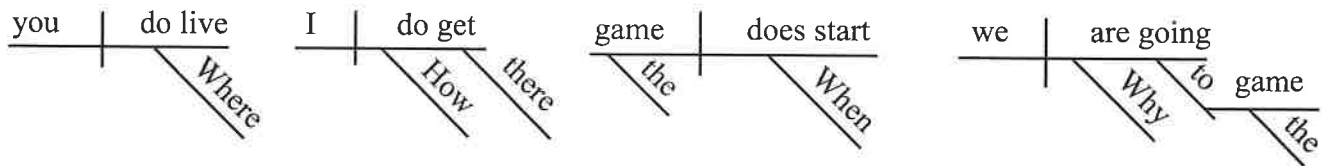
7. We are going to my sister Gloria's house for Thanksgiving dinner.

4. Children go to their neighbors' houses on Halloween.

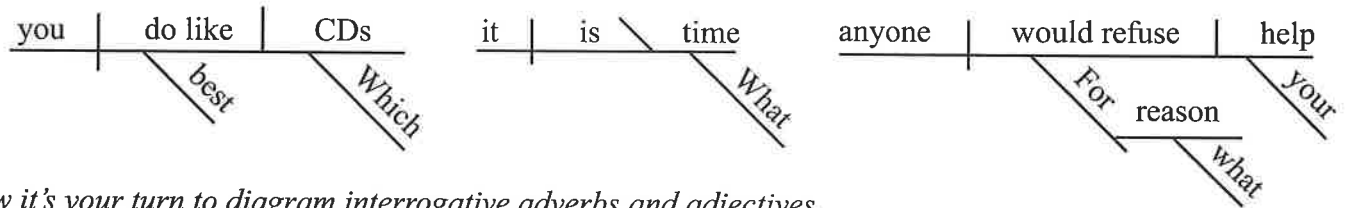
8. The Pattersons could hardly stand the loud music of their neighbors' children.

Lesson 18: Interrogative Adverbs and Adjectives

The interrogative adverbs *how*, *where*, *when*, and *why* are used to introduce questions. In a sentence diagram, an interrogative adverb is placed on a diagonal line attached to the horizontal line under the verb. Here are some examples and diagrams: *Where do you live?* *How do I get there?* *When does the game start?* *Why are we going to the game?*



The interrogative adjectives *what* and *which* are used in asking questions like *Which CDs do you like best?* *What time is it?* *For what reason would anyone refuse your help?*



Now it's your turn to diagram interrogative adverbs and adjectives.

1. At what temperature does water boil?
2. Why does it rain so much in Seattle?
3. Mom, which shirt did I wear to school yesterday?
4. Which candle would look best on our kitchen table?
5. How can a tiny hummingbird find its way from Alaska to Mexico?
6. When did Katherine's cousin move to Florida?
7. Why have scientists not found a cure for the common cold?
8. What kinds of marine animals did you see at Sea World?

Review VI: Lessons 16 - 18

1. Hey, Robert, that is Shurita's bicycle!

6. Woops! How did that happen so quickly?

2. Yikes! A snake is crawling into Mrs. Rawling's mailbox.

7. In my dream, Halloween skeletons were jumping on your parents' new car.

3. The color of my friend Eric's house is red.

8. Which movie did you kids like best?

4. What kind of spider has a red hourglass-shaped mark on its belly?

9. Keisha's little cousin Micah was digging for earthworms.

5. Where do frogs go in the wintertime?