

How to Teach Sentence Diagramming

Sentence diagramming can be a useful visual tool to teach students how to identify the different parts of sentences, understand how these parts function, and see how these parts relate to other parts of a sentence. Most students find that the visual image helps them better understand and remember grammatical terms, the parts of a sentence, and the basic rules of grammar. Sentence diagrams take the abstract components of English grammar and make them concrete. With practice, writers can use diagramming to diagnose their own grammatical errors and fix them.

Objectives: Students will learn the how a sentence diagram depicts the subject, predicate, direct object, and indirect object of a sentence. Students will learn the definitions of these parts of the sentence. Students will apply proper nouns, action verbs, common nouns, and object case pronouns to their diagrams.

Lesson #1

1. Draw a simple horizontal line and write a subject on top to the left. Make the subject a proper noun and define the word as “the do-er” of the sentence.

Mark _____

2. Draw a vertical line after the subject and extend it just under the line.

Mark | _____

3. Write a predicate on top of the horizontal line, just to the right of the vertical line. Make the predicate a present tense action verb that will easily lead to a direct object without an article (*a*, *an*, and *the*). Define the predicate as “the action” of the subject and “what the ‘do-er’ does.”

Mark | gives _____

4. Have students replicate the lines and then insert their own subjects (proper nouns only) and predicates (present tense action verbs only). Share examples and discuss, making sure to use the exact language of instruction.

_____ | _____