Diagramming Sentences

A Visual-Spacial Approach to Sentence Structure
Main Clauses

The simplest sentence diagram = two lines:
A horizontal line intersected perpendicularly by a vertical line
For example:

Ducks waddle.
For example:

Dogs drool.

subject

Verb
For example:

I sing.

Don’t forget the subject may be a noun or a pronoun.

Common pronouns include I, you, me, us, them, etc.

Always ask “who or what is the sentence about”
For example:

Someone called.

Subjects can also include the indefinite pronouns, such as someone, anyone, everyone, any, etc.
helping verbs connected to a main verb
go on the same line as the main verb

subject | helping verb + verb
For example:

Katie had been sleeping.
For example:

Alan should be sleeping.
For example:

She may be worrying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>She</th>
<th>may be worrying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Articles come before nouns in sentences.

To diagram an article, place it on a diagonal line under the noun it modifies.

Remember:
THE = definite article (one specific)
A and AN = indefinite articles (not specific)
The farmers have been working.

Remember:

THE = definite article (one specific)

A and AN = indefinite articles (not specific)
For example:

A coyote was howling.
You Practice

1. A breeze is stirring.
2. The students should have studied.
3. An antelope was playing.
Predicate Nominatives =
A noun or pronoun that comes after a form of be or become and repeats, identifies, or describes the subject.

He was an officer.
The women became doctors.
A brother should be a friend.
Anna will become a teacher.
Tebow is a corgi.
To diagram a predicate nominative, place it after a backslash following the verb.

Notice that the backslash does not come below the horizontal line.
Example:
We are neighbors.
Example:
The girls are becoming friends.
You will add articles next to the predicate nominative just as you did the subject.
Example:
The book has become a movie.

Caution: Be careful to place the diagonal lines for the articles under the noun or pronoun that precedes.
Caution: Be careful to place the diagonal lines for the articles under the noun or pronoun it precedes.

Do not do this:

```
book has become movie
   the   a
```

or this:

```
book has become movie
   the a
```
Example:
The teacher may be a coach.
You Practice

1. He is a lifeguard.
2. Rembrandt was an artist.
3. The friends had been enemies.
4. We can be friends.
5. Tiffany was a musician.
Homework

DS – Review 1-3

JPEG of handout is available on
www.clarkscorners.weebly.com
An **Adjective** modifies (changes) nouns and pronouns by describing or limiting them.

An attributive adjective comes **directly in front** of the noun it modifies.

It is diagrammed like an article.
Example:
The Clarks are nice people.
Example:
The new students are Nigerians.
Example:

A tiny seed became a huge tree.
You Practice

1. Kelly was a strong swimmer.
2. The Scottish museum had been a castle.
3. The unhappy child became a successful adult.
4. Pikes Peak is a famous mountain.
5. The same orchestra will be performing.
Predicate adjective =

An adjective that comes after a linking verb such as be or become and modifies the subject of the sentence.

He was hungry.
The cowardly lion became brave.
A person should be compassionate.
Jordan will become quiet.
To diagram a predicate adjective, place it after a backslash following the verb.

subject  |  verb \  predicate adjective

Yes, this is just like diagramming predicate nominatives.

WHY do you think that is?
Example:

They are thirsty.
Example:
Your parents will be proud.

parents

will be

proud

your
Example:
The food tastes good.

Notice this linking verb is not a form of be or become!
About **Linking Verbs**:

Rather than expressing action, some verbs connect (link) the subject to additional information about the subject, such as a predicate adjective.

I *feel* fine.

The flowers *smell* wonderful.

The garden *looks* great.

**Hint**: If you can replace the verb with *am, is, or are* and the sentence still makes sense, then you have a linking verb.
**LINKING VERBS:**
- become
- appear
- seem
- look
- smell
- sound
- taste
- feel
- grow
- remain

**HELPFUL LINKS:**

Handout with lists of linking verbs:  
[https://www.sinclair.edu/centers/tlc/pub/handouts_worksheets/grammar_punctuation_on_writing/verbs_linking.pdf](https://www.sinclair.edu/centers/tlc/pub/handouts_worksheets/grammar_punctuation_on_writing/verbs_linking.pdf)

Grammar Bytes:  
[http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/linkingverb.htm](http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/linkingverb.htm)

The Linking Verb Song on YouTube  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1IJWvHZcOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1IJWvHZcOU)
You Practice

1. The wicked witch was ugly.
2. The cowardly lion became brave.
3. Two teachers appear sick.
4. You should have been polite.
5. The football team seems confident.
POSSESIVE PRONOUNS modify nouns by indicating ownership. Examples include my, your, his, her, its, our and their.

It is diagrammed like an adjective and is placed on a diagonal line below the noun it modifies.
Example:

Their new car is a Nissan.
Example:

Our first president had been a successful general.
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS sometimes appear after the verb, much like predicate adjectives; therefore, they are diagrammed like predicate adjectives.
Example:

The jacket is mine.

Diagram:

- jacket
- is
- mine
- the
Example:

Ours is a Nissan.

Notice how this possessive pronoun functions as the subject of the sentence. Therefore, it should be diagrammed as the subject.

Standing alone, this sentence really doesn’t make sense. However, consider it in context:

My neighbors’ car is a Chevrolet. Ours is a Nissan.
You Practice

1. My grandfather was kind.
2. Her other suitcase is blue.
3. The red crayons are yours.
4. Mine are the green crayons.
5. The larger trophy will be ours.