

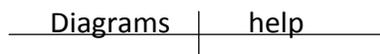
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PART 1: THE ELEMENTS OF THE SENTENCE

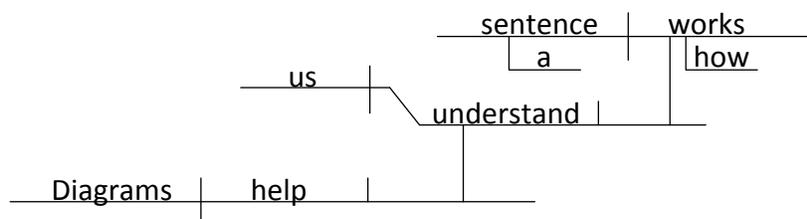
If you have done some pre-reading of this book, you may have noticed that every chapter begins with a part labeled **syntax**, and it may be that you have wondered what this word means since it is not one of those words we use in everyday conversation. It is in fact, part of the jargon of grammarians and linguists. *Syntax* comes from a Greek word meaning “to put together in an orderly arrangement,” and it refers to the ways in which words make up phrases and phrases make up sentences and with the word order in those phrases and in those sentences as a whole. For instance, in English we say *the red balloon* rather than *the balloon red*, which the French would say—except with French words: *le ballon rouge*. In English we also say *John likes to fish*, not *Likes John to fish*. So this rather strange word, *syntax*, really has a very simple meaning, referring to the ordering of words in a sentence in whatever language we are discussing. In this book, we are talking about English.

Studying the opening chapters may feel a bit like going through the tutorial for a computer application and being introduced to a succession of icons and functions. The experience can be bewildering. Most of us discover that we really learn an application only when we start using it for an actual project. Then, through repeated use, the icons and functions eventually register themselves in our minds. It will be that way with the information in these first three chapters. There will be lots of it, all of it important, but do not worry if it does not all register immediately. In Chapter 5 we will start applying it to an actual “project” -- analyzing and creating specific sentence patterns.

These opening chapters will also introduce you to sentence diagramming, the method we will use for teaching syntax throughout the book. The method was invented in the nineteenth century by two grammarians named Kellogg and Reed. Modern linguistics has since developed an excellent method called phrase structure trees to represent how our brains might create sentences. Once a sentence is created, however, we think Kellogg-Reed diagrams are more helpful in understanding its syntax. They use lines and spaces to demonstrate visually how the words of a sentence are related to other words. Starting from diagrams like this --



you will, by gradual steps, work up to more complicated diagrams like this:



Many students have told us how helpful diagramming has been in strengthening their grasp of sentence elements.

The other focus of this book is on **sentence rhetoric** or what the grammarian Martha Kolln has called **rhetorical grammar**. If syntax refers to the *orderly* arrangement of words, **rhetoric** refers to the *effective* arrangement of words. It is true that, for a reader to understand the basic message of a sentence, the first thing it must have is order -- syntax. But a sentence can do much more than transmit a basic message. It can direct a reader's attention to this or that aspect of the message; it can convey shades of meaning; it can affect how the reader sees or even feels about something. When we consider these things, we are considering rhetoric. All through this book, beginning with Chapter 1, we will show you how syntactic choices cause rhetorical effects. Indeed, achieving the rhetorical effect is the payoff for learning about the syntactic choices. That is why we have so enjoyed writing the **rhetoric** sections of this book, and we hope you will enjoy reading them.

Following each Rhetoric section are Exercises that give you the chance to test the rhetorical effects of your syntactic choices. Most of these exercises use the method called sentence combining. Sentence combining is based on the reality that mature-sounding, effective sentences combine several short kernel sentences into one longer sentence. In a typical sentence-combining exercise, you may be given a set of kernel sentences like this --

Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993.

Toni Morrison has published six novels.

-- and instructed to combine them into a single sentence, which might look like this:

Toni Morrison, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, has published six novels.

It might also look like this:

Toni Morrison, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, has published six novels.

Some textbooks use free combining, which allows one to combine kernel sentences into longer sentences in as many different ways as one can devise. In this book, we use guided combining, in which you must use some specified structure or sentence pattern. This is to give you practice in the grammar that you are learning. At the end of many chapters, you get further practice by creating sentences of your own that illustrate certain structures or patterns.

The final goal of all the directed exercises in this book is greater freedom in writing through expanded choice. After going through this book, you will not be stuck with the first way of expressing an idea that comes to mind. Instead, you will be able to try several structures and to settle on the one that most effectively says what you want to say. There is both power and joy in that. Enjoy yourself.