

Sentence Flow

Adapted from Fee, New Testament Exegesis

I. Introduction

- a. Aim-
 - i. The aim of a sentence flow is to diagrammatically represent the syntactic relationships (how the words work together to communicate meaning) of a given passage.
 - ii. To aid the student to graphically see the main point and relationships of sentences
 - iii. As you try to fit text into a category, really wrestle with text and what it is saying
 - iv. Therefore, the student gains much greater insight into the meaning, purpose, and function of a phrase or proposition than would have been possible without sentence flow
- b. Basic Structure
The basic skeleton of a sentence is:
Subject Verb Indirect Object Direct Object
- c. Using a formal equivalent translation is helpful.

II. Basic Approach

- a. Put the skeleton of the sentence on the main line
This is to see the main idea of every sentence at a glance
- b. Put the modifiers underneath the words they modify
This is to show the relationship of all the words to what is modified in the main skeleton
- c. Subordinate by indenting dependent clauses
This is to show which ideas are central thoughts and which are qualifying thoughts at a glance
- d. Highlight connecting conjunctions
This is to see the relationship between propositions at a glance

III. Method

- a. Divide the sentences and clauses
 - i. Find the main verbs
Underline each verb in the passage
 - ii. Divide into sentences/propositions
Draw a line between words, to divide which words are with each verb
 - iii. Divide any dependent clauses
 1. Decide whether each clause is an independent clause or a dependent clause
 2. An independent clause makes complete sense on its own
 3. A dependent clause does not make sense on its own because it is an incomplete thought
 4. A dependent clause often has a subordinating conjunction (see below)

b. Display the main sentences

i. List the main verbs

Write the verbs down the page with plenty of space between

ii. For each verb, List the subject and any objects

Write the subject before the verb and any objects after

Subject	Verb	(Indirect Object)	(Direct Object)
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iii. Display the modifiers in the proper position

Determine which part of the skeleton it modifies

Display them under what they modify (slightly indented)

Subject modifiers	Verb modifiers	(Indirect Object) modifiers	(Direct Object) modifiers
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c. Display dependent clauses by subordination

i. Participle clauses (“-ing” clauses)

ii. Infinitive clauses (“to –“ clauses)

iii. Adverbial clauses (Reason, Purpose, etc.)

iv. Relative clauses (“who...”, “which...” clauses)

Relative clauses can be recognized by the following relative conjunctions:

That, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whose, whomever, whomever

v. Subordinate clauses can be recognized by the following subordinating conjunctions:

after, although, as, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order, that, once, provided that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while, why

Subject	Verb	(Indirect Object)	(Direct Object)
	subordinating conjunction		
	subordinate clause (subj. verb. Object)		

d. Isolate and Highlight coordinating conjunctions by placing them to the left

Subject	Verb	Object
<u>Conj.</u>		
Subject	Verb	Object

e. Use color to highlight repeated words and continuing or contrasting themes

f. Use the structure of the diagram to show lists and parallel thoughts

Subject	Verb	Object
	prep. phrase	
	prep. phrase	
	prep. phrase	

IV. Example
1 Corinthians 2:1-8

And when I came
to you, brethren,
I did not come
with superiority of speech
or
of wisdom,
proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

For I determined to know nothing
among you
except
Jesus Christ,
and Him crucified.

I was
with you
in weakness
and in fear
and in much trembling,

and my message
and my preaching were not
in persuasive words of wisdom,
but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

your faith so that
would not rest
on the wisdom of men,
but on the power of God.

Yet we do speak wisdom
among those who are mature;
a wisdom,

however,
not of this age
nor of the rulers of this age,
who are passing away;

but we speak God's wisdom
in a mystery,
the hidden *wisdom*
which
God predestined
before the ages
to our glory;