

CHAPTER 1: N V

In this approach to writing, we will go back to the beginning: the Noun + Verb Sentence.

Jane walks. Mom works.

No modifiers, no compounds, no frills. Just Noun + Verb (N V). There are several reasons for this.

First, we need to start off together. Having taught in several states, I have learned not to assume that all students have the same foundation. Some are quite proficient at identifying the core sentence (noun and verb), while others are completely lost. So, I cover the basics.

Second, we strip sentences down to N V in order to remove distractions. These distractions keep students from focusing on the action, which is the meat of the sentence. In this grammar system, we redirect the students' focus from the "Who?" (noun/subject) of the sentence to the "action" (verb). I have found that, because of our action-packed society, students rarely have trouble identifying action. Once they find the verb, I ask them, "Who took the action?" This solves the problem of finding the noun/subject.

You probably noticed that I used the term "noun/subject" in the preceding paragraph. I did so because there are a great many types of nouns: direct object, indirect object, object of the preposition, subject, etc. And I wanted to make it clear to the student that this particular noun is the subject. We will abbreviate noun/subject as N/S.

We need to address one more issue: nouns and pronouns. Under most circumstances, I use the word noun in my discussion of sentences and sentence patterns, but I allow my students to write sentences using nouns or pronouns. It's your choice.

DIAGRAMMING

At this point, I usually introduce diagramming. This is something of a controversial topic in many schools. Teachers have been told that it is pointless, while parents remember diagramming as **the** tool that gave them a handle on English grammar. I diagram for the following reasons.

As an Air Force dependent, I traveled extensively throughout my school-age years. In twelve years of public education, I attended thirteen schools – three during fourth grade alone. Needless to say, there were a few gaps in my education.

When I arrived at Jackson State, Dr. Cistrunk took me through sentence combining, sentence patterns . . . and diagramming. Never having had a complete grammar course before, I was

less than impressed with this notion. On the other hand, I really didn't want to embarrass myself before the department chair. Under Dr. Cistrunk's tutelage, I learned to diagram and found it enormously helpful in understanding how sentences fit together. That is the reason we diagram, to see how sentences fit together. Once we understand how the various parts work together, we can fashion our own sentences with wondrous diversity.

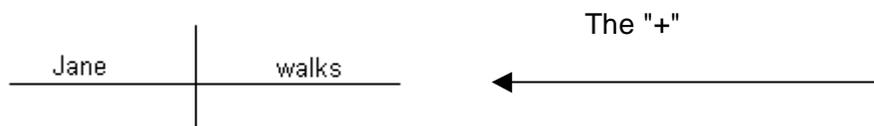
With these thoughts in mind, I have included diagrams in this workbook.

DIAGRAMMING THE N V SENTENCE

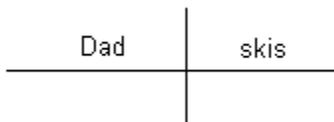
The easiest sentence to diagram is the simple N/S V sentence. The verb always goes on the top right, with the subject always located on the top left of the "+."

When the assignment calls for the student to write, parse, and diagram (WPD) a sentence, it should look like the examples below.

1. N/S V
Jane walks.



2. N/S V
Dad skis.



ASSIGNMENTS FOR CHAPTER 1

I would like to offer suggested assignments. If they work for you, use them. If not, adjust them to suit your purposes.

DAY	ASSIGNMENT
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Explain the N/S V Sentence.◆ Do Exercise 1.1 in class.◆ Have students write and parse (WP) 3 N/S V sentences for homework. [See example below on how to write and parse a sentence.]
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Check homework.◆ Teach your students how to diagram the N/S V sentence by doing Exercise 1.2 in class.◆ Have students write, parse, & diagram (WPD) 3 N/S V sentences for homework.
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Check homework.◆ Students are to write, parse, & diagram (WPD) 2 N/S V sentences in class.◆ Students are to write, parse, & diagram (WPD) 3 N/S V sentences for homework.
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Check homework.◆ Test: Write, parse, & diagram 3 N/S V sentences.

Write and parse (WP) a N/S V sentence.

N/S V
Ted farms.

All we have done is identify the parts of speech used in the sentence.

EXERCISE 1.1

Directions: Read the following sentences and answer the questions.

1. Betsy sews.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____

2. Richard plays.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____

3. Shemeika sings.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____

EXERCISE 1.2

Directions: Read the following sentences and answer the questions.

1. Bao runs.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____

2. Esteban studies.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____

3. Bearskin reads.

What is the action (verb)? _____

Who took the action (noun/subject)? _____