

Lesson 2 – Indentations in Cascade

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Indentations In Cascade

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROPE - LESSON TWO

The second in our '[Other Side of the Rope](#)' lesson series. For more on this series and how to get started with Cascade Reading – [see our introductory post](#). You can also [download the PDF](#) for this lesson.

SUMMARY:

In the Cascade Format, parts of the sentence that modify—or describe—other parts of the sentence are indented under the part they are describing. We saw examples of this in [Lesson 1](#) when we introduced prepositional phrases. This lesson will demonstrate another type of relationship where phrases are indented under the things they describe.

We focus now on *direct objects*, which occur in many sentences that contain an active verb. The direct object is the word (or phrase) that receives the action of the verb. It is the answer to the question: **What got verbed?**

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be introduced to the concept of direct objects.
- Students will explore how direct objects are represented in Cascade Format.
- Students will understand the difference between a simple direct object and a complex direct object.
- Students will understand the concept of subordinate clauses.

SAMPLE SENTENCES:

This lesson will demonstrate Cascades for the sentences below:

The children ate birthday cake.

My family planned a long vacation.

The sixth-grade students in Mr. Carol's class finished their assignments on time.

Sandy won an award for her science fair project.

The actor enjoyed the part he played in the movie about baseball.

LESSON – DIRECT TEACHING OF SKILL

Introduction

In the [first lesson](#), we explored the most essential components of a complete sentence. They are:

1. The **who**, also known as the subject.
2. The **do**, also known as the predicate.

Many sentences include another important component, **who or what receives the action** of the verb. This is called the *direct object*.

Modeling

Let's look at this sentence:

The children ate birthday cake.

The children
ate
| birthday cake.

Birthday cake is the direct object because it tells the reader what the children ate. You can ask yourself, “*The children ate what?*” (birthday cake); or “*What got eaten?*” (birthday cake)

It is indented under ‘ate’ because it is the thing that got eaten.

Here is another example:

My family planned a long vacation.

My family
planned
| a long vacation.

Who is the subject?

My family

How do you know?

It answers who planned.

What is the predicate?

Planned

How do you know?

It answers what my family did.

Notice that you can immediately find the subject and predicate because they are aligned.

What got planned?

a long vacation

The direct object is ‘*a long vacation*’ because that is what was planned. It is indented under ‘planned’ to show that it is what got planned.

Here is a more complicated example, which includes the prepositional phrases we learned about in Lesson 1:

The sixth-grade students in Mr. Carol’s class finished their assignments on time.

The sixth-grade students
| in Mr. Carol’s class
finished
| their assignments
| on time.

Who is the subject?

The sixth-grade students

How do you know?

Two ways to tell:

1. That’s the part of the sentence that is aligned all the way to the left; and
2. It answers the question “who finished?”

What is the predicate?

finished

How do you know?

Two ways to tell:

1. That's the part of the sentence that is lined up with the subject; and
2. It answers, "What did the sixth-grade students do?"

Which students finished their assignments?

those "in Mr. Carol's class"

"In Mr. Carol's class" is a prepositional phrase that answers which students, so it is indented under the line that contains 'student'. It is indented because it gives more information about the students.

What did they finish?

their assignments

This is a direct object, so it is indented under 'finished' to show what was finished. It gives more information about *what* was finished.

When did they finish them?

on time

"On time" is a prepositional phrase, and it is indented under 'finished' to show when they were finished. It gives more information about *when* it was finished.

Simple vs. Complex Direct Objects

Just like we discussed in [Lesson 1](#) for subjects and predicates, direct objects can be complex if they include extra modifying phrases. Here's an example where a direct object has a prepositional phrase associated with it.

Sandy won an award for her science fair project.

```
Sandy
  won
    |
    | an award
    |
    | for her science fair project.
```

Who is the subject?

Sandy

How do you know?

Two ways to tell:

1. That's the part of the sentence that is aligned all the way to the left; and
2. It answers the question "**who** won?"

What is the do?

won

Two ways to tell:

1. That's the part of the sentence that is lined up with the subject; and
2. It answers, "What did Sandy **do**?"

What is the complex predicate?

won an award for her science fair project

This is the entire predicate, which includes all the ideas associated with the “winning” action. This means it includes the verb and the direct object and all of the other modifiers related to either of them.

What is the simple direct object?

an award

How do you know?

Two ways to tell:

1. That’s the part of the sentence that is indented under the verb “won”;
2. It answers, “What did Sally win?”

What was the award for?

the science fair project.

“for the science fair project” is a prepositional phrase. Cascade indents the entire phrase under ‘award’ because it gives more information about the award.

The entire phrase “an award for her science fair project” is the *complex direct object* because it includes the simple direct object and all of its modifiers. This is why the entire phrase is pushed over under the verb “won”.

Notice that the indentation between “an award” and “for her science fair project” remains the same, to show that “for her science fair project” gives more information about the award.

Here’s an even more complex direct object, containing an embedded clause.

The actor enjoyed the part he played in the movie about baseball.

```
The actor
enjoyed
  |
  | the part
  |   |
  |   | he
  |   | played
  |   |   |
  |   |   | in the movie
  |   |   | |
  |   |   | | about baseball.
```

Who is the subject?

the actor – that is the simple subject.

What is the do?

enjoyed. – that is the simple predicate.

In Cascade Format, you can find the simple subject and the simple predicate immediately by looking at the two leftmost lines.

What is the direct object?

the part

How do you know?

1. It is indented under the verb ‘enjoyed’.
2. It tells what the actor enjoyed.

It gives more information about *what* was enjoyed.

And now, for the embedded clause, which in this case is also called a *subordinate clause*, *because its meaning depends on the clause it’s attached to.*

Which ‘part’ is the one that he enjoyed?

the one that ‘he played in the movie about baseball’.

This clause gives more information about *which* part was enjoyed. Therefore, the *entire* clause is indented under the word it describes, namely “the part”. “The part” is the phrase in the main clause that the subordinate clause depends on for its meaning.

Notice that since this is a clause, it also has a subject and a predicate. The subject is “he” and the simple predicate is “played”. They are aligned with each other because we still follow the rule where subjects and predicates are aligned (**Lesson 1**), even when they are in a subordinate, or embedded, clause.

We also follow the rules about prepositions (**Lesson 1**). “in the movie” is indented under ‘played’ because it gives more information about *where* he played the part.

Likewise, “about baseball” is indented under ‘in the movie’ because it gives more information about which movie he played in.

CLOSURE

Today we introduced the concept of a direct object, which is the thing that receives the action of the simple predicate. In Cascade Format, it is indented under the simple predicate to show that it gives more information about the Do.

Generally speaking, when something is indented in Cascade Format, it is giving more information about the thing it is positioned under. This is true whether the additional information occurs as a direct object, or as a prepositional phrase.

As we see more examples of indentations in Cascade Format, we will discover other types of grammatical phrases that are indented. An easy way to understand the part of a sentence that a particular idea should be associated with is by looking at what it is indented under. Regardless of the specific grammatical phrase (prepositional phrase, adverbial phrase, relative clause, etc.), *it will always be indented with respect to the part of the sentence that it gives more information about.*

We also explored ways that the direct object can be more complex. We demonstrated how increased complexity can come from adding prepositional phrases and also embedded clauses, which have their own subjects and predicates. We showed how the Cascade Format keeps the same rule about aligning subjects and predicates, even when they are embedded. Cascade Format also follows the rule that added modifiers are indented under the part of the sentences they are related to.

Finally, we observed that subordinate clauses, which are a special type of embedded clause, have their own subjects and predicates. A clause is subordinate when its meaning is derived from phrases in the main clause that it is associated with.

On your Exit Ticket, describe what a direct object is.

- How is it shown in the Cascade Format?
- What’s the difference between a simple and complex direct object?
- Can you give two examples of sentences with direct objects, written in Cascade Format?

Next, explain why a subordinate clause is called “subordinate”—what is it “subordinate” to?

EXIT TICKET

The direct object is the concept in the sentence that receives the action of the verb. In Cascade Format, it is indented under the verb it is related to.

It is possible to have complex direct objects, and when that happens, the direct object will have other modifiers, like prepositional phrases, or embedded or subordinate clauses, and these will be indented one step in from the direct object itself.

The general rule is that phrases are indented under the part of the sentence that they are related to. In the case of a subordinate clause, the clause refers to something in the main clause in order to be interpreted correctly. In our example sentence, “he played in the movie about baseball” refers to the actor’s part—which is the direct object of the main sentence.

LESSON SENTENCES

This lesson demonstrated Cascades for the sentences below:

The children ate birthday cake.
My family planned a long vacation.
The sixth-grade students in Mr. Carol's class finished their assignments on time.
Sandy won an award for her science fair project.
The actor enjoyed the part he played in the movie about baseball.

ADDITIONAL SAMPLE SENTENCES*

Copy and paste these sentences into Cascade Explorer to demonstrate the concepts explained here. Try out highlighting and labeling tools to show students how the Cascade changes for related sentences from this list.

For more practice with simple direct objects in Cascade:

Katelyn's best friend loves music.
My dog always wants a treat.
Jackie hugged his sister.

For more practice with complex direct objects in Cascade:

Katelyn's best friend loves music of all types.
My dog always begs for a piece of cheese.
Alice has a reputation for yummy desserts.

For more practice with other types of indented phrases in Cascade

Adverb phrase:

Annie ran across the field really quickly.
Most stores have huge deals right after Thanksgiving.

Direct object AND multiple prepositional phrases:

The player ran the ball out of bounds during the game.

For more practice with subordinate clauses in Cascade.

I like the way that Mary wears her hair.
Katelyn's best friend loves music that comes from the Middle East.
The girl thought that the movie she saw on Saturday night was amazing.

For writing practice, [Sentence Building exercise](#) provided by Literacy How.

*NOTE: Try out your own sentences to illustrate these concepts! However, be aware that some errors in the Cascades are possible, because this is a Beta version of the algorithm (i.e., still under development). We encourage teachers to test out their sentences *before* using them in the classroom, in case unexpected results occur.

LESSON RESOURCES

[Download the PDF](#) for this lesson.

[Sentence Building Exercise](#) provided by Literacy How