



Sentence Analysis

Background Information

This section contains two parts:

- a brief description of sentence analysis and the material used for sentence analysis in the Montessori classroom
- a summary of the grammatical terms needed for analysis of the more complicated sentences examined at the upper elementary level

Sentence Analysis

At the lower elementary level, Montessori students use the Grammar Symbols to study the parts of speech. As they become

familiar with the parts of speech, students are introduced to sentence analysis, which involves using special shapes and symbols to learn to analyze sentences logically.

Sentence analysis involves using Sentence Analysis Boxes with Extensions. The material used usually include the following:

- large red circles to signify verbs
- black circles of differing sizes to signify subject, direct object, and indirect object
- black arrows to point to subject, direct object, and indirect object
- orange arrows and circles for adverbial extensions, which answer such questions as how, when, and where

Students are presented with a simple sentence printed on a slip of paper. Each



Sentence Analysis Material

part of the sentence is analyzed, then cut from the slip of paper and paired with the appropriate size and color of circle or arrow. Students may refer to the Adverbial Extension Chart that accompanies the Sentence Analysis Boxes. This chart shows all the possible arrows and circles arrayed around the large red verb circle.

Sentence Analysis Boxes give students the tools to break a sentence into smaller parts, determine how the parts relate to one another, and understand how changes in word placement affect the meaning of the sentence. Through sentence analysis, lower elementary students are introduced to the concepts of subject and predicate, direct object and indirect object, adverbial extensions, and the process of constructing interesting, coherent sentences. Sentence analysis is carried out in conjunction with the students' analysis of grammar, which focuses on learning the names of the parts of speech and understanding the role of each part in a sentence.

A similar process is followed at the upper elementary level. This section on sentence

analysis builds on what the students learn about analyzing sentences in the lower elementary years and is designed to work in conjunction with the expanded information on parts of speech that appears in this manual. In earlier elementary years, students gain an understanding of the parts of speech both as stand-alone words and within sentences. In Years 4–6, students continue working with these concepts, using more and more complicated sentences as they go along. Teachers can help students in Years 4–6 build on their analytical skills by regularly assessing each student's level of comprehension, reviewing as much as necessary, and gradually increasing the level of difficulty of the work as the student is ready for more challenge.

At the upper elementary level, students may continue to use the Grammar Symbols and Sentence Analysis Boxes, especially in Year 4. For students ready to move on from manipulating shapes and symbols, Maria Montessori created Sentence Analysis Charts, summary charts that show the steps involved in two kinds of sentence analysis. Some refer to these charts as Logical Analysis Charts. Chart A was designed to guide students in analyzing a simple sentence. Chart B was designed to guide students in analyzing the clauses in a complex sentence (this term will be explained later in this section).

The original charts were translated from Italian and were designed many years ago. In order to reflect the English language accurately and to show the grammatical terms that are used today, many Montessori teachers find that they need to revise the charts. Two charts that have been revised appear at the end of this section and are

Note to the Teacher

Many versions of the Sentence Analysis Charts exist. The original three charts designed by Maria Montessori can be found in *The Advanced Montessori Method II*.

available on the NAMC's Curriculum Support Material:

- Sentence Analysis Chart A summarizes the questions and terms shown on the circles and arrows contained in the Sentence Analysis Boxes with Extensions. It also includes definitions of basic terms (sentence, independent clause, dependent clause, simple sentence), an example of a simple sentence, and analysis of that example.
- Sentence Analysis Chart B summarizes the terms needed for analyzing complex sentences: independent (main) clause, dependent adjective clause, dependent noun clause, dependent adverb clause. Like Chart A, Chart B includes definitions of basic terms (sentence, independent clause, dependent clause, simple sentence). Chart B also includes an example of a complex sentence and analysis of that example.

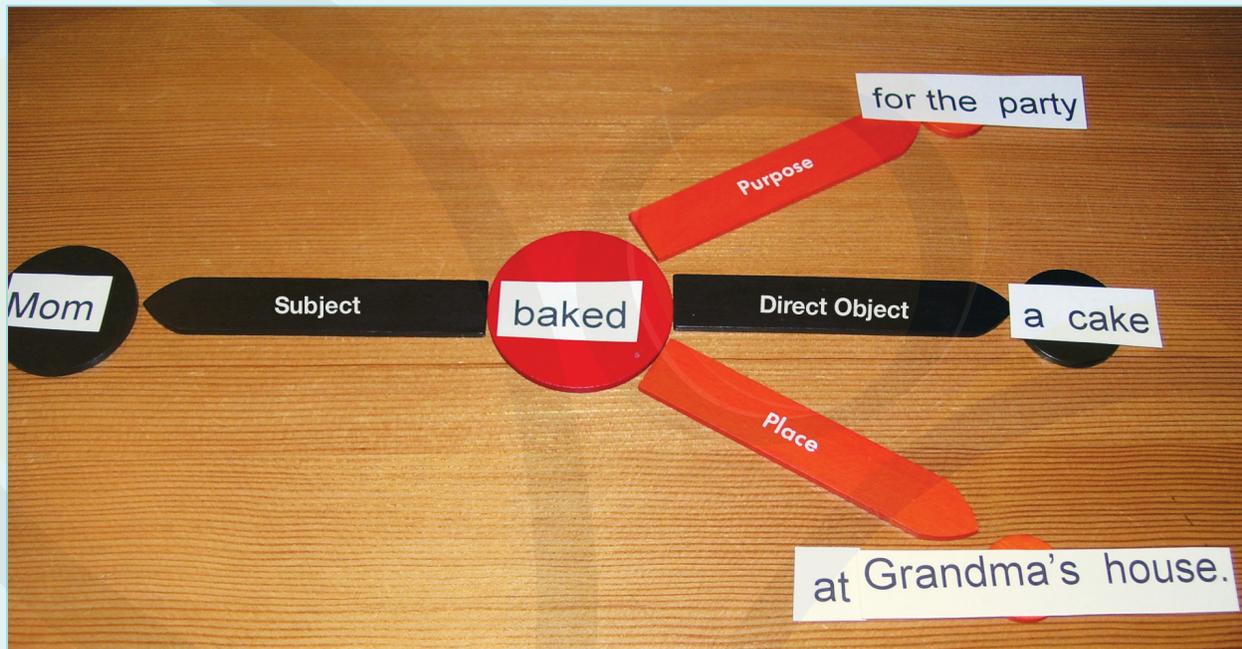
Teachers may wish to laminate copies of these Sentence Analysis Charts before making them available as a classroom reference. NAMC's Curriculum Support Material also includes templates that teachers may copy and to which teachers may add their own examples.

While informative as a reference, the Sentence Analysis Charts do not provide the hands-on opportunities for learning presented by the circles and arrows from the Sentence Analysis Boxes with Extensions. These shapes are especially helpful in Year 4, when students are reviewing sentence analysis and being introduced to complex sentences. When analyzing sentences, it is common practice to have the students write a sentence properly in their notebooks, then lay it out using the Grammar Symbols and copy it directly into their notebooks, including labels, circles, and arrows.

Once they understand the concepts involved and have had many opportunities to practice sentence analysis with prepared sentences and the circles and arrows, the students might try another way of analyzing sentences. A student can write a sentence on paper, underline certain words or parts of the sentence or place square brackets around them, then draw arrows and add labels to show what modifies what. In effect, the student replaces the circles and arrows of the Sentence Analysis Boxes with labels and signs written by hand and analyzes the sentence without cutting it apart. For example, a student might underline the verb in a sentence written on a sheet of paper and draw an arrow from the verb to its direct object, labeling each. Or a student might place brackets around a dependent clause in a sentence and draw an arrow from the clause to the word to which it is linked in the sentence, then add labels. For this kind of sentence analysis, students will find the Sentence Analysis Charts helpful as a reference.

ACTIVITY 1

Analyzing Simple Sentences



Purpose

To review what is involved with analyzing simple sentences with and without adverbial extensions, using Sentence Analysis Box material.

Material

Sentence Analysis Box with Extensions (containing the black arrows with writing on both sides; large and medium black circles; the large red circle that is plain on one side and has “Predicate” written on the other; orange arrows and circles).

Prepared simple sentences, including this sentence: Mom baked a cake for the party at Grandma's house.

Scissors.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

NOTE: This activity uses a prepared sentence with which some students will be familiar from a NAMC lower elementary language arts sentence analysis activity. The sentence is repeated here for review.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers review this concept in Year 4 and as needed in Years 5 and 6. This activity can be done in parts.
- Announce that the students will have the opportunity to analyze simple sentences.

Review and Analysis of a Sentence without Adverbial Extensions

- Review these terms if needed: sentence, simple sentence, clause, subject, simple predicate (verb), predicate, compound predicate, direct object, indirect object. Provide one or two examples of prepared simple sentences containing one or more of the terms being reviewed. As each term is being discussed, point to that part in a sentence.
- Demonstrate the material from the box, and review with the students what each item signifies.
- Demonstrate the prepared sentences and the scissors. Choose a sentence without adverbial extensions and invite a student to read it aloud. Example: Jennifer likes pizza.
- Proceed through the sentence analysis questions. Ask: What is the action? Answer: likes. Place the large red circle on the work space, written side down. Invite a student to cut out “likes” and place it on top of the red circle.
- Ask: Who or what is it that likes? Answer: Jennifer. Place the large, black circle to the left of the black arrow with “who is it that? what is it that?” right side up. Invite a student to cut out “Jennifer” and place it on top of the large, black circle.
- Ask: Jennifer likes what or whom? Answer: pizza. Place out the black arrow with “whom? what?” right side up, then to the right of the arrow place the medium, black circle. Invite a student to place “pizza” on top of the medium black circle.

- Finally, invite a student to turn over the black arrows and read aloud the words underneath. (The left-side arrow will read “Subject” and the right-side arrow will read “Direct Object.”) If needed, also turn over the red circle and remind the students that it and everything linked to it makes up the predicate.
- Repeat with other prepared sentences without adverbial extensions, making sure to include sentences with indirect objects as well as sentence with direct objects.
- Ask the students to use their journals for two tasks: (1) write out two of the sentences without adverbial extensions that were analyzed in the activity, along with pertinent sentence analysis questions and answers; (2) create two similar simple sentences without adverbial extensions, then write out the questions and answers involved in analysis of the two sentences.

Analysis of a Sentence with Adverbial Extensions

- Briefly review adverbial extensions. Provide one or two examples of prepared simple sentences containing one or more adverbial extensions. With the students, name and identify each adverbial extension in the sentences.
- From the prepared simple sentences, choose this prepared sentence with adverbial extensions: Mom baked a cake for the party at Grandma’s house.
- Invite a student to read the sentence aloud.

- Proceed through the sentence analysis questions as before, up to the point where arrows and circles have been placed for “Mom baked a cake.” Point out that without adverbial extensions, this is a very short, simple sentence.
- Explain that with adverbial extensions, this sentence becomes more interesting. Then proceed with the remaining analysis. Ask: Mom baked a cake where? Answer: at Grandma’s house. Extending from the verb circle, place out the orange arrow with “place” right side up, then to the right of the arrow place an orange circle. Invite a student to cut out “at Grandma’s house” and place it on top of the orange circle.
- Ask: Mom baked a cake at Grandma’s house when? Answer: We do not know, so we will put this arrow and circle away.
- Ask: Mom baked a cake for whom or what? Answer: for the party. Extending from the verb circle, place out the orange arrow with “for whom? for what?” right side up, then to the right of the arrow place an orange circle. Invite a student to cut out “for the party” and place it on top of the orange circle.
- Finally, invite a student to turn over all the arrows and read aloud the words underneath. (The left-side black arrow will read “Subject,” the right-side black arrow will read “Direct Object,” one of the orange arrows will read “Purpose,” and the other orange arrow will read “Place.”)

- Repeat with other prepared sentences with adverbial extensions, until each of the adverbial extension arrows has been used at least once.
- Ask the students to use their journals for two tasks: (1) write out two of the sentences with adverbial extensions that were analyzed in the activity, along with pertinent sentence analysis questions and answers; (2) create two similar simple sentences with adverbial extensions, then write out the questions and answers involved in analysis of the two sentences.

Extensions

- Write a paragraph about a favorite friend or relative, using simple sentences without adverbial extensions. Rewrite the paragraph, this time adding adverbial extensions. Then write a short paragraph describing the changes you see in the paragraph with extensions. How much longer is it? Is it more interesting? Which version do you prefer — the longer version or the more concise one? Why?
- Write out ten simple sentences: five without adverbial extensions and five with. Exchange sentences with a classmate, then each write out the questions and answers involved in analysis of the ten sentences.