

# The Shadow Test: Recalling What We Know of the Language of Grammar and Syntax

from Diederich, Paul B. *Measuring Growth in English*. NCTE, 1974.

PART I—Directions: Provide an answer or circle the best answer from the choices given. This test is based on one sentence:

**I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me and what can be the use of him is more than I can see.**

1. This sentence may be hard to read because one comma has been left out. Where would you put a comma to break up the sentence into two main parts?
2. What kind of sentence is this? a. simple      b. compound      c. complex      d. compound complex
3. What is “I have a little shadow”?  
a. the subject of the sentence      c. the first independent clause  
b. the first subordinate clause      d. the subject of “him”
4. What is “that goes in and out with me”  
a. the first independent clause      c. a subordinate clause, object of “have”  
b. a subordinate clause modifying “shadow”      d. a subordinate clause modifying “goes”
5. What is “and”?  
a. a coordinating conjunction      c. a subordinating conjunction  
b. a relative pronoun      d. a preposition modifying “what”
6. What is “and what can be the use of him”?  
a. the second independent clause      c. a subordinate clause modifying “shadow”  
b. a subordinate clause, subject of “is”      d. a subordinate clause, subject of “see”
7. What is “than I can see”  
a. the second independent clause      c. a subordinate clause, object of “is”  
b. a subordinate clause, object of “more”      d. a subordinate clause modifying “more”
8. What is “is”?  
a. verb of the second independent clause      c. verb of second subordinate clause  
b. verb modifying “more”      d. verb that does not have a subject
9. What is “more”  
a. a coordinating conjunction      c. a subordinating conjunction  
b. an adverb modifying “than I can see”      d. a linking verb complement
10. What is the subject of the first independent clause?
11. What is the subject of the second independent clause?
12. What is the subject of the first subordinate clause?
13. What is the subject of the second subordinate clause?
14. What is the subject of the third subordinate clause?
15. What is the verb of the first independent clause?
16. What is the verb of the second independent clause?
17. What is “shadow”?  
a. the subject of the whole sentence      c. object of “have”  
b. a linking verb complement      d. object of the preposition
18. What are “in” and “out”?  
a. prepositions      b. adverbs      c. objects of “goes”      d. adjectives modifying “with me”
19. What does “with me” modify? a. shadow      b. have      c. goes      d. in and out
20. What is “what”? a. a relative pronoun      b. an interrogative pronoun      c. an indefinite pronoun      d. a personal pronoun

21. What is “of him”?
- object of the verb “use”
  - prepositional phrase, subject of “is more”
  - prepositional phrase modifying “use”
  - prepositional phrase modifying “can be”
22. What is “than”?
- a coordinating conjunction
  - an adverb modifying “can see”
  - a subordinating conjunction
  - a relative pronoun, object of “can see”
23. “Can be” is a different form of the same verb as
- have
  - goes
  - is
  - can see
24. What is “can” in “can be” and “can see”?
- an adverb
  - an auxiliary
  - the subject
  - the object
25. The subordinate clauses in this sentence have three of the following functions. Which one do they NOT have?
- noun
  - verb
  - adjective
  - adverb

PART II—Directions: Rewrite the sentence in as many of the following ways as you can. Use the same words that are in this sentence but change the form and the order of these words as required. Try not to change or omit any of the ideas expressed by this sentence. Each rewritten version should be a single complete sentence.

- Start with “I had a little shadow”
- Start with “I cannot see the use”
- Start with “The children had”
- Start with “Do you have”
- Start with “What can be the use”
- Start with “Going in and out with me”

#### Answer Key

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. after the word “me”   | 13. “what”  |
| 2. D—compound complex  | 14. “I”   |
| 3. C—the first independent clause  | 15. “have”  |
| 4. B—a subordinate clause modifying “shadow”                                   | 16. “is”  |
| 5. A—a coordinating conjunction  | 17. C—object of “have”                                |
| 6. B—a subordinate clause, subject of “is”                                     | 18. B—adverbs   |
| 7. D—a subordinate clause modifying “more”                                     | 19. C—“goes”  |
| 8. A—verb of the second independent clause                                     | 20. A—a relative pronoun (introducing a noun clause)  |
| 9. D—a linking verb complement (predicate nominative or subjective complement) | 21. C—prepositional phrase modifying “use”            |
| 10. “I”  | 22. C—a subordinating conjunction                     |
| 11. “what can be the use of him”   | 23. C—“is”  |
| 12. “that”   | 24. B—an auxiliary (a modal)                          |
|  | 25. B—verb (a subordinate clause can never be a verb) |

#### Page 2 “The Shadow Test—Part II”

- I had a little shadow that went in and out with me, and what could be (could have been) the use of him was more than I could see (could have seen).
- I cannot see the use of a little shadow I have that goes in and out with me.
- The children had little shadows that went in and out with them, and what could be (could have been) the uses of them was more than I could see (could have seen).
- Do you have a little shadow that goes in and out with you, and is what can be the use of him more than you can see?
- What can be the use of a little shadow I have that goes in and out with me is more than I can see.
- Going in and out with me is a little shadow I have whose use is more than I can see.

# The S-V-C Structure of English Sentences: Recognizing the Basic Patterns

From Kolln, Martha. *Understanding English Grammar*. New York: Macmillian, 1986.

## The Ten Basic Sentence Patterns:

I.	NP	“be”	ADV	
II.	NP	“be”	ADJ (subject complement)	
III.	NP <sub>1</sub>	“be”	NP <sub>1</sub>	
IV.	NP	V-linking	ADJ (subject complement)	
V.	NP <sub>1</sub>	V-linking	NP <sub>1</sub>	
VI.	NP	V-intransitive		
VII.	NP <sub>1</sub>	V-transitive	NP <sub>2</sub> (direct object)	
VIII.	NP <sub>1</sub>	V-transitive	NP <sub>2</sub> (i. o.)	NP <sub>3</sub> (d. o.)
IX.	NP <sub>1</sub>	V-transitive	NP <sub>2</sub> (d. o.)	ADJ (object complement)
X.	NP <sub>1</sub>	V-transitive	NP <sub>2</sub> (d. o.)	NP <sub>2</sub> (object complement)

## Exercise 1: Identify the Basic Sentence Pattern of the following sentences:

- \_\_\_ 1. In the evening Chicago’s skyline is a beautiful sight.
- \_\_\_ 2. After the picnic, the teacher rounded up the kindergarteners for the long trip home.
- \_\_\_ 3. My uncle is moving to Arizona for his health.
- \_\_\_ 4. Yesterday, Rosa bought herself a lovely knit coat at Macy’s.
- \_\_\_ 5. Our grocer calls asparagus the Rolls Royce of vegetables.
- \_\_\_ 6. During his second term, Ronald Reagan became the oldest president in our nation’s history.
- \_\_\_ 7. At first glance, the streets of Washington, D. C., seem very confusing.
- \_\_\_ 8. Our art history class was at the museum for three hours on Tuesday afternoon.
- \_\_\_ 9. Sometimes I find modern art very depressing.
- \_\_\_ 10. For most of the morning, the kids have been in a very grumpy mood.

## Exercise 2: Identify the Basic Sentence Pattern of the following sentences:

- \_\_\_ 1. The teacher made the test hard.
- \_\_\_ 2. The batter hit the ball hard.
- \_\_\_ 3. My husband made me a chocolate cake.
- \_\_\_ 4. My husband made me a happy woman.
- \_\_\_ 5. We set off through the woods at dawn.
- \_\_\_ 6. We set off the fireworks at dawn.
- \_\_\_ 7. The cook tasted the soup.
- \_\_\_ 8. The soup tasted good.
- \_\_\_ 9. She acted tired.
- \_\_\_ 10. She acted brilliantly.

## Exercise 1

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 1. III  | 6. V   |
| 2. VII  | 7. IV  |
| 3. VI   | 8. I   |
| 4. VIII | 9. IX  |
| 5. X    | 10. II |

## Exercise 2

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 1. IX   | 6. VII |
| 2. VII  | 7. VII |
| 3. VIII | 8. IV  |
| 4. X    | 9. IV  |
| 5. VI   | 10. VI |

## Transforming the Basic Patterns: Discovering Syntactical Choices

A possible format for exercises:

*Start with basic S-V-C statements.*

Mrs. Thomas owns a cat.

- The cat is Margot.
- The cat loves to brush up against a fence.
  - The fence is ours
  - The fence is in the backyard.
- The cat loves to meow.
  - The cat meows “The National Anthem.”
  - The cat meows at midnight.

*Explore the possibilities.*

Mrs. Thomas owns a cat named Margot that loves to brush up against our backyard fence and meow “The National Anthem” at midnight.

Mrs. Thomas’s cat, Margot, loves to brush up against our backyard fence and meow “The National Anthem” at midnight.

At midnight, Mrs. Thomas’s cat, Margot, loves to brush up against our backyard fence and meow “The National Anthem.”

At midnight, Margot, Mrs. Thomas’s cat, loves to brush up against our backyard fence and meow “The National Anthem.”

# Syntactical Elements Chart

Adapted from "Tackling Syntax: Insights and Strategies for Readers and Writers," presented by Robby Davis, Lee County High School, at GA DOE ELA/Literacy Summer Academy 2014

DEVICE	EXAMPLE	QUALITIES	STOCK EFFECTS
Declarative	He is a fraud.	Speaker clearly states assertion.	Reader might accept assertion as fact.
Imperative	Stand up for your right.	Speaker demands something of the reader.	Reader might be compelled to comply/agree reflexively.
Interrogative	Is he a fraud?	Speaker asks something of the reader.	Writer engages reader.
Exclamatory	He is a fraud!	Speaker emphatically states assertion.	Boldness might be more compelling to the reader.
Subordination (Hypotaxis)	I knew very well what Americans saw when they looked at me and this allowed me to play endless and sinister variations on the role which they had assigned me; since I knew that it was, for them, of the utmost importance that they never be confronted with what, in their own personalities, made this role so necessary and gratifying to them, I knew what I was doing; so that I moved into every crucial situation with the deadly and rather desperate advantages of bitterly accumulated perception, of pride and contempt. --Baldwin	Subordinate conjunctions function as adverbs—words that tell the reader when, where, why, how and to what extent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writer attempts to show logical relationships, attempts to explain.</li> <li>• The writer sounds reasonable.</li> </ul>
Inverted SVC order	Deep and dark was the sea.	The structure inverts to C-V-S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in mood or tone or genre—more somber, more formal, more poetic.</li> <li>• Archaic air?—gives it authority.</li> <li>• Colloquial air?—makes it humorous.</li> <li>• Aphoristic quality—rings with authority.</li> <li>• Could evoke mystery, uncertainty.</li> </ul>
Split SVC order	Deep and dark the sea was.	The pattern becomes C-S-V.	(See above)
Nominal prose	Still, although species may be discrete, they have no immutable essence. Variation is the raw material of evolutionary change. It represents the fundamental reality of nature, not an accident about a created norm. Variation is primary; essences are illusory. Species must be defined as ranges of irreducible variation. --Stephen Jay Gould	Nouns—and the stuff that goes with them—are the chief carriers of meaning in the sentence. Verbs pale into the background.	Nouns=impact Nouns=images
Verbal prose	The cod attack in mid-depth. The gulls smother the surface and press the capelin back among the submarine hunters. The murre and puffins fly underwater, their beating wings, turning them rapidly back and forth. They meet the cod, flail wings in desperate haste, are caught, crushed, and swallowed. Now seabirds tangle wings. Silver walls of capelin flicker, part, reform. Some seabirds surface abruptly, broken wings dangling. Others with leg or legs torn off, fly frantically, crash, skitter in shock across the water. --Frank Russell	Verbs—and the stuff that goes with them—dominate the sentence. Action and movement subdue other elements of the sentence.	Verbs=energy Verbs=actions, movement

Periodic structure	Just as the prophets of the eighth century B. C. left their villages and carried their “thus sayeth the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. --King	The subordinate material comes first. The principal elements that complete the sentence come near the end—near the period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oratorical, premeditated</li> <li>• “Elaborate engineering”</li> <li>• The stuff of speeches and sermons</li> <li>• Intensity builds to a climax</li> <li>• Dramatic</li> <li>• Suspense—the completion of the idea is suspended</li> <li>• Often a rapid or struggling pace</li> </ul>
Cumulative structure	I doubt that you would so quickly commend the police force if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. --King	The sentence completes itself right away. The gist of the idea comes right at the beginning. The subordinate material follows, running and unreeling naturally, accumulating toward the end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversational; writer is in the process of thinking</li> <li>• “Illusion of spontaneity,” off the cuff</li> <li>• Seems to fade in intensity</li> <li>• Often a slow, strolling pace</li> </ul>
Asyndeton	“I arise at seven. The milkman has neglected me. He pays little attention to the colored districts. My white neighbor glares elaborately.” --Du Bois	Conjunctions are eliminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Artful incoherence”</li> <li>• No logical relationship among ideas</li> <li>• Independent ideas, each impactful</li> </ul>
Polysyndeton	“You are apt to have the company of a sheriff and a couple of meek or sullen black prisoners on part of your way, and dirty colored section hands will pour in toward night and drive you to the smallest corner.” --Du Bois	Lots of conjunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Artful coherence”</li> <li>• Sentence elements are equalized and leveled</li> <li>• Unity among the ideas</li> <li>• Logical relationships among ideas</li> <li>• One big idea, not independent ones</li> </ul>
Parallelism— Anaphora (Parataxis)	To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar. --Bacon  Speak as you think, be what you are, pay your debts of all kinds. --Emerson	Repetition of the <b>initial</b> syntactical element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphatic quality</li> <li>• Oratorical quality</li> <li>• Aphoristic quality</li> <li>• Aesthetic, poetic quality</li> </ul>
Parallelism— Balance	Their characteristics are respectable; their motives, I am willing to believe, were laudable. —Macauley  The gaiety and frolic of a bottle companion improves with him into a solid friendship: and the ardor of a youthful appetite becomes an elegant passion. --Hume	The pairing of sentence elements whose similar form expresses similar ideas.  AB = AB ABC = ABC	(See above)  Creates a palpable feeling of logic
Parallelism— Chiasmus	In the poetical quarter, I found there were <i>poets who had no monuments</i> and <i>monuments which had no poets</i> . --Addison  Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. --Kennedy	Crossed or inverted parallelism.  AB = BA	(See above)  Creates a palpable feeling of logic

Parallelism— Balance with antithesis	The truth of it is, that a man in much business must either make himself a knave, or else the world will make him a fool. --Cowley	Similarity of form with difference of meaning.  AB = -AB ABC = -ABC	(See above)  Creates a palpable feeling of logic
Repetition	. . . government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. --Lincoln	Some element of the sentence is repeated for effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis of repeated element</li> <li>• Many of the same effects as parallelism</li> </ul>
Rhetorical question	In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? --King	A question with a rhetorical purpose. A question to make a point, not simply to solicit an answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages the reader</li> <li>• Impact is often much greater than a direct statement</li> </ul>
RQ—Epiphesis	You're not wearing that, are you?	An assertion disguised as a question, usually intended as a rebuke or condemnation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages the reader</li> <li>• Often forces the reader to make the assertion, allowing writer to evade responsibility</li> </ul>
RQ—Hypophora	Is this any way to treat a lady? No, I say!	A question asked and answered by the speaker.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems to engage the reader but doesn't allow the reader to formulate an answer.</li> <li>• The writer speaks for the reader!</li> </ul>
RQ—Tag question	If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it? --Einstein	RQ that comes at the end of a statement or declarative sentence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages the reader</li> <li>• Writer is verifying that something has been understood or confirming that an action has occurred.</li> </ul>
Aphorism	I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it. --Voltaire  The first rule of Fight Club is—you do not talk about Fight Club. --Chuck Palahniuk' Tyler Durden	Language that has the quality of a maxim or proverb—the phrases we read on refrigerator magnets. Aphorisms are terse and economic statements of truth, opinion, or principle.  Aphoristic prose presents sentence after sentence with these qualities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The memorable, recitative quality makes the assertion seem logical and self-evidently truthful</li> <li>• Parallelism—or some other distinctive syntactical element—is often an aspect of aphorism. (See effects listed above.)</li> </ul>
Excessive Coordination	I grow weary of the excuses, my friends, and I admit it openly, for if the city council chooses to remain frozen, and they choose to sit idly by while this situation continues, we have no choice but to act, and though the police join the council in their complacency or do act only to intimidate us, yet we, the concerned citizens, will be heard and reckoned with.	Considered grammatically incorrect unless purposeful coordinating conjunctions connect equal aspects of a sentence; suggests equality among those elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swift, continuous rhythm and pace</li> <li>• All the ideas seem blended together.</li> <li>• Writer seems caught in a flow of ideas that he can't or won't sort out.</li> <li>• Everything is emphasized, so nothing is emphasized.</li> <li>• Writer is ranting.</li> </ul>

## Structure and Effect: Employing Syntactical Choices

### Sentences to Play With:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

Somewhere in La Mancha, in a place whose name I do not care to remember, a gentleman lived not long ago, one of those who has a lance and ancient shield on a shelf and keeps a skinny nag and a greyhound for racing.

Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*

I am doomed to remember a boy with a wrecked voice—not because of his voice, or because he was the smallest person I ever knew, or even because he was the instrument of my mother's death, but because he is the reason I believe in God; I am a Christian because of Owen Meany.

John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too.

Queen Elizabeth I

Americans love a winner. Americans will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all of the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost nor will ever lose a war; for the very idea of losing is hateful to an American.

Gen. George Patton

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*