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**Level I: 9 Basic Parts of Speech & Sentence Analysis**

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These lessons have traditionally been included in Montessori language albums. Because language often reflects societal trends, these lessons are, in the judgment of the author, less relevant today than they once were for native English speakers. It is possible that one or more of them may be helpful for English language learners, so they have been included in the album in this appendix.
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Preface

Why teach language?

This question is not entirely rhetorical. When we think about what we want for children, it impacts what we choose to teach and how we choose to teach it! In my estimation, there are two areas of curriculum in any pedagogy that are so fundamental that all other areas flow through and from them: math and language. If a child is successful in these areas, all else is possible; the Universe is their playground. If not, doors begin to close.

As Montessorians, our interest in teaching language goes beyond mere decoding and encoding of the written word. We see language as the currency of knowledge and the vehicle of culture. Maria Montessori said that it is vital that children learn about language because it is so much a part of who they are; their heritage is inextricably bound up with their language.

Consider, for example, the English word *please* and how it reflects society in different cultures:
In Spanish, the term is *por favor* – for a favor. Do this favor for me.
The French will say, *S’il vous plait,* – if it pleases you. Do this if it pleases you, not to please me.
The Danes have no such. Do this. It is the right thing. Why would you need to please someone?

Montessori further noted the interrelationship between language and human innovation, saying that if the child could not spontaneously master his native language, no effective work would ever have been done by the humankind. There would be no such thing as civilization.

Our view of the universality of language and mathematics affects the way that we teach these subjects. When we talk about building mathematical skills, we are referring to far more than mere computation. Montessori math is designed to encourage true mathematical thinking: understanding how operations work rather than rote memorization of algorithms; discovering intricate relationships between geometry and mathematics; applying logic and reasoning to new concepts; recognizing innate mathematical patterns. Montessori’s approach to teaching language is much the same. Lessons teach us to understand how language works, to look for patterns, to understand the logic (or to acknowledge muddled logic). In so doing, we are empowered to be successful even when working beyond the rules that we have been taught.

Language is complex! It includes many aspects: speaking, reading, interpreting both oral and written language, synthesizing the new information with prior learning, and writing to express ideas. Montessori noted that oral language is spontaneously mastered during the first plane of development as the implicit grammar and syntax of the spoken word is modeled to the young child. The human brain is hard-wired to absorb that in the first years of life. Mastery of the written word (decoding, reading comprehension, spelling and mechanics, and writing) will not happen spontaneously because these are conventions that have been created and adopted by humankind. We humans must be explicitly taught the ways in which we have all agreed to use those language tools.

Sometimes the study of written language takes on an added dimension of supplementing oral tradition. If the child is born into a culture rich in colloquialism and dialect, this is the language that s/he masters spontaneously. For example, in parts of the Caribbean, local dialect makes use of “green verbs”. Rather than saying “I am learning grammar,” they say, “I be learning grammar,” or “I be learning the grammars.” The meaning behind this statement is evident, but if it is but one sentence in an entire conversation filled with non-conventional language patterns, it can be tough for a conventionally trained ear to keep up! One can only imagine that it is equally difficult for those whose ears are trained for green verbs to keep up in a rapid conversation that more closely adheres to conventions. The study of conventional language helps attune the ear to these language...
patterns and to be able to distinguish between colloquial and conventional language. This can be important as the child matures, enabling him to select when it is appropriate to use colloquial language and when more conventional language is called for.

Even in areas that have little colloquial language, there are influences that can limit children’s ability to comprehend rich language. In Endangered Minds, author Jane Healy references the beloved children’s program Sesame Street, pointing out that in an effort to reach young children the scripts are limited to mostly 1- and 2-syllable words and simple sentences: a single independent clause, usually with syntax of S-P or S-P-DO. Healy says that this highly simplified oral language can actually harm children’s pre-reading readiness; children need to be able to hear and comprehend compound / complex sentences in an oral tradition before being able to read, interpret, and retain them. This criticism may seem harsh, but consider the difficulty encountered when first reading Shakespeare. His great works were written in a different language tradition than we use today. Initially it is a struggle; this lessens as we begin to feel the rhythm and flow, as we begin to find the patterns of the syntax and vocabulary of the day.

**Montessori language vs. traditional language**

By now you may be thinking, “Shakespeare can wait! All we really want to do is teach children to be enthusiastic readers and eloquent writers! How does the Montessori curriculum do that?”

The answer is that we do so by giving children the tools to analyze and synthesize the grammar and syntax of our language before we ask them to utilize those skills. In broad-brush, we study phrases and clauses, their creation and use, in isolation. As children become proficient with these isolated skills in writing, they transfer this knowledge into reading. Using their knowledge of how phrases and clauses work, children can more effectively chunk sentences for enhanced comprehension and retention. Montessori referred to this as “total reading”; when children are “total readers” they can read lengthier passages without wearying or losing the meaning.

There is no more powerful tool for studying the construction of language than sentence analysis. Of course, success with syntax (circles and arrows) is predicated on an understanding of parts of speech. Therefore, the knowledge of parts of speech enables the study of syntax, which in turn empowers children to read and comprehend complex language and write with precision and elegance. An additional benefit to the study of parts of speech is that it increases children’s deductive vocabulary (unfamiliar words that they encounter in reading) and expands their applied vocabulary in writing and reading. They learn, for example, how root words and suffixes relate, changing the noun beauty to the adjective beautiful or to the adverb beautifully.

In traditional pedagogies, the trend for many years has been to treat the study of parts of speech and syntax superficially until junior year of high school or until the student begins formal study of a foreign language. But the pendulum is beginning to swing back in the other direction! Evidence is building that suggests that neglecting foundational grammar lessons can have a deleterious effect. New York City high schools, in conjunction with the Center for Educational Leadership at City University of New York, have discovered that much of the lack of clarity in older student’s writing could be traced back to lack of understanding of language at the sentence level. Some of these deficits stem from something as granular as a lack of understanding of how conjunctions work in a sentence. Their conclusion? It is time to go back and teach high schoolers these fundamentals that Montessori children receive in the elementary years. Some of the teachers participating in the study felt that as students began to write with greater clarity, it even helped clarify their thinking processes.
Montessori language and the neuroscience of learning
Montessori was, in so many ways, a woman well ahead of her time. She described the learning process in detail, beginning with the potential of language learning, which she referred to as a “nebula”. She said that each experience by the child results in an engram. Engrams interact and produce new learning that, on occasion, rises to the conscious mind; we learn by building webs of engrams.

Compare that to the way that neuroscientists describe the process of learning. We have a sensory experience that passes through the Reticular Activating System (RAS) for prioritizing. Those experiences that are relevant pass through to working memory. Working memory consults with stored memory (episodic, semantic or procedural) to find things that match the new concept. It integrates the new learning with prior learning, encoding and storing it relationally for ready recall.

Montessori advocated using the 3-Period Lesson teaching strategy developed by Edouard Séguin. This is particularly effective when teaching vocabulary. Recall that the three periods, in simple terms are:

- “This is…” Introducing the new vocabulary
- “Show me…” Asking the child to recognize the new term and its meaning
- “What is …?” Asking the child to produce the new term in context

Another way to look at the three periods is:

- Introduction
- Recognition (can pick out the correct answer from among several options)
- Recall (knows the right answer without having to be offered choices)

Many Montessori lessons, particularly at the Early Childhood (3-6) level, complete all three periods in a single lesson. As concepts being presented become more complex and intertwined with prior learning, the three periods may extend over days or even weeks. When that happens, I find it helpful to think of the three periods of learning with different vocabulary depending upon the setting. Here are different sets of vocabulary that all express the same pattern of learning:

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<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td>Utilize</td>
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The set of terms that seems to best lend itself to the kinds of grammar lessons in this album is the last set of terms: analyze, synthesize, and utilize.

- Classification (parts of speech and/or syntax) is a form of analysis. We deconstruct sentences to learn the new grammar and how it functions in context.
- Putting the sentence back together and integrating the new learning is a form of synthesis – it explores how this new bit relates to what the child already knows.
- Applying the new concept through generative writing and/or by searching for it within reading passages utilizes the concept. This is the highest form of understanding.

Lessons for upper elementary (9-12) children

Montessori grammar symbols and reading/sentence analysis materials from the lower elementary classroom are used in upper elementary to extend the children’s understanding of the “currency of communication”. These old friends are taken to dizzying new heights as children learn advanced linguistic concepts and pragmatic strategies for achieving mastery of language. The manner of delivering content to these older children, however, can be a bit different.

Montessori philosophy tells us that this age, the second half of the second plane of development, is sometimes referred to as the Bridge to Abstraction. This is the perfect age to use reasoning, lateral thinking, logic and problem solving. When delivering content, therefore, we do well to refrain from telling all that we know, giving children every detail on a particular topic. Pragmatically, we will lose them if we drone on and on. More importantly, giving every detail turns the students into passive learners – something children of today are being conditioned to expect at very young ages. Children who have been so conditioned will tune out for most of the lesson, perking up when the guide begins to discuss the follow-up options. To elongate their attention and work cycles, and to develop active listening and processing skills we get them to reason: we make them active participants in the lesson, sharing their reasoning of grammatical concepts almost as co-presenters.

The template for presenting new grammars in this album often begins with a review of prior learning and an overview of the new concept. Next we ask the children to decide how they would organize, name, and/or construct the new concept. The lesson culminates by giving terminology that linguists have chosen to describe the concept – often the same terms that the children suggested! This lesson format helps children be active learners, integrating prior learning with the new concept. In so doing, the new concept is better retained and more available for active application. Follow-up activities are graduated to provide meaningful work at the analysis, synthesis and/or utilization stage of understanding. (For more on this, see the discussion on the organization of suggested follow-up activities beginning on page 41.)

When we teach grammar concepts through application, grammar will be far more than a subject of study for its own sake. It will be a useful tool that children can access as writers and readers. For example, a favorite activity is “Improve My Sentence”. We begin with a simple sentence like, “The cat ran.” By asking grammar-based questions, the imagery of the sentence evolves:

*Ran is a tired, worn-out verb. How did the cat move? Give me a vivid verb!*  
*It pounced!*

*Wonderful! Now tell me what kind of cat it is. Give me a more specific noun.*  
*A leopard!*

*Now we’re getting somewhere! Give me an adjective or two to describe the leopard.*  
*Sleek, powerful*

*Great! Now give me an adverb to tell show how the sleek, powerful leopard pounced.*  
*Aggressively*
And a prepositional phrase to say where the leopard pounced from or to.

Onto its prey

We could describe what the prey looked like, but could we give some abstract adjectives to describe the prey’s state of mind or state of being?

Unsuspecting, powerless

How about a prepositional phrase to tell when this happened…

In the evening

Similarly explore and expand on the prepositional phrase to evoke imagery...

This third-period activity solidifies grammar knowledge in application while transforming a pedantic S-P sentence into something with incredible imagery:

In the evening’s misty light, the sleek, powerful leopard pounced aggressively onto its unsuspecting and powerless prey.

Without grammar, our teacher toolboxes are restricted to repetition and correction, and are much less likely to impact children’s reading and writing.

The joy (or terror?) of teaching grammar

Some teachers find teaching grammar and sentence analysis to be uniquely challenging because there can be more than one reasonable answer, particularly as these studies and the literature being evaluated become more sophisticated. How much more straightforward is it to teach arithmetic, where the answer is either right or wrong. Consider, for example, the word school. Most typically we think of school as being a noun, a place where one is educated. But it isn’t always!

I took the school bus to my school so that I can school my friends in how to take effective photographs.

Here, school is first an adjective, then a noun, then a verb!

The possibility that there may be more than one right answer will evoke different reactions in different people. When approached with a spirit of adventure and a willingness to explore options, the analysis and synthesis of our language provides a puzzle-like experience for child and adult alike. The great news is that no one need have complete mastery of all of these concepts before sharing them with children! Explore these lessons and concepts WITH the children. Laugh at the foibles of our peculiar language. Delight in discovery! Spread the joy!

I would like to acknowledge Judi Bauerline, former AMS president, for multiple consultations on some of the more esoteric aspects of Montessori Language, Laura Alexander, upper elementary teacher and teacher trainer, for superb editing assistance, and Louis Sisneros, Evergreen High School English teacher, for his timely help with understanding the subjunctive mood. Feedback from teachers on lessons that worked well or were less successful, awesome resources, subjects that seem particularly difficult for children to internalize, or fun and effective activities would be greatly appreciated. Please address any questions, concerns, or stories to:

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Preliminary Studies of 9 Basic Parts of Speech and the Syntax of Language

As we move from assessment and remediation into new material, most lessons will include a discussion of follow-up options that serve children at up to three levels of understanding. Internalization of a new concept doesn’t typically happen all at once. Initially, a person will consider the new concept in isolation. What is this new word or idea? What does it mean? How does it work? Possessing this level of understanding opens the doors to the next phase, where the new word or concept is integrated with prior knowledge or learning. Once the new concept is fully integrated, it is ready to be applied.

In this section of the album, most lessons suggest three options for follow-up labeled analyze, synthesize, and utilize. It is worth taking a moment to explain here what those words are intended to convey and how the teacher might use these options in the classroom.

Activities at the analyze level of understanding cause children to repeat the isolated concept of the lesson. This level of follow-up continues to keep the new skill / knowledge isolated, to better internalize that individual concept. For example, if the lesson was about types of adjectives, a follow-up at this level might be to sort word tickets used in the lesson into categories by type, as demonstrated in the lesson. This follow-up is appropriate when children demonstrate any unresolved confusion or hesitation in the lesson.

Activities at the synthesize level of understanding cause children to integrate the new learning with previous learning. A follow-up for types of adjectives at this level might be to symbolize all of the words in teacher-provided sentences, labeling each adjective symbol with initials to represent its type. This follow-up is appropriate when children demonstrate good comprehension of the isolated concept during the lesson.

Activities at the utilize level of understanding cause children to use the new knowledge in a generative way. It requires effortful retrieval of the information from the lesson to create something new. This is the passage to abstraction – a way to move this concept from episodic memory to semantic or procedural memory so that children will begin to automatically apply it in their writing. A follow-up for types of adjectives at this level might be to come up with new examples of each of the types
of adjectives discussed in the lesson, and then write several sentences that each use at least 2-3 different types of adjectives. This follow-up is appropriate when children behave as though the lesson was a review – as if they are thinking, “And… what else?” during the presentation.

The role of the teacher is to give the lessons and then select follow-ups based upon the children’s response during the lesson. Follow-up activities can be all from a single level or can combine levels. Again using Types of Adjectives as our example, if the children in the lesson demonstrated ease with the new concept and seemed eager for more, one might combine synthesis and utilization in a single follow up. For example, one might ask them to symbolize just a couple of teacher-provided sentences and then go on to generate new examples of each of the types of adjectives and use them in sentences.

As with any lesson in a Montessori environment, we strive to informally assess children’s processing of the new material continuously during lessons and to present them with follow-up activities that will internalize the new learning. The art of delivering grammar lessons and follow-ups has an additional layer of complexity in that we are not really teaching the concepts for their own sake. We must always keep our eye on the prize – increased skill and sophistication in writing and reading. Make no mistake: studying grammar can be great fun, heightening children’s love of language and their willingness to play with it in self-expression. In all honesty, it is not likely that any child’s future success or happiness will depend upon his ability to name a subordinating conjunction! However, when recognizing subordinate clauses becomes automatic, sentence-chunking does as well, increasing children’s reading fluency and writing sophistication, and giving them courage to tackle anything that comes their way.

The graduated follow-up activities in this album offer teachers and children a structure to move children’s understanding of our language to that point of automaticity. In some cases, one might choose to spend 2 lessons on a single concept, in order to get to that stage where the new learning is utilized. In (most) other cases, even if the new learning is not yet fully integrated, one might choose to go on to the next lesson, recognizing that there will be another opportunity for children to utilize what they learned. Please do not feel limited to the follow-up suggestions listed in the album – these are intended to be a point of departure rather than procedures-that-must-be-followed. Remember that the more fun and creativity you infuse into your lessons and follow-ups, the more creativity and commitment you will inspire in the children!
Presentation 1: Verb tense (Simple Tenses)
Materials: Three charts of the simple tenses, blank chart, verb and pronoun symbols, prepared sentences strips.

Children of upper elementary age readily understand past, present and future time. A goal of this lesson is to help them reason through the idea that while the action may be in the past or future, the speaker or subject remains in the present. More importantly, this lesson provides much-needed direct instruction in future tense verbs requiring more than a single word to complete the verb. The only other lesson that directly addresses this issue is verb conjugation, which is a more advanced lesson.

1. Begin with a sentence in the present tense, such as

   I cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.

   NOTE: Be certain to use a regular verb. Save irregular verbs (to be) for later!

2. Ask the children if the action in that sentence takes place in the present, the past or the future. When they agree that the action is in the present, establish that the speaker is also in the present.

3. Produce the blank chart and grammar symbols.

   Explain that the black marks on the chart represent time. Think of it as railroad tracks going on without end into the past (to the left) and into the future (to the right). The vertical line at the center represents the present. The children decided that the action, cook, is in the present, so we put the verb symbol above the “tracks” on the vertical line. The children also decided that the speaker, I, is in the present, so we put the pronoun symbol below the “tracks” on the vertical line.

I cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.
4. Produce the “Present Tense” chart. Place it to one side of the blank chart with the sentence below it, and return the loose grammar symbols to their place below the blank chart, as below:

```
I cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.
```

5. Next, read the same sentence in the past tense:

```
I cooked lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.
```

6. Ask the children if the action in that sentence takes place in the present, the past or the future. When they agree that the action is in the past, ask if the pronoun is in the past with the verb. “Is I in the past? Did I time-travel back to the past to deliver the sentence?” When the children agree that the pronoun stays in the present, lay out the grammar symbols on the blank chart, restating that the children decided that the action, cooked, is in the past, so we put the verb symbol above the “tracks” to the left of the vertical line. The children also decided that the speaker, you, is still in the present, so we put the pronoun symbol below the “tracks” on the vertical line, as before.

7. Produce the “Past Tense” chart. Place it under the “Present Tense” chart with the sentence below it, and pick up the grammar symbols from the blank chart.

```
I cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.
```

```
I cooked lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.
```

8. Reinforce the concept that the verb is in the past or present tense. The pronoun has no tense.
9. Finally, read the same sentence in the future tense:
   **I shall cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.**

10. Establish that the verb, *shall cook*, takes place in the future while the speaker, *I*, remains in the present. Place the verb and the pronoun on the blank chart while restating the conclusions drawn by the children.

11. Produce the “Future Tense” chart. Place it above the “Present Tense” chart with the sentence below it, and set the grammar symbols and the blank chart to one side.

   ![Future Tense Chart]

   I shall cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.

   ![Present Tense Chart]

   I cook lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.

   ![Blank Chart]

   I cooked lasagna for Garfield in my kitchen.

12. Reinforce the concept that the verb is in the past, present or future tense. The pronoun has no tense.

13. Do a three-period lesson, including asking children to construct past, present or future tense using the blank chart and loose symbols.

14. Give the children various sentences and ask them to identify the verb tense. For extra fun, ask them to change the tense!

TEACHER NOTE: Using the pronoun *I* in this lesson is a bit problematic, as the future tense of a verb with a 1st person pronoun officially and formally takes the form *shall cook* rather than *will cook*. If one writes and speaks completely grammatically accurately, the future tense verb *will cook* is only proper for second and third person singular and plural pronouns. However, using third person singular (he, she, it) compromises verb conjugation as the present tense of the verb often ends in –s. It might seem that second person (you) would be the best choice for demonstrating tense; however, it is difficult to convince some children that the pronoun *you* remains in the present while the verb took place in the past. I find that few (if any) children question the use of the word *shall*, and using the proper auxiliary verb is sows seeds for the future.
Follow-up
This is the time to draw children’s attention to verb tense in everything they are reading, both in expository and narrative writing. This will raise their consciousness of verb tense, but will also give them closely-spaced practice if the subject comes up several times per day for a time.

Written follow-up
Analyze: Children use a blank tenses chart (just the railroad tracks), verb and pronoun symbols, and the sentences from the lesson to recreate the depictions of the three tenses. After a teacher-check to be sure that the pronoun stays in the present, while the verb moves to reflect its tense, they copy the results into their language books.
Synthesize / Utilize: Children sort teacher-provided sentences from current lit group readings and/or from the current read-aloud that have verbs illustrating the three simple tenses. For each sentence, children rewrite the sentence in each of the other two tenses. An interesting conversation can arise from this. What if the book was written entirely in future tense, present, or past tense? How would it feel different to the reader? Why do writers use a mix of tenses in their work? (etc)
Presentation 2: Types of Verbs: Transitive and Intransitive

Materials: sentence analysis boxes 3 and 4 (or two of box 3), grammar symbols, logical analysis chart, prepared sentence strips or materials to write sentences in the lesson, labels TRANSITIVE and INTRANSITIVE, a frame with gold doors and a cut-out figure of a person (optional – classic presentation),

This lesson can be done at this point in the sequence or as part of the secondary verb study, with verb voice (active and passive). If done here, the goal should be to help children recognize that when doing sentence analysis, some verbs need an object and others don’t, and that if a verb takes a direct object, it is sometimes strong enough to support an indirect object as well. The next time we encounter transitive and intransitive verbs, it will be to introduce complements.

1. Lay out two sentences, one with a transitive verb and one with an intransitive verb:
   - Pirates buried the treasure.
   - The little baby cries.
   Ask the children to lay out each of the 2 sentences with circles and arrows.

2. Ask the children what is similar / different between the two sentences. Establish that the first sentence has a direct object and the second does not. In the first sentence the action passes from subject to object. The subject does the action and the object has the action done to it. The pirates bury the treasure and the treasure is buried. Everything relates to the action (predicate).

3. (Optional) Use the doorframe and the figure to illustrate the action passing from the subject to the object by having the figure passing through the door.

4. This sentence has a verb with a special name: transitive verb. Place the label TRANSITIVE. The word transitive comes from the Latin word transire, which means “to pass”. Just as the figure passed through the doorframe, the action passes through the transitive verb. Show transitive verb chart “Complement I”.

5. Now look at the second sentence. This is a S-P sentence: no objects. (Optional) Use the doorframe and the figure to illustrate the action staying on one side of the door. Sometimes there is no need to pass through the doorframe.

6. This sentence also has a verb with a special name: intransitive verb. Place the label INTRANSITIVE. The prefix in- means not. Intransitive, therefore, means not transitive or not to pass. With an intransitive verb, the thought is complete without an object. It can have an object, but it doesn’t have to have one. Show intransitive verb Chart I.

TEACHER NOTE ONE: Some like to make an analogy to football, saying that an intransitive verb is like an incomplete pass: no receiver. This is true, but may not be the most accurate of analogies: an incomplete pass is an unsuccessful play, while a sentence with an intransitive verb is very complete and successful. It is better to think of an intransitive sentences as a running play; however, “incomplete pass” is a nice trick for remembering which verb type is which.
7. Ask the children to use the grammar symbols to symbolize the two sentences, placing the symbols above the words.

8. Introduce the symbol for intransitive verbs: add a small gold circle to the large red circle:

![Symbol Illustration]

The symbol for the transitive verb is the unadorned red verb circle.

9. Give the children several sentences to analyze and symbolize. They should have either S-P-DO or S-P pattern.

10. Add a sentence(s) with an indirect object if taught previously. Note that if a verb is intransitive, not only does it not need a DO, but also it does not need an IO. Recall that sentences cannot have an IO without a DO to support it. Show transitive verb chart “Complement II”.

TEACHER NOTE ONE: A common error is to assume that any sentence that ends with a verb has an intransitive verb, and any with words following the verb is transitive. While the former is a safe bet, the latter is not always true. Consider the sentence

**Cheyenne talks on the phone in the kitchen.**

*Talks* is an intransitive verb. The words following *talks* make up two prepositional phrases: *on the phone* and *in the kitchen*. They are not direct objects. They do not receive the action.

TEACHER NOTE TWO: A common grammatical error is confusion of the verbs *lay* and *lie*. Part of the confusion arises from conjugation: the past tense of *lie* is *lay*!

One way to keep them straight is to look at the definitions carefully. *Lay* means to put down or place something, whereas *lie* means to rest or recline.

Another way (one relating to this lesson) is to recognize that *lay* is a transitive verb, needing an object, while *lie* is intransitive. Consider the following sentences:

She lays down her pen and stands up.
He laid the newspaper on the table.
The table was laid for four.

*She often lies (not lays) down after lunch.*
*When I lay (not laid) down, I fell asleep.*
*The rubbish had lain (not laid) there a week.*
*I was lying (not laying) in bed when he called.*

Most commonly, we American-English speakers are most likely to use *lay* for everything. Consider that statement, “Lie down!” sounds foreign to most of our ears.
SUPER GEEKY TEACHER NOTE (and some foreshadowing): The conjugation chart below shows a regularly conjugated verb (polish) for grounding and comparison, followed by two irregularly conjugated verbs (lay and lie). This illustrates what happens to these two troublemakers when we begin to use Perfect and Progressive Forms of the verbs – very common in everyday language but really challenging when doing irregular conjugations. Note that the Perfect and Progressive Forms shown in this chart will be discussed much later in the album.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Simple Form Present Tense</th>
<th>Simple Form Past Tense</th>
<th>Perfect Form Present Tense</th>
<th>Progressive Form Present Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>polish</td>
<td>Make smooth and glossy</td>
<td>I polish the teakettle</td>
<td>I polished the teakettle</td>
<td>I have polished teakettles before.</td>
<td>I am polishing the teakettle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lay</td>
<td>Put down or place something</td>
<td>I lay the pencil down.</td>
<td>I laid the pencil down.</td>
<td>I have laid the pencil down</td>
<td>I am laying the pencil down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lie</td>
<td>Rest or recline</td>
<td>I lie on the couch.</td>
<td>I lay on the couch.</td>
<td>I have lain on the couch all day.</td>
<td>I was lying on the couch when you came.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow-Up
Analyze / Synthesize: Children analyze a number of teacher-provided sentences. They then symbolize them, using the special symbol for the intransitive verb. This leads to the secondary realization that the simple red predicate symbol does not change. There are no transitive or intransitive predicates!
Utilize: Children write and symbolize at least 3 sentences using a transitive verb and 3 sentences using an intransitive verb.
For extra challenge, write one or more complex sentences that have at least one transitive and one intransitive verb!
Note: Most children who are up to the challenge of the Utilize follow-up will be much more successful if they analyze and symbolize at least 1-2 teacher provided sentences first!

(This is also a great time to practice correct application of lay/lie in isolation.)

Extension
This can be a suitable time for more instruction on commas; commas do not separate the subject and predicate. Children are not likely to make this mistake in simple sentences, but may do so with long or complex sentences (erroneous commas are highlighted and shown in bold):

*The things that cause me joy, may also cause me pain.*
*Navigating through snow, wind, and darkness, can make anyone anxious.*
Preliminary Noun Family Study

Presentation 2a: Noun types – Common/Concrete vs. Abstract
Materials: classification cards – CONCRETE, & ABSTRACT, sorting card set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fun</th>
<th>party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guilt</td>
<td>criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happiness</td>
<td>winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health</td>
<td>vitamins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hope</td>
<td>contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love</td>
<td>puppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wealth</td>
<td>investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace</td>
<td>Gandhi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mix the sorting cards. Tell the children that all of the words on these cards are nouns. Ask them to create pairs of nouns that have a relationship with one another. NOTE: There is more than one way to pair these. A child might pair fun and happiness. However, unless the child can also make an argument that pairs party and winner, he will need to go back and search for better matches.

2. Show the classification cards. Ask the children to explain the difference between concrete and abstract. Ultimately, arrive at the conclusion that a concrete noun names something that occupies space, can be seen and/or can be touched, while an abstract noun is an idea, a quality, or a feeling/ emotion, so it can be felt or sensed. NB: Avoid the definition that concrete nouns can be touched. With that definition, how would one classify a cloud, electricity, or the sun? None can be touched, but all are concrete nouns. Abstract nouns exist only in the mind”, “heart and/or soul”.

3. Tell the children that in each pair, one noun is concrete, while the other is abstract. Set out the classification cards and, pair-by-pair, move one from each set to the concrete column, and the other to the abstract column. If there is a pair where it seems that both are concrete or both are abstract, set the pair aside until the end. There may be a better pairing to be made.

4. Teach the symbol for the abstract noun:
The black triangle represents the noun.
The blue circle represents the idea that since the noun represents a quality, it is somewhat like an adjective, and yet is still a noun.
Follow-up
Analyze: Children sort the provided tickets again independently, adding more abstract – concrete noun pairs.

Synthesize: Students symbolize teacher-provided sentences that have a mixture of concrete and abstract nouns. Passages that describe ideas (such as a paragraph describing Montessori Philosophy) are more likely to bear fruit here!

Utilize: none suggested at this level. Children use abstract nouns in their everyday life already – now they can identify them as nouns with greater confidence.

Extension
A wonderful creative writing experience is writing concrete nouns to visually depict their meaning, such as in concrete poetry, such as this German poem:

```
Apfel (1965) by Reinhard Dohl

Did you look closely enough to find the Wurm?

Here is another concrete poem
```
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio

Silencio (1954) by Eugen Gomringer
Presentation 1: Simple Prepositional Phrases
Review prepositions and prepositional phrases leading into Circles and Arrows work (next lesson)

1. Initiate a discussion with the children to discover what they remember about prepositions. If they received little instruction on prepositions in lower elementary, key points to bring out include the following.
   • Prepositions are joining words, like conjunctions but different.
     - Simple conjunctions join parts that are of equal value – one noun to the next, one verb to the next, one phrase to the next, one clause to the next.
     - Prepositions relate one part of the sentence to another, telling more about the noun or verb in the sentence – its position/location, direction, time, etc.
   • The word preposition comes from the Latin word praepositio, meaning “to place in front”. Prepositions are always placed in front of the noun family that completes the relationship to the noun or verb in the clause. Together, the preposition and the noun/noun phrase are called the prepositional phrase.

         The missing book was under Fred’s bed.
         The missing book was beside Fred’s bed.
         The missing book was on top of Fred’s bed.
         The missing book was inside Fred’s bed.

   • Prepositions are represented in the Montessori system by a green bridge, showing that prepositions bridge from one part of a sentence to another.

2. Choose one of the above sentences and symbolize it. Transpose the noun families (Fred’s bed was beside the missing book). Show that sometimes noun families can be transposed to create a meaningful sentence and sometimes it is just silly!

3. Ask the children to brainstorm prepositions. Since there are over 150 words used as prepositions in the English language, this should be easy. One way to accelerate the brainstorming process is to ask where a frog can be compared to a log. (He can be on the log, under the log…) A very thorough list of prepositions and examples of their use can be found at

         https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/prepositions/list.htm

Their shorter list is provided in the following pages. Be aware that this listing includes 1-word prepositions (the subject of this lesson) and phrasal prepositions like in order to or ahead of (the subject of the Level II preposition lesson). This web page also references a book of prepositions, examples, and quizzes available through the English Club website.
Follow-up
Analyze: Students symbolize only the preposition and its object (the noun family that follows it) in a variety of teacher-provided sentences. The best sentences for symbolizing include unexpected prepositions – those that children may not automatically think of as prepositions. Remember that the real goals of this lesson are to review prepositions and to expand children’s view of prepositions to include phrases!

Synthesize: Students symbolize entire sentences containing prepositional phrases. This is a very helpful activity not only for solidifying children’s understanding of prepositions and prepositional phrases, but also as preparation for the next couple of lessons to come, especially if children are asked to underline prepositional phrases twice in orange. (The color choice relates to where these phrases are placed in sentence analysis.) For example:

The preening rooster on the fence crowed raucously at the sleeping barnyard creatures.

Utilize: A very basic generative activity for children is to have them choose 10 prepositions from the list that follows and create prepositional phrases for each preposition, writing a sentence for each prepositional phrase.

For extra fun, challenge the children to incorporate all of 10 phrases in as few sentences as possible without creating a run-on. This will cause the children to place some prepositional phrases before the predicate (therefore modifying the subject) and some prepositional phrases after the predicate (and therefore modify the predicate or an object. They might even have 2 prepositional phrases in a row! This challenge not only adds fun and creativity to the follow-up activity, but also causes children to write more sophisticated sentences than they might otherwise create. Example (1 sentence with 5 prepositional phrases featuring 5 different prepositions): Despite the presence of the hooded figure in the shadows, the courageous young woman behind the barrier handed the captain aboard The Lusitania the mysterious package.

All levels: A morning “improve my sentence” activity for the next week or two can help children practice creating prepositional phrases in application: give the children sentence(s) devoid of prepositional phrases and ask them to add one or more phrases to each sentence to enliven them.
A Short List of 70 Common One-Word Prepositions in English
from https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/prepositions-list.htm

aboard  inside
about  into
above  like
across  minus
after  near
against  of
along  off
amid  on
among  onto
anti  opposite
around  outside
as  over
at  past
before  per
behind  plus
below  regarding
beneath  round
beside  save
besides  since
between  than
beyond  through
but  to
toward  toward
towards  towards
between  under
below  underneath
beneath  unlike
beside  until
between  up
besides  upon
between  versus
besides  via
between  with
between  within
besides  without
between  in
Secondary Grammar Studies leading to Sophisticated Reading and Writing

The academic staircase is now spiraling higher. Each of these lessons builds directly on lessons from Part I. It is possible to stay within a single topic and to bounce from Part I to Part II. For example, one could give the lesson on active and passive voice of verbs (Part II) right after the transitive and intransitive verbs lesson (Part I). On the surface, the latter concept is not significantly more challenging than the first. However, it is far more sophisticated. Having a thorough understanding of the basics of sentence analysis (S, P, DO) will make understanding active and passive voice fairly trivial for most children!

Proceeding in this manner heightens the importance of reviewing prior learning at the beginning of each group of lessons. If children have forgotten key concepts, take whatever time is necessary to ensure that they are confident before forging ahead!

Once again, throughout this section, an effort is made to provide a variety of follow-up activities following the general pattern wherein the most straightforward follow-up has the child repeat the isolated difficulty demonstrated in the lesson (Analyze); the second level will have the child integrate this learning with previous learning, often to write something to illustrate the lesson (Synthesize); the third level will have the child apply that knowledge to his/her own writing in some kind of generative activity (Utilize). If the subject of that activity is a current cultural or Writer’s Workshop study, twice the benefit can be gained from a single activity. Recall that children can do more than one level of work in a single follow-up, combining a bit of practice from each of two or three levels rather than more extensive practice at a single level. Variety is the spice of life: keep the follow-up requirements and options varied for maximum interest from the children.
Presentation 2: Object Complements (transitive verbs)

Materials: Prepared sentence strips, circles and arrows box 4, labels for the two object complements, Transitive Verb charts 1-4.

1. Ask the children to define transitive and intransitive verbs and give a sentence that illustrates each type.

2. Tell the children that the focus is now narrowing to look at transitive verbs in greater detail. Produce transitive verb charts Transitive Verb chart 1: Direct Object and Transitive Verb chart 2: Indirect Object + Direct Object. Remind the children that they have seen these charts before. Ask the children to create a few sentences that illustrate each of the two examples. IMPORTANT: withhold the charts for Complement 3 & 4 until the end of the lesson! When children logic through the lesson with you, they are far more likely to retain it than if they are told in advance what the “punch line” is.

3. There is a third pattern for transitive verbs. In these types of sentences, there is a modifier that follows the direct object. For example:

   The new parents named the baby Barry.
   The decorator painted the living room black.

In both sentences there is something called an object complement. It either renames or further characterizes the direct object. Ask the children to symbolize the two sentences and to find the object complements in the example sentences.

4. Object complements complete the meaning of the direct object. Knowing that the parents named the baby is fine; adding the object complement Barry gives more complete information. A decorator painting the living room is not an unusual occurrence; when the object complement tells us that room is black, we have much more information.

5. Ask the children if there is anything about the symbolizing of these sentences that is troubling. (If the children express concern that there are two nouns in a row with no comma or that there is an adjective that follows the noun that it modifies, celebrate! If not, lead them to that dilemma.) “Hmm….. Perhaps we can analyze these sentences to help us understand this.”

6. Ask the children to use circles and arrows to analyze the sentences. They will undoubtedly put the baby Barry and the living room black onto the DO circle. Express concern about putting the receiver of the action and the words that
restate or describe the receiver on the same wooden piece – they have different jobs! “Perhaps Object Complements should have their own symbol…”

7. Introduce the black and blue triangles from the circles and arrows box. In the two example sentences, one of the complements functions as a noun, and one functions as an adjective. Show the children how to lay out each of the two object complements with the arrow pointing from the triangle back to the direct object that it renames or describes. NOTE: place arrows with blank side up – these are not attributives or appositives.

8. Explain that if one wants to sound super-sophisticated (snooty, stereotypical high-society optional), the black triangle can be said to represent the Nominative Object Complement or the Noun Object Complement; the blue triangle then represents that Adjectival Object Complement or Adjective Object Complement. The important thing is to be able to identify what follows the DO as an Object Complement, to explain why there are two nouns in a row without a comma or conjunction between them, and why the adjective is following the noun that it modifies.


Follow-up
Analyze: Children symbolize and analyze teacher-provided sentences that illustrate each of the four patterns for transitive verbs. (Be sure to throw in a few intransitive verbs just to keep that learning alive!)

Synthesize: Children write 1 or more sentences to illustrate each of the four transitive verb patterns.

Utilize: To apply this cross-curricularly is a bit of a challenge because object complements are rare in everyday communication; in point of fact, sentences with indirect objects are fairly unusual as well. Some ideas that may present opportunities:

- request that the sentences include facts about a current cultural topic
- request that the children write a descriptive or narrative paragraph that incorporates at least one sentence of each type into the piece. (Children can be given a prompt for this or allowed to choose their own topic.)

These are very artificial writing experiences that will lead to more natural applications in spontaneous writing.
Presentation 1: The Infinitive
Materials: Prepared sentences, labels VERBAL and Infinitive, box of grammar symbols, circles and arrows box III or IV.

1. Ask the children to symbolize and analyze the following sentence:
   I like classic movies.
2. Ask the children to symbolize and analyze the following sentence:
   I like to swim.
The second sentence will prove to be the more challenging. Analyzing the sentence will not be difficult. However, the children will hopefully balk or get into a discussion about how to symbolize to swim.

3. Tell the children that sometimes there are words that look like verbs but act like other parts of speech, especially members of the noun family. In the latter sentence, to swim is the direct object. By all rights, the word(s) that occupy that space should be a noun or noun family. But to swim is not a noun.

Words that look like verbs but act like other parts of speech are called verbals.

4. There are three types of verbals. The one being discussed in this lesson is called the infinitive. The symbol for an infinitive is a silver circle. It is the same size as the verb.

   ![Infinitive symbol]

Infinitives take the form to + the simple form of the verb. In this form, it can act like a noun, and adjective or even as an adverb!
noun (subject or object!):  
To run is a healthy habit.  
I love to sing.

adjective (modifies subject or object, following the noun that it modifies):  
The way to succeed is clear.  
It is time to go.

adverb (various applications):  
I read to learn. (modifies verb)  
He was delighted to help. (modifies adjective)  
They ran too fast to lose. (modifies adverb)

Infinitives can fill more roles than any other verbals. The word *infinitive* comes from the root word *infinitius* meaning unlimited or infinite. There is only one rule about infinitives! DO NOT split *to* and *the verb*.

The ringmaster is trained to handle wild animals easily.  
NOT  
The ringmaster is trained to easily handle wild animals.

Follow-up  
Analyze: Children symbolize teacher-provided sentences, each containing infinitive(s), indicating if each infinitive is functioning as a noun, adjective, or adverb with initials in or adjacent to the silver circle.  
Children can also take a page from a current novel or from their own writing and go on an infinitive hunt. They are actually fairly common. Highlight each infinitive. (These may be saved for future follow-ups.)

Synthesize: Children symbolize and analyze teacher-provided sentences (fewer sentences than those at the Analyze stage due to the extra effort for each sentence), analyzing the sentences with wooden circles and arrows to support identifying each verb by type (transitive, complete intransitive, or linking intransitive):

Transitive verb: I love to skydive.  
(infinitive is the DO because it answers the question, “I love what?”; the infinitive is acting as a noun)

Simple intransitive verb: Athletes compete to win.  
(infinitive is an adverbial modifier – orange circle -- because it answers the question, “Why?” – adverbial modifier of purpose)

Linking intransitive verb: The goal is to win.  
(infinitive is a predicate noun because it follows a linking verb and renames the subject: goal = to win)

Utilize: Children already utilize infinitives liberally in their oral and written work. Utilization of infinitives in isolation is not especially needed.
Presentation 4: Parallelism (A Literary Device)

Materials: white board or flip-chart paper, sentences on strips or on a handout.

1. With the children, explore the term parallel from a geometric standpoint. Then ask them to reason out what parallel structure might mean in writing.

2. Explain that parallelism in writing is having similar structure in a pair or a series of words, phrases, or clauses. Show examples of sentences illustrating two kinds of parallelism on strips of paper:

   I like math, geometry, and poetry.
   I like to read, to ride my bicycle, and to pester my little brother.

3. Ask the children to identify the parallelism in each sentence and to name it. (The first sentence has parallel nouns and the second has parallel infinitives.)

4. Cut each of the sentences apart after the first in the series and swap the second halves to produce new sentences.

   I like math, to ride my bicycle, and to pester my little brother.
   I like to read, geometry, and poetry.

5. Explore the flow of the two new sentences. While there is no true grammatical error here, these sentences lack unity and balance. They are not as coherent as the first two sentences. When items in a list are not arranged in parallel grammar form, it is referred to as faulty parallelism. While parallelism is a literary device (not a rule) it does make our writing easier to understand and more clear; it is a more sophisticated writing style. It also adds a sense of rhythm to sentences because of the repetition, giving ideas smoother flow.

6. Show some examples of parallelism and for several (or each) have the children identify the parallel elements.

   Alice ran into the room, into the garden, and into our hearts.
   Whenever you need me, wherever you need me, I will be there for you.
   Like father, like son.
   Easy come, easy go.
   They got together, conversed, and dispersed, but to no avail.
   He came, he saw, and he conquered.
   He wanted to have a new house to live in and a new car to drive.
   I tried to reach her by telephone, email, and snail mail.
   James liked fast food, while Mary liked conventional food.
   Shakespeare was a prolific playwright and an excellent sonneteer.
   The culprit was wanted dead or alive.
7. Show examples of sentences with faulty parallelism. Break down the sentence (cut it apart, if written on a sentence strip) to portray it as a list, as shown below. This is a way to shine a spotlight on the words or phrases that should parallel one another.

Sir Humphry Davy was an excellent literary critic as well as being a great scientist.

Sir Humphry Davy was
- an excellent literary critic (as well as) - noun phrase
- being a great scientist. - verbal phrase

Brainstorm ways to repair the flow. (Sir Humphry Davy was an excellent literary critic as well as a great scientist.)

8. Note that there is an obvious choice in the above sentence; typically there is more than one way to repair the sentence.

Sal's promotion means that she will be moving to another state and take the children with her.

Sal's promotion means that she
- will be moving to another state (and) - compound future tense verb
- take the children with her. - simple present tense verb

...can be changed to...

Sal's promotion means that she
- will move to another state (and) - simple future tense verb
- will take the children with her. - simple future tense verb

Sal's promotion means that she will move to another state and will take the children with her.

OR

Sal's promotion means that she will be
- moving to another state (and) - present participle
- taking the children with her. - present participle

Sal's promotion means that she will be moving to another state and taking the children with her.

OR

Sal's promotion means that she
- will be moving to another state (and) - compound future tense verb
- will be taking the children with her. - compound future tense verb

Sal's promotion means that she will be moving to another state and will be taking the children with her.

9. Discuss the change in the way the new sentence makes the reader feel about what has been written. Show more examples as interest remains.
Follow-up
Analyze: Provide sentences that exhibit faulty parallelism for children to correct. The evident mastery (or discomfort) of the children in the lesson will dictate whether or not to ask children to break the sentence down to where the elements form a list, as above. (Conduct an Internet search on parallelism for grammar sites for ample examples of faulty parallelism.)

Synthesize: Provide sentences, some of which have faulty parallelism and some of which do not, asking children to repair only those needing help.

Utilize: Provide prompts that invite answers that are words or phrases in a series, asking for a 1-sentence response to each. (What were some of the more common occupations in Ancient Egypt? If you could take 3-5 items with you on a world tour, what would you take? What are the steps in the Scientific Method? Etc.)

Extension
Teach the rules for the use of a colon. Colons are used only at the end of an independent clause to say, “that is to say”, “here’s what I mean” or sometimes “here is a list”. If there are more than 2 items that follow the colon, they are separated by commas. A quick and effective way to tell if a colon is appropriate is to substitute the word “namely”. For example:

I love so many vegetables, namely Brussels sprouts, spinach, and zucchini.

I love so many vegetables: Brussels sprouts, spinach, and zucchini.

She got what she asked for, namely a raise in her allowance

She got what she asked for: a raise in her allowance

If what follows the colon is a series of long phrases or clauses, semicolons are used to separate the items on the list. This is to avoid confusion, especially if the long phrases or clauses have commas within them! For example:

There are many things to do in the heart of Denver: take a walking tour of historic buildings; browse and shop on the 16th Street Mall; spend the day riding, splashing, and screaming at Elitch Garden’s Theme and Water Park; or tour any of the great museums that the city has to offer!

(Notice that the words that are underlined here illustrate the concept of the lesson, parallelism.)