

Introduction 0.1.4
English syntax: a rehearsal

The purpose of this rehearsal is to suggest a simplified code for recognizing syntactical structures. You will notice that I do not indicate details such as person, number, tense or mood of a verb, since my purpose is not to describe the "anatomy" of the passage but its "physiology." These are the abbreviations and symbols I use, and the strategies I suggest.

- a) Begin by identifying all the *conjugated verbs, that is to say, verbs in personal forms* ("they work," rather than "to work" or "working" even though these are verbal forms too. Mark them simply with **V**.
- b) As soon as you can, mark, at least tentatively, the units to which they belong, which may be main clauses or dependent clauses, as follows.

[Mark main clauses or independent sentences enclosing them within square brackets.] An independent sentence does not have any clause completing its meaning, whereas "main clause" is a concept relative to that of a "dependent clause" that modifies it. We will use the term "main clauses" both for independent sentences and for genuine main clauses.

(Mark dependent clauses enclosing them in round parentheses.) Initially, we will simply dub them "dependent clauses," but later we will indicate what their function as clauses is in the general context. To pursue the body metaphor I am using, calling them all "dependent clauses" is equivalent to referring to the pancreas or the tongue as "internal organs." Not very useful, but it will be provisional.

- c) Look for a **subject** of the first verb you have marked. In English the subject will be usually apparent, yet in Greek it may be implicit in the verb. Mark the subject as **S** and, if it is only made clear by the ending of the verb (as in English, e.g., the ending -s represents the 3rd person singular), you may mark the verb as **S + V**.

<i>main clause</i>				
[He would not have given the counsel] S V DO	<i>conditional clause</i>			
	(if he had not believed) S V	<i>indirect...</i>		<i>...statement</i>
		((that...	<i>subject of the indirect statement</i>	<i>... would come true.))</i> V PN
			((((what he said))) DO S V	

(Click here for the list of abbreviations. The functions they represent, however, will only become clear once we start working on the syntax of English and Greek. This is just an illustration.)