Sentence Pattern Three: Subject–Verb–Indirect Object–Direct Object (S-V-IO-DO)

This pattern adds one more element to that of Sentence Pattern Two. That element is called the indirect object. The pattern is subject plus action verb plus indirect object plus direct object. Many times, the indirect object is found by asking To whom? or To what? after the verb and the direct object. The questions go like this: The subject did what to whom? Look at the examples to see this pattern. In these examples, the subjects are boldface, the verbs are underlined once, the direct objects are underlined twice, and the indirect objects are italicized.

Example: Bobby Bowden gave quarterbacking in college his undivided attention.

Example: He taught others the game.

Example: Florida State University paid him the ultimate compliment.

Adapted from: http://www.theledger.com/top50/pages/bowden.html.

In the first example, to find the indirect object, you ask: Bowden gave attention to what? The answer is quarterbacking, which is the indirect object. You follow the same process in the second example. He taught the game to whom? The answer is others, which is the indirect object. Finally,
you can see the pattern in the third example: *The University paid the
compliment to whom?* The answer, *him*, is the indirect object. The indirect
objects are diagrammed as follows:

**Example:**  **Bobby Bowden** gave *quarterbacking* in college his
undivided **attention**.

**Diagram:**

```
Bobby Bowden     gave     attention
             (to)    quarterbacking
```

**Example:**  **He** taught **others** the *game*.

**Diagram:**

```
He             taught     game
            (to)     others
```

In each of these diagrams, you can see that the indirect object is placed on a
line under the verb. The word *to* is placed on a slanted line, in parentheses,
because the preposition is understood. In fact, you could rewrite the sentence
with the preposition, and you would have an object of the preposition rather
than a direct object. For example, the last diagram would read, *He taught the
game to others.* Remember that the indirect object occurs between the verb
and the direct object. You can practice locating indirect objects in the following exercise.