

An Introductory English Grammar

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Basic Sentence Patterns



Pattern 8: N1 TrV N2 N3

Example: The mother bought the girl a dress.

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❖ Seven matters should be taken into consideration in this pattern:

1. The superscripts 1, 2, and 3 indicate that each noun has a different referent: *mother*, *girl*, and *dress* are three separate entities.
1. We see two grammatical objects after the verb *bought*. These two objects are called, in order, the indirect and direct object.

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3. The indirect object may often be replaced by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* or *for*, or occasionally with a different preposition.

Example: He sold *the student* a ticket.

He sold a ticket *to the student*.

4. The verbs that can be used in this pattern are in restricted group. Some of the common ones are *give, find, tell, buy, write, send, and so on*.

5. A pattern 8 sentence may be transformed into the passive by making either the direct or the indirect object the subject of the passive verb:

A dress was bought the girl by her mother.

The girl was bought a dress by her mother.

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6. The grammatical meaning of the indirect object is “beneficiary of the action of the verb-plus-direct-object.”

7. If a pronoun is used in the position the direct object (N3), it must be the first of the two objects:

- The mother bought it for the girl.**