

The 18 Propositions: showing how the author intended to convey meaning through connected sentences

Type		Name	Definition	Key Words	Example 1	Example 2
Coordinate	one proposition does not support the other, but each makes its own contribution in the whole	1. Series	Each proposition makes its own independent contribution to a whole - Main clauses are COEXISTING	And, moreover, furthermore, likewise, neither, nor, etc.	(series) The sun will be darkened, (series) And the moon will not give its light, (series) And the stars will fall from heaven, (series) And the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Mt. 24:29	(series) For everyone who asks receives, (series) and he who seeks finds, (series) and to him who knocks it will be opened. Matt 7:8
		2. Progression	Like series, but each proposition is a further step toward a climax - Main clauses are CLIMAXING	Then, and moreover, furthermore, etc.	(progression) Those whom he predestined he also called; (progression) And those whom he called he also justified; (progression) And those whom he justified, he also glorified." Rom 8:30	(progression) The soil produces crops by itself; (progression) first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. Mk. 4:28
		3. Alternative	Each proposition expresses a different possibility arising from a situation. Main clauses are CONTRASTING	Or, but, while, on the other hand, etc.	(alternative) Some were convinced (alternative) While others disbelieved. Acts 28:24	(alternative) "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. (alternative) A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?" Jn 10:20-21
Subordinate	Support by RES TATEMENT	1. Action - Manner	The statement of an action, and then a more precise statement which indicates the way or manner in which this action is carried out	In that, by, etc. (in Greek it is the adverbial participle of means that distinguishes this from Idea – Explanation)	(action-main clause) God has not left himself without a witness (manner-subordinate clause) In that he gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons. Acts 28:24	(action-main clause) He emptied Himself, (manner-subordinate clause) taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Phil 2:7
		2. Comparison	The relationship between statements expressing an action clearer by showing what it is like.	Even as, as...so, like just as	(comparison) As my Father has sent me, (main clause) So I send you. John 20:21	(main clause) Be imitators of me, (comparison) just as I also am of Christ. 1 Cor 11:1
		3. Negative - Positive	The relationship between two alternatives, one of which is denied so that the other is enforced - contrasting statements	Not...but	(-) (main clause) Do not be foolish, (+) (adversative clause) But understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph 5:17	(-) (main clause) He does not give help to angels, (+) (adversative clause) but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Heb 2:16
		4. Idea - Explanation	The relationship between an original statement and one clarifying its meaning (may only clarify one word from the main clause)	That is	(idea-main clause) Jacob supplanted me these two times; (explanation) He took away my birthright and (explanation) now he has taken away my blessing. Gen 27:36	(idea-main clause) 6I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him...for a different gospel; (explanation) 7which is really not another; Gal 1:6-7
		5. Question – Answer	Statement of question and answer to that question	Look for the question mark	(question) What does Scripture say? (answer-main clause) Abraham believed God... Rom 4:3	(question) Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? Rom 6:1-2 (answer-main clause) 2May it never be!

Type	Name	Definition	Key Words	Example 1	Example 2	
Subordinate	Support by DISTINCT statement	1. Ground	The relationship between a statement and the argument or reason for the statement (supporting proposition FOLLOWS)	For, because, since, etc. (In Ground, the conclusion comes first)	(main clause) Blessed are the poor in spirit, (ground) For there is the kingdom of God Matt 5:3	(if) But if they do not have self-control, (then) let them marry; (If/Th main clause) (Ground) for it is better to marry than to burn with passion (1 Cor 7:9)
		2. Inference	The relationship between a statement and the argument or reason for the statement (supporting proposition PRECEEDS)	Therefore, wherefore, consequently, accordingly, etc. (In Inference, the conclusion comes second)	(main clause) The end of all things is at hand, (inference) Therefore be sensible and sober in prayer. 1 Pet 4:7	(-) consider yourselves to be dead to sin, (Rom 6:11-12) (+&- = main clause) (+) but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (inference) 12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body
		3. Action - Result	The relationship between an action and a consequence or result which accompanies that action	So that, that, with the result that	(action) There arose a great storm in the sea, (result) so that the boat was being swamped by the waves. Matt 8:24	(action) For God so loved the world, (result) that He gave His only begotten Son. John 3:16
		4. Action - Purpose	The relationship between an action and the one that is intended to come as a result.	In order that, so that, that, with a view to, to the end that, lest	(action) Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand (purpose) That he may lift you up. 1 Pet 5:6	(action) For I long to see you (purpose) so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you. Rom 1:11
		5. Conditional (if-then)	This is like Action-Result except that the existence of the action is only potential	If...then, provided that, except	(if-conditional clause) If you are led by the spirit, (then-main clause) You are not under the law. Gal 5:18	(if) Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, (then) you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Gal 6:1)
		6. Temporal	The relationship between the main proposition and the occasion when it can occur	When, whenever, after, before	(temporal clause) When you fast, (main clause) Do not look gloomy. (Matt. 6:16)	(main clause) Blessed are you (temporal) when men hate you. Luke 6:22
		7. Locative	The relationship between a proposition and the place where it can be true	Where, wherever	(locative) Where two or three are gathered together in my name, (main clause) there I am in their midst (Matt 18:20)	(main clause) Now the Lord is the Spirit, (locative) and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor 3:17
		8. Bilateral	A bilateral proposition supports two other propositions, one preceding and one following	Same conjunctions as Ground and Inference	(main) Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, (bilateral phrase) For you will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. (main clause) Let the peoples praise you, O God. Ps 67:4-5	(main clause) for you who judge practice the same things. (bilateral) 2And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those (Rom 2:1b-2) (main clause) who practice such things.
	Support by CONTRARY statement	1. Concessive	The relationship between a main clause and a contrary statement	Although...yet, although, yet, nevertheless, but however	(concessive) Although he was a Son, (main clause) he learned obedience from what he suffered. Heb 5:8	(concessive) for if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, (main clause) yet you would not have many fathers. 1 Cor 4:15
		2. Situation - Response	The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another		(situation) How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, (response) And you would not. Matt 23:37	(situation) I did one deed, (response) and you all marvel. John 7:21

The 18 Propositions: A proposition makes a statement about something, for example, “I ate”. A proposition always has a SUBJECT and a VERB. There are two main categories of ways that two or more complete thoughts can relate to one another: they coordinate together or one is subordinate to the other further explaining it in some manner. Of the 18 total ways complete thoughts can relate to one another, the first three propositions COORDINATE, in that each contributes separately to the flow of what the author is saying. The other 15 propositions are all SUBORDINATE, in that they further define another proposition. They can be grouped in three types of subordinate propositions: subordinate propositions that **RESTATE** the main clause, subordinate propositions that make a **DISTINCT** statement about the main clause, or subordinate propositions that support the main clause by making a **CONTRARY** statement. Setting forth and tracing the building blocks help us to see the reasoning, logic, and flow of an argument. Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, Dr. Thomas Schreiner, Baker Book House

Practical instructions: Step 1 - put one subject with one verb on each line. Do that for the whole section of Scripture. Step 2 - start to determine how each complete thought relates to another complete thought. Start with one pair or series and identify each one. Leave some blank, and start with the easy ones. Step 3 - go back as your understanding of the passage unfolds and put a guess in front of each sentence. It is like working with clay or a sculpture - keep chipping away at this in an iterative fashion. Step 4 - cluster sentences together. This is called “working left” meaning look for how multiple propositions then relate as a group to other sections of the text. Fill out columns to the left of the column before the verse. Merge the cells or shade with a pencil. For example, verse 4 and 5 below are two sides of the same coin: one sentence is a plus and one is a minus contrasting the two thoughts. That is all part of how Paul provides “Explanation” in more detail to his “Idea” about Abraham in verse 2-3. Further, Abraham is how Paul provides the “Answer” to the “Question” he raises in verse 1. Remember, each sentence or proposition stands on its own and relates to other sentences, and groups of sentences relate to other groups of sentences as you “widen out the lens” to see the overall flow of thought in the paragraph.

Example 1: Romans 4

Arcing:				Passage: Romans 4:1-8	
Question				1What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?	
Answer	Idea	+	If	2For if Abraham was justified by works,	
			Then	[then] he has something to boast about,	
		Main	but [he has no reason for boasting] before God.		
	Ground	-	Action	3For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD,	
			Result	AND [as a consequence] IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”	
	Explain		+	4Now [let me explain further:] to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.	
-			5But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,		
Comparison		Idea		6just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:	
		Explain	Series	7 [He says:] “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,	
			Series	AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.	
		Series	8 [and] “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”		