

# A GUIDE TO BASIC NAVAJO SENTENCE STRUCTURES



Diné College  
**LEARNING CENTER**  
Chinle · Crownpoint · Shiprock · Tsailie · Tuba City · Window Rock

## BASE FORMAT



**Note:** Writing in the Navajo language can only be grammatically correct while a subject, object, and verb exist in a S-O-V order. Notice that Navajo sentences end with a verb, which is different from the English language.

Tl'ízi yázhí tl'oh ayíłchozh.

## ADDING LOCATION/TIME AND ADVERBS



Tl'ízi yázhí i'í'áádaá' tl'oh altsq ayíłchozh.

**Note:** Location and time can be added before or after the subject. Both location and time can be interchangeable or switched. Like the English language, adverbs may be added before the verb.

## ADDING ADJECTIVES



Tsé Nitsaa Deez'áhídi, Tl'ízi yázhí lizhinígíí, i'í'áádaá' tl'oh díłdzidgo altsq ayíłchozh.

**Note:** When adding adjectives, they should immediately follow a noun, such as a subject or object. The adjective should describe the noun.

## ADDING POSTPOSITIONS



Tl'ízi yázhí lizhinígíí, shúighah, i'í'áádaá' tl'oh díłdziidgo altsq ayíłchozh.

**Note:** Postpositions, like adjectives, come after a noun. It relates that noun to some other word in the sentence, usually in terms of physical position.

### Postposition Examples

Shikáá' | níkáá' | bikáá' | yikáá' | hakáá' | *on top of*  
Shinaa | ninaa | binaa | yinaa | hanaa | *around*  
Shine' | nine' | bine' | yine' | hane' | *behind*

## ADDING ENCLITICS



Navajo sentences should end with a verb. When adding an enclitic to the ending verb, a verb must be added.

Tl'ízi yázhí lizhinígíí, shúighah, i'í'áádaá' tl'oh díłdziidgo altsq ayíłchozhígíí hanáyiiskoh.

**Note:** Enclitics are closely connected in pronunciation with a preceding word. Adding enclitics allow a sentence to become more complex, by adding more information.

### Types of Enclitics

|             |                     |               |       |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-------|
| Noun-making | -ígíí   -í   -ii    | Time          | -dáá' |
| Space       | -d'éé'   -gi   -góó | Subordinating | -go   |

## Legend

- A** Adverb
- E** Enclitic
- L/T** Location/Time
- O** Object
- Oa** Object (adjective)
- P** Postposition
- S** Subject
- Sa** Subject (adjective)
- V** Verb