

English Syntax

Memo

from: Niall Ross
to: Some User Group
date: 12 sep 2013.

Guys,
attend the Smalltalk course;
bring your friends.

Sentence = Subject Verb Object.

full stop / period: ends sentences

colon: separates equal clauses

What is the date? 12 sep 2013. What is 12 sep 2013? It's the date.

semi-colon: clauses share syntactic element (the Subject is shared)



Suppose you are speaking about Smalltalk to some group accustomed to curly-bracket syntax. How do you avoid someone complaining that “Smalltalk’s syntax is really weird!”

At or near the start of your talk, show a slide like the above-the-line part of this slide. Suggest that you sent it to some of the group and say how glad you are they came. Move from that to the fact that obviously they found it possible to understand. Say you’re happy with that since it means they’ll have no difficulty reading your Smalltalk code examples since [AS YOU MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE] it’s very like Smalltalk ...

Smalltalk Syntax

Memo

from: 'Niall Ross'
to: 'Some User Group'
date: (12 sep: 2013).

Guys

attend: smalltalkCourse;
bring: friends.

Statement = Receiver Message Argument

full stop / period: ends statements

colon: separates keyword and value

date='12 sep 2013'. '12 sep 2013'=date.

semi-colon: clauses share syntactic element (the Receiver is shared)



(To the user group, this second slide shows just the above-the-line text, like the first slide.)

Explain that the red characters show the (minimal) changes we had to make to turn the English into Smalltalk.

Switch to a workspace with the same first four lines of text as the slide above:

Memo

from: 'Niall Ross'
to: 'Some User Group'
date: (23 may: 2013).

Select those lines and inspectIt. OR have your slides in a Smalltalk presentation framework (e.g. Martin's in the Cincom Open Repository) so you can select those lines in the slide and inspectIt.

Then briefly go through the analogies. A third slide can be the first slide with the below-the-line text, or you can just say it. The fourth can be this second slide with the below-the-line text, or you can just say it.