Parsing, **syntax analysis**, or **syntactic analysis** is the process of analyzing a string of symbols, either in natural language, computer languages or data structures, conforming to the rules of a formal grammar. The term *parsing* comes from Latin *pars* (*orationis*), meaning part (of speech).[1]

The term has slightly different meanings in different branches of linguistics and computer science. Traditional sentence parsing is often performed as a method of understanding the exact meaning of a sentence or word, sometimes with the aid of devices such as sentence diagrams. It usually emphasizes the importance of grammatical divisions such as subject and predicate.

Within computational linguistics the term is used to refer to the formal analysis by a computer of a sentence or other string of words into its constituents, resulting in a parse tree showing their syntactic relation to each other, which may also contain semantic and other information (p-values).[*citation needed*] Some parsing algorithms may generate a *parse forest* or list of parse trees for a syntactically ambiguous input.[2]

The term is also used in psycholinguistics when describing language comprehension. In this context, parsing refers to the way that human beings analyze a sentence or phrase (in spoken language or text) "in terms of grammatical constituents, identifying the parts of speech, syntactic relations, etc."[1] This term is especially common when discussing what linguistic cues help speakers to interpret garden-path sentences.