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# PARTS OF SPEECH

Words are grouped into eight classes or parts of speech, accordingto their function, place, meaning, and use in a sentence. The parts of speech are:

* + - **Nouns**
    - **Pronouns**
    - **Verbs**
    - **Adjectives**
    - **Adverbs**
    - **Prepositions**
    - **Conjunctions**
    - **Interjection**

## FORM VS. FUNCTION Many words are not confined to one part of speech, but may function in several capacities. Consider the word “light” in the following contexts:

* As you **light** the candle, say a prayer. (verb)
* The **light** glowed at the end of the pier. (noun)
* Use a **light** touch when you pet the frightened cat. (adjective)
* When packing for a long trip, be sure to pack **light** to save space. (adverb)

# NOUNS

A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | **Repetition** does not transform a **lie** into **truth.** |

Nouns:

* Often appear with an article (**a** spoon, **an** apple, **the** newspaper).
* Can usually be made plural (one **kitten**, two **kittens**).
* Can usually be made possessive (the **kitten's** paw).
* Can be a **subject, direct object, indirect object, subject complement, object complement,** or **object of apreposition.**

## PROPER NOUNS AND COMMON NOUNS

**Proper nouns** are the names of specific persons, places, and things. All other nouns are **common nouns.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Proper Nouns** | **Common Nouns** |
| Book of Jeremiah | a book |
| Father John | a priest |
| Lake Superior | a lake |
| Declaration of Independence | a treaty |

## COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A **collective noun** stands for a group of people, animals, or things.

* **Collective nouns** can work with either singular or plural verbs, or pronouns, without changing their form.
* If a collective is a single unit, it takes a singular verb or singular pronoun to refer to it.
* If the individuals are working separately, the noun takes plural verbs or pronouns.

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| **Examples:** | The **jury** **agreed** on its verdict. (The **jury** is acting as a single unit, so the noun needs a singular verb.) |
|  | The **jury** **were arguing** about their views. (Individuals on the **jury** arearguing, so the noun is treated as plural.) |

### Common Collective Nouns

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| audience | Congress | group | team |
| class | faculty | herd | troop |
| crew | family | jury | U.S. Senate |
| committee | flock | mob |  |

## POSSESSIVE NOUNS

**Possessive nouns** are noun forms that show ownership, possession, or similar relationships. To show possession:

* Add an apostrophe before the last “s” if the word is singular.
* Add an apostrophe after the “s” if the word is plural.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | Incorrect: The boys foot hurt after he took a long hike. |
|  | Correct: The boy's foot hurt after he took a long hike. |
|  | Correct: The boys’ feet hurt after they took a long hike. |

# PRONOUNS

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun. The pronoun usually substitutes for a specific noun, known as its **antecedent** (‘the words before”).

Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in *number* (she or they), in *person* (I, you, him), and in *gender* (he, she, it).

## COMMON PRONOUNS

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject of a sentence (Nominative)** |
| I, you, he, she, it, we, they |
| **Object of a verb (Objective)** |
| me, you, him, her, it, us, them |
| **Ownership of the antecedent (Possessive)** |
| my/mine, your/yours, his, her/hers, its, our/ours, their/theirs |

## TYPES OF PRONOUNS

|  |
| --- |
| * Demonstrative: Refers to things (**this, that, these, those**) |
| * Intensive: Ends in self, selves (**myself, itself, herself, himself, yourself)** |
| * Indefinite: Indefinite reference to nouns (**each, one, all, anybody, some, everyone**) |
| * Interrogative: Used in questions (**who, which, what, whose, whom**) |
| * Personal: Refers to people or things (**I, you, he, she, it, we, they**) |
| * Possessive: Does not take an apostrophe (**its, her, theirs**) |
| * Reciprocal: Refers back to individual parts of plural terms (**each other, one another**) |
| * Reflexive: Intensifies nouns they refer back to (**yourselves, themselves**) |
| * Relative: Relates dependent clause to a noun (**who, which, that, what, whom**) |

# ADJECTIVES

An **adjective** is a modifier that describes nouns and pronouns. It may appear before or after the word it modifies.

An adjective usually answers one of these questions: **Which one? What kind of? How many?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | The **tame** elephant. (**Which** elephant?) |
|  | Her **rare, valuable, old** stamps. (**What kind of** stamps?) |
|  | These **sixteen** candles. (**How many** candles?) |

## TYPES OF ADJECTIVES

* Descriptive(**gray** sky, **beautiful** garden)
* Proper (**Buddhist, Italian**)
* Limiting or possessive**—**these adjectives do not describe qualities, but instead identify or specify the words they modify **(this** sky, **my** garden, **its** name)

**Note:** Adjectives do not change form based on number: **new** student (singular); **new** students(plural).

**ADJECTIVE FORMS**

Adjectives (and adverbs) appear in three forms: **positive, comparative**, and **superlative**. The positive, or **simple**, form is the form most common in speech and writing. Use the comparative and superlative forms to make comparisons:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| hungry | hungrier | hungriest |
| small | smaller | smallest |
| good | better | best |

# VERBS

A **verb** is a word that indicates action or existence, expressing what a subject does or is.

**FORMS OF A VERB**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | *First person*: I walk.  *Second person*: You walk.  *Third person*: He/She/It walks. | **Number** | *Singular*: It walks.  *Plural*: They walk. |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Tense** | *Past*: I walked outside.  *Present*: I walk outside.  F*uture*: I will walk outside. | **Voice** | A*ctive voice*: The fans watched the game.  *Passive voice*: The game was watched by the fans. |
| **Mood** | *Imperative*: Listen!  *Indicative*: You are listening.  *Subjunctive*: I wish you would listen. |  |  |

**PRIMARY VERB FORMS**

All English verbs, with the exception of ***be***, have five primary forms:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Base Form** | **Present Tense** | **Present Participle** | **Past Tense** | **Past Participle** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| look | looks | looking | looked | looked |
| walk | walks | walking | walked | walked |
| watch | watches | watching | watched | watched |

1. The **base form** is used for the present tense when the subject of the verb is **I, you, we, they,** or aplural noun**.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | I **talk** and you **listen.** |

1. The **present tense** indicates action in the present when the subject is third-person singular (**he, she, it** or a **singular noun).**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | He **walks** while she **talks**. |

1. The **present participle** indicates continuing action, created by adding -**ing** to the base form of the verb. In order to function as the main verb in a sentence, a participle must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | Mary **is looking** for a large apartment. |

A **gerund** is a present participle functioning as the subjector object in a sentence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | **Swimming** is good exercise. (**Swimming** is the subject.) |
|  | Jonathan liked **fishing**. (**fishing** is the direct object of **liked.**) |

A present participle can also be an adjective.

**Example:** He gave **supporting** evidence. (**supporting** modifies **evidence.)**

1. The **past tense** indicates action that occurred in the past. A verb's past tense can often be recognized by its **-d** or **-ed** ending. The past tense does notchange form to show person or number.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | [His parents] or [Richard] **agreed** with her. |
|  | [His parents] or [Richard] **traveled** to Paris and **saw** the Eiffel Tower. |

1. The **past participle** is identical to the past tense form of the verb (except in some irregular verbs). Like the present participle, the past participle must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be** to function as the main verb in the sentence. It does not change form to indicate person or number.

The past participle can also function as an adjective.

|  |  |
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| **Examples:** | Nearly everyone **was helped** at the scene. (passive voice verb) |
|  | I never eat an **overcooked** steak. (adjective) |

**IRREGULAR VERBS**

Verbs that form their past tense in other ways than adding a **–d** or **–ed** at the end are called **irregular** verbs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | I **see** the birds. (perfect tense) |
|  | I **saw** the birds. (past tense) |

**AUXILIARY VERB FORMS**

Some verbs do not make sense without an **auxiliary verb** (or a **helping verb**). The most common auxiliary verbs are **be, have, do.**

Forms of **be, have, do**

| **Base Form** | **Present Tense** | **Present Participle** | **Past Tense** | **Past Participle** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **be** | I **am**  he/she/it **is**  we/you/they **are** | **being** | I/he/she/it **was** we/you/they **were** | **been** |
| **have** | I **have**  he/she/it **has** we/you/they **have** | **having** | I **have**  he/she/it **had** we/you/they **had** | **had** |
| **do** | I **do**  he/she/it **does**  we/you/they **do** | **doing** | **did** | **done** |

**LINKING VERBS**

A **linking verb** joins the subject of a sentence to a sentence complement, which describes or renames the subject. Linking verbs usually describe states of being, not actions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | Alex Gordon **was** a baseball player for the Kansas City Royals. |
|  | Salvador Perez **remained** confident that the Royals would succeed. |

Linking verbs include all forms of the verb **be: am, is, was, are, were, be, being, been.**

# ADVERBS

An **adverb** is a word that describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs add to action verbs; they show how, when, where or why actions are done. Adverbs often end in **–ly**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | The pastry chef **carefully** spread raspberry frosting over the cake. (The adverb **carefully** describes the verb **spread**.) |
|  | That lamp shines **very brightly**. (The adverb **very** describes the adverb **brightly**.) |

**Note:** Be careful to use an **adverb—**not an **adjective**—after an action verb.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | *Incorrect*: The boss sneezed **loud** at his desk. (**Loud** is an **adjective**) |
|  | *Correct*: The boss sneezed **loudly** at his desk. |
|  | *Incorrect*: Speak **slow** during your lecture. (**Slow** is an **adjective**) |
|  | *Correct*: Speak **slowly** during your lecture. |

**PLACEMENT OF ADVERBS**

Adverbs modifying verbs can appear in various positions: at the beginning or end of the sentence, before or after the verb, or between a helping verb and its main verb.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | **Slowly**, we drove along the rain-slick road |
|  | Mary handled the china dish very **carefully**. |
|  | Martin **always** wins our tennis matches. |

An adverb cannot appear after the verb, because the verb is followed by the direct object.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Incorrect** | **Correct** |
|  |  |
| Mother wrapped **carefully** the gift. | Mother wrapped the gift **carefully**.  Mother **carefully** wrapped the gift.  **Carefully,** Mother wrapped the gift. |

**WORDS INTRODUCING ADVERBIAL CLAUSES**

Words that introduce adverbial clauses are **subordinating conjunctions**:

**Common** **Subordinating Conjunctions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| after | although | as | as if | because | before | if |
| rather | since | so that | that | than | though | unless |
| until | when | whether | where | while |  |  |

**ADVERBIAL WORD GROUPS**

**Adverbial word groups** can appear nearly anywhere in a sentence. They usually answer a question: **When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | Do not judge a book **by its cover**. (Do not judge a book **how**? By its cover.) |
|  | Tyranny will **in time** lead to revolution. (Tyranny will lead to revolution **when**? In time.) |
|  | **To the ant** a few drops of rain are a flood. (A few drops of rain are a flood **under what conditions**? To an ant.) |

**USING IRREGULAR COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE FORMS OF ADVERBS**

Some adverbs (and adjectives) change form to indicate their comparative and superlative degrees.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | **Positive** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
|  | badly | worse | worst |
|  | ill | worse | worst |
|  | well | better | best |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ADVERB CLAUSES**  **Adverb clauses** modify verbs and may appear nearly anywhere in a sentence. They tell **when, where, why, under what conditions,** or **to what degree**.  **Examples:** **When the well is dry**, we know the value of water.  Venice would be a fine city **if the canals were only drained**  Unlike adjective clauses, the adverb clause can move within the sentence without affecting the meaning of the sentence:  **Examples:** We know the value of water **when the well is dry**.  **If the canals were only drained**, Venice would be a fine city.    **USING GOOD/WELL AND BAD/BADLY**  Don't confuse the adjective **good** with the adverb **well**,or the adjective **bad** with the adverb **badly**.  Use the adjectives **good** and **bad** to modify nouns or pronouns:  **Examples:** a **good** time; a **bad** play.  Use the adverbs **well** and **badly** to modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs:  **Examples:** she sings **well**; he hears **badly**. AVOID DOUBLE NEGATIVES A **double negative** is a nonstandard form that uses two negatives when only one is necessary, i.e. “I **don't** have **no** money.”  The adverbs **barely**, **scarcely**, and **hardly** and the preposition **but** (meaning **except**) are negative and should not be used with other negatives.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Examples:** | Faulty: | We **couldn’t** **hardly** see the band. Their music **didn’t** **never** reach the back rows of the stadium. | |  | Revised: | We could hardly see the band. Their music never reached the back rows of the stadium. | |  | Revised: | Their songs would never have been heard in the back rows of the stadium. | |

# PREPOSITIONS

A **preposition** is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase that modifies

another word in a sentence.

**Examples: in** the house, **to** the store, **over** the hill.

A journey **of** a thousand miles begins **with** a single step.

**COMMON PREPOSITIONS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| about | but | into | over | toward |
| above | by | inside | past | under |
| after | concerning | like | plus | underneath |
| among | considering | near | regarding | unlike |
| at | despite | next | respecting | until |
| before | down | off | round | unto |
| behind | during | on | since | up |
| below | except | onto | than | upon |
| beside | for | opposite | through | with |
| between | from | out | throughout | without |
| beyond | in | outside | to |  |

**MULTIPLE-WORD PREPOSITIONS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| according to | away from | in back of | in spite of | together with |
| ahead of | because of | in case of | on top of |  |
| along with | except for | in front of | other than |  |
| apart from | in addition to | inside of | out of |  |

**PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES**

Prepositional phrases may contain two or more nouns or pronouns, plus a conjunction. Nouns at the end of prepositional phrases can never function as the subject of a sentence:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | One of the boys wants pizza. (**Boys** is not the subject because it is the object of the preposition **of**. Therefore, the subject is **One**.) |

# CONJUNCTIONS

**COORDINATING** **CONJUNCTIONS**

A **coordinating** **conjunction** is a small word that connects **independent** clauses to create a compound sentence. To decide whether a word works coordinating conjunction, try using it to join two short sentences:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | She studies English constantly. She knows it better every day.  She studies English constantly, **and** she knows it better every day. |
|  | I went to the store. I couldn’t find what I wanted.  I went to the store, **but** I couldn’t find what I wanted. |

**Common Coordinating Conjunctions**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| for | nor | or | so |
| and | but | yet |  |

**Tip:** Use the acronym **FANBOYS** to remember the coordinating conjunctions.

**SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS**

**Subordinating conjunctions** join one subject-verb combination to another subject-verb combination, making one part **subordinate** to or **dependent** upon the other—called a **subordinate** or **dependent clause.**

**Common Subordinating Conjunctions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| after | as soon as | for | in order that | than | when |
| although | because | how | provided that | that | whenever |
| as | before | if | since | unless | wherever |
| as if | even if | in case that | so that | until | while |

**Note:** When they are not linking sentences, some of these words can function as prepositions.

**CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS**

**Correlative** **conjunctions** are paired wordsthat join equal words, phrases, or clauses. One conjunction comes before one part and the second conjunction come before the other part.

**Common Correlative Conjunctions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Not only...but also | Either…or |
| Both…and | Neither…nor |

# INTERJECTIONS

**Interjections** are words or small groups of words that are used before exclamation points to express strong feeling of any kind.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | Wow**!** Hooray**!** Way to go**!** |

An interjection should be written separately from the main sentence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | Congratulations! You've just won the lottery! |

Overuse diminishes the value of the exclamation point, so use it sparingly. A comma or period is often better after mildly exclamatory expressions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example:** | He said maybe. |

# IMPERATIVES

An **imperative** is a request or command. Either a period or an exclamation point could be appropriate, depending on the context.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples:** | Refuse the offer. |
|  | Refuse the offer! |