



The Betty East Tutoring Center at Victoria College

Johnson Hall, Room 106

2200 E. Red River St.

Victoria, TX 77901

361-571-6473

www.VictoriaCollege.edu/TutoringCenter

Parts of Speech

Every word in a sentence can be classified as one of eight different parts of speech. Five parts change in form to show different meanings: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Three parts always keep the same form: prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

Nouns: a person, place, or thing. Nouns can be proper or common nouns, or divided by gender and number.

Proper Nouns name a particular person, place, or thing; always capitalized

Example: Alexander, Oklahoma, England, or History 1301

Common Nouns give a general term for a person, place, or thing; not capitalized.

Example: the boy, a country, or history

Gender: The English language has three genders: masculine refers to males (cowboy, milkman); feminine refer to females (policewoman, mother); and nouns that can refer to either, (student, librarian) or inanimate objects (tree, car) that have no gender.

Number: Nouns are classified by number, and are either singular or plural. The plural form of nouns is regularly made by adding an “s” to the singular form, such as dog to dogs or place to places.

Pronouns: take the place of nouns. The noun the pronoun replaces is called its antecedent. The antecedent comes before the noun in the sentence. Pronouns are classified as personal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, and indefinite.

Ex: The **boys** play football with **their** friends. The **girl** is fond of **her** dog.

Verbs: are words used to express action or a state of being for the subject of a sentence. Verbs can either be transitive, intransitive, or a helping verb. Verbs also can vary in tenses, which must match the tense of the rest of the sentence/paragraph/paper.

Transitive: requires a direct object to complete the meaning

Ex: I *love* my country he *takes* his medicine

Intransitive: does not require a direct object to complete its meaning

Ex; he *sleeps* dogs *run*

Helping Verbs: help form the voice, tense, and mood of other verbs such as am, is, are, was, were, be being, been, do, did, does, have, had, has, can, shall, will, must, etc. The helping verb is always used with an action verb.

Ex: The boys *have been* playing outside today.

Verb Tenses: Most verbs form their *past tense* by adding -ed to the word’s end. But, there are a number of verbs that form their past tense differently. Instead of adding -ed, these verbs form their past tense by *changing their spelling*. These verbs are called irregular verbs. See attached sheet for list.

Adverbs: used to modify the meaning of a verb, adjective or another adverb. Adverbs can also demonstrate degrees of comparison.

Modify: add “ly” to the end of an adjective.

Ex: slow—slowly Ex: The turtle was *slow*. Slow is an adjective that describes the noun.

Ex: The turtle moved *slowly*. Here, “ly” was added to slow to form an adverb. Slowly modifies moved.

Comparison: can show degrees of comparison like the adjective being modified.

Ex: The pianist’s performance was *beautiful*. Here, “beautiful” is an adjective.

Ex: The pianist performed *beautifully*. “ly” has been added to create an adverb out of an adjective.

Adjectives: used to describe or limit a noun or pronoun.

Describe: A descriptive adjective expresses quality or kind, such as *pretty* girl, *ripe* apple, or *long* road.

Limit: points out or denotes a number or quantity. There are four classes of limiting adjectives:

1. Demonstrative- *this* man, *that* lady, *these* books
2. Possessive- *my* book, *his* sister, *their* uncle
3. Numerals- *two* men, *third* lesson, *sixty-five* years old
4. Indefinite- *all* men, *many* people, *any* book, *some* things

Articles: a, an, the. “The” is a definite adjective, while “a” and “an” are indefinite articles.

Comparison of Adjectives: different forms used to express different levels of quality or quantity:

Positive Degree	Comparative Degree	Superlative Degree
cheap	cheaper	cheapest
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst

Prepositions: are placed before a noun or pronoun to show its relation to the rest of the sentence.

Prepositions often show time, place, direction, or manner. A prepositional phrase always begins with a preposition and ends with a noun. The noun is the object of the preposition. Example: *in* the house, *at* the movies, *with* her friends, etc

Conjunctions: connect words or groups of words.

Coordinating Conjunctions: used to join independent clauses: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. You can remember these easily by the first letter of each word, which spells out FANBOYS.

Subordinating Conjunctions: Words other than the ones listed above can join dependent clauses or phrases to the rest of the sentence. Ex: and, but, however

Interjections: used to express emotion or surprise. Interjections should rarely be used in academic papers, try to save them for creative writing projects. Common interjections are: Ah! Oh! Help! Stop!

Ex: “It is so windy today...Oh! Can you help me?”

Notice how the first word after the interjection is not capitalized, because they are still a part of the same single sentence and same single thought.