

Parts of Speech

Every word in a sentence can be classified as one of eight 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. 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.

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.

More Information on Nouns

Nouns are one of eight different parts of speech. A noun is a person, place, or thing. Nouns are divided by proper and common nouns, as well as by gender and number.

Proper Nouns:

These nouns name a particular person, place, or thing. Proper nouns are *always* capitalized.

Ex: Patrick Oklahoma Germany History 1301 Civil War

Common Nouns:

Common nouns give a general term for a person, place, or thing. These nouns are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence.

Ex: man country history class sheep pneumonia

Gender:

The English language has three genders:

masculine, feminine, and common gender, referring to either male or female

Masculine Ex: milkman, cowboy

Feminine Ex: mother, policewoman

Common Gender Ex: student, worker, librarian

Neutral nouns are inanimate objects that have no gender, such as trees, cars, and apples.

Number:

Nouns are either singular or plural. The plural form of nouns is regularly made by adding an "s" to the singular form, but this is not always the case.

Ex: singular noun to plural noun: dog—dogs place—places mother—mothers

Ex: Irregular nouns goose—geese mouse—mice sheep—sheep

More Information on Pronouns

Pronouns can take the place of nouns. The pronoun's antecedent refers to the noun the pronoun replaced. Pronouns are classified as personal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, or indefinite.

Personal Pronouns: used as subjects or objects. They have singular, plural, possessive, and reflexive forms.

Singular Subjects: I, you, he, she, it

Plural Subjects: we, you, they

Singular Possessive: mine, yours, his, hers, its

Plural Possessive: ours, yours, theirs

Singular Objects: me, you, him, her, it

Plural Objects: us, you, them

Singular Reflexive: myself, yourself, himself

Plural Reflexive: ourselves, yourselves, themselves

Relative Pronouns: join dependent thoughts (clauses) to preceding nouns or pronouns. They are subjects or objects. Their forms are: what and that (these remain the same), who and which (these have different forms):

Subject	Object	Possessive
who	whom	whose
which	which	whose

Interrogative Pronouns: used when asking questions. They are subjects and objects. Their forms are which and what (these have the same form), and who (this one has different forms).

Subject	Object	Possessive
who?	whom?	whose?

Demonstrative Pronouns: point out people or things. They are subjects or objects. Their forms are this, that, these, and those.

Ex: These are the special roses for the wedding.

Indefinite Pronouns: such as one, someone, something, each, either, neither, many, and few. These words can also be used as adjectives.

Pronouns must match their antecedent (noun they replace) in person, number, and gender.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

A pronoun takes the place of a noun. The antecedent is the word the pronoun refers to or replaces. In a sentence, the antecedent comes before the pronoun and must match in person, number, and gender.

Singular Nouns: Ex: Bob ate his lunch at work.

Two singular objects connected by "and" are considered plural.

Ex: Julie and Mike picked their part in the play.

Two singular objects connected by "or" are considered singular

Ex: Gloria or Lisa has promised to lend me her book.

Plural Words: such as both, several, and many are plural and require plural pronouns.

Ex: Several donated their books back to the school.

Singular Subjects: words that are always singular must have singular pronouns when used as subjects: each, everybody, nobody, nothing, every, everything, somebody, either, everyone, anybody, someone, neither.

Ex: Everybody is wearing his or her jersey to the game. (use his or her if the gender is not known)

Prepositional Phrases: A pronoun must agree with its antecedent, not with the object of a prepositional phrase.

Ex: One (of the boys) lost his bike.

Company Names: always require singular pronouns.

Ex: Walmart's will soon have all its spring clothes on sale.

One Plural and One Singular Subject: When a compound subject joined by "or" or "nor" contains one singular and one plural subject, the pronoun agrees with the closer word.

Ex: Neither the dog nor the cats lost their collar.

Ex: Either the girls or Mrs. Smith will give her presentation first.

Collective Nouns: such as army, class, family take different pronouns, depending on their use as singular or plural nouns.

Ex: The band played its hardest piece. (the band is one unit and considered singular)

Ex: The band wore their uniforms to the game. (the band is made up of individuals who wear uniforms, so in this case, band is plural, implying the members of the band)

More Information on Verbs

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

Transitive Verbs:

Transitive verbs require a direct object to complete the meaning.

Ex: I *love* my dog.

Intransitive Verbs:

Intransitive verbs do not require a direct object to complete the meaning.

Ex: Athletes *run*.

Helping Verbs:

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

Ex: The dogs *have been* outside all day.

Ex: The choir *will be leaving* today at noon.

Verb Tenses:

Most verbs form their past tense by adding “-ed” to the word’s end. (love to loved) But, there are some verbs that form their past tense by changing their spelling. These verbs are called irregular verbs. Common irregular verbs include:

Simple Form	Past Tense
feed	fed
find	found
have	had
hear	heard
hold	held
lay	laid
lead	led
make	made
pay	paid
read	read
say	said
sell	sold

More Information on Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives can be used to describe or limit a noun or pronoun. Some articles can be adjectives.

Describe:

A descriptive adjective expresses the quality or type of the noun.

Example: A *pretty* girl.

The adjective, *pretty*, describes the noun (girl).

When using more than one adjective to describe a noun or pronoun, separate the adjectives with a comma.

Example: The big, shaggy dog ran away from the tired, frustrated, angry dog walker.

Limit:

A limited adjective points out 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, *many* people, *any* book, *some* things
4. Articles: a, an, the are used to describe either a definite or indefinite designation

Example: The man ran away from the scene of the crime.

(use of “the” designates one particular man)

A man ran away from the scene of the crime.

(use of “a” or “an” for a word starting with a vowel, does not designate any particular man)

Comparison of Adjectives:

Adjectives have 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

Adjectives with more than three syllables should not change – instead of using the “er” or “est” form, these adjectives should use “more” or “most.”

Example: My more memorable event was the day of the wedding. Not memorabler event

The most beautiful sunset followed a perfect day on the beach. Not the beautifulst sunset

Adverbs are used to modify or show the degree of comparison for a verb, adjective, or another adverb.

Modify:

To modify the meaning of a verb, adjective, or another adverb, add “-ly” to the end of an adjective.

Adjective “slow” becomes an adverb “slowly” when adding “ly.”

Example of an adjective: The turtle was *slow*. Here, *slow* is an adjective describing the turtle.

Example of an adverb: The turtle moved *slowly*. Here, “ly” was added to the adjective “slow” to form the adverb “slowly.” Slowly now modifies the verb “moved.”

Compare:

Adverbs can show degrees of comparison like the adjective being modified.

Example: Beautifully, more beautifully, or most beautifully

Consider: The pianist played *beautifully*.

The violinist played *more beautifully*.

The singer performed *most beautifully*.

These adverbs compare the performances of three musicians.

More Information on Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that introduce subordinate clauses or create compound sentences.

Conjunctions That Introduce Subordinate Clauses:

Subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns can introduce subordinate clauses. Subordinate clauses depend on the other clause to make sense.

Subordinating Conjunctions:

after	because	in order that	than	when
although	before	now that	that	whenever
as	even if	once	though	where
as if	even though	rather than	till	whereas
as long as	if	since	unless	wherever
as though	if only	so that	until	while

Relative Pronouns:

which	what	who (whose, whom)
that	whatever	whoever (whomever)

Example: While massage therapy relieves stress headaches, Tylenol works faster.

Conjunctions That Create Compound Sentences:

Coordinating and correlative conjunctions can create compound sentences.

Coordinating Conjunctions:

Remember coordinating clauses by the first letter of each word: fanboys—for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. If coordinating conjunction joins sentences, a comma must come before the conjunction.

Example: Tylenol can relieve stress headaches, but so can massage therapy.

Correlative Conjunctions:

Correlative conjunctions include: *both/and*, *neither/nor*, *not only/but also*, *either/or*, *not/but*, *whether/or*, and *as/as*. Ex.: Both Tylenol and massage therapy can relieve stress headaches.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Conjunctive adverbs are modifiers that describe a relationship between two thoughts. They act as transitional phrases and connect ideas. Conjunctive adverbs can appear anywhere in a sentence.

Commonly Used Conjunctive Adverbs

according	furthermore	next	thus
for example	still	thereafter	consequently
meanwhile	as a result	besides	instead
otherwise	hence	incidentally	on the contrary
also	nevertheless	nonetheless	undoubtedly
further	then	therefore	finally
moreover	at the same	certainly	on the other hand
similarly	time	indeed	likewise
anyway	however	how	

Two Purposes of Conjunctive Adverbs:

To Show Relationship:

The purpose of conjunctive adverbs is to show relationship between ideas in two separate clauses. When two clauses show relationship with a conjunctive adverb, they must be separated by a period or semicolon.

Example: Jose did not want to go to the library today. However, he knew he needed to study.

Example: Jose did not want to go to the library today; however, he knew he needed to study.

To Provide Transition:

All conjunctive adverbs are transitional. They can be used to compare, contrast, show sequence, indicate time, and more. The following example uses conjunctive adverbs to compare two foods.

Example: The pasta is good; however, the mystery dish is disgusting.

Conjunctive verbs can move within a sentence, like this:

Example: However, the movie is good.

Example: The movie, however, is good.

Example: The movie is good, however.

More Information on Prepositions

A preposition is placed before a noun or pronoun to show how it relates to the rest of the sentence. Prepositions often show time, place, direction, or manner.

Common Prepositions:

about	beyond	onto
above	by	outside
across	concerning	over
against	despite	regarding
along	down	since
alongside	during	through
amid	except	throughout
among	for	to
around	from	toward
at	in	under
before	inside	underneath
behind	into	until
below	like	up
beneath	near	upon
beside	of	with
between	off	within
but	on	without

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase always begins with a preposition and ends with a noun. The noun is then the object of the preposition.

Ex: Jessica is at the movies *with* her friends.

She lives *across* the road.

More Information on Interjections

Interjections are words used to express emotion or surprise. Interjections should rarely be used in academic papers; they are more appropriate for creative writing projects.

Common Interjections:

Ex: Ah! Oh! Help! Stop!

Imagine writing a story about a girl going outside on a windy day. She is carrying a folder full of important papers, but she loses her grip when she trips over a loose step on the porch, and the papers scatter across the grass.

Example: “Help! I must collect these papers.” The man passing by notices the young girl and comes to her assistance.

She sobs, “It is so windy today. Please catch those papers going out in the street.”

The man tries to step on the papers to keep the wind from carrying them away. The young girl starts to cry.

“Oh! I am going to fail my class if I don’t find all my work.”