

Parts of Speech Overview: Identification and Function

1) The Noun: A *noun* names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

Persons carpenter, tourists, team, cousins, Faith Ringgold

Places cities, theater, forest, neighborhood, Santa Fe

Things merry-go-round, bricks, birds, horseshoe, Liberty Bell

Ideas justice, creativity, self-control, opinions, Buddhism

1.1.Common Nouns and Proper Nouns: A *common noun* names any one of a group of persons, places, things, or ideas. A *proper noun* names a particular person, place, thing, or idea. A common noun is not capitalized (except when it begins a sentence or is part of a title); a proper noun, however, is capitalized.

Common Nouns

Proper Nouns

woman

Queen Isabella, Wilma Mankiller, Judith Baca

nation

Egypt, Mexico, Vietnam, New Zealand

event

Pan American Games, French Revolution, Academy Awards, Boston Tea Party

holiday

Patriot's Day; Fourth of July; Martin Luther King, Jr., Day; Mardi Gras

language

Hebrew, Spanish, Bantu, Thai, Latin

1.2.Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns: A *concrete noun* names a person, place, or thing that can be perceived by one or more of the senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell).

An *abstract noun* names an idea, a feeling, a quality, or a characteristic.

Concrete Nouns sneeze, star, gravel, cinnamon, jack-o'-lantern, Beijing, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Sammy Sosa

Abstract Nouns peace, civilization, honor, courage, citizenship, Victorianism, Manifest Destiny

1.3.Collective Nouns: The singular form of a *collective noun* names a group.

Collective Nouns jury, band, family, class, flock, committee, team,

1.4.Compound Nouns: A *compound noun* consists of two or more words that together name a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. The parts of a compound noun may be written as one word, as separate words, or as a hyphenated word.

One Word

stairway, bookcase, toenail, Newfoundland

Separate Words

lieutenant governor, ceiling fan, blue jay, Golden Gate Bridge

Hyphenated Word

sister-in-law, jack-of-all-trades, great-uncle, stick-in-the-mud

2) The Pronoun: A *pronoun* takes the place of one or more nouns or pronouns.

The word or word group that a pronoun stands for is called the *antecedent* of the pronoun.

EXAMPLES Jay enjoys hiking and camping; in fact, **they** are his two favorite pastimes. [The nouns *hiking* and *camping* are the antecedents of the pronoun *they*.]

One of the film projectors is broken. **It** is being repaired. [The pronoun *One* is the antecedent of the pronoun *It*.]

The students complained to the principal about the dress code. **They** wished **he** had consulted **them** about **it**.

[The noun *students* is the antecedent of the pronouns *They* and *them*; the noun *principal* is the antecedent of the pronoun *he*; and the compound noun *dress code* is the antecedent of the pronoun *it*.]

2.1.Personal Pronouns: A *personal pronoun* refers to the one(s) speaking (*first person*), the one(s) spoken to (*second person*), or the one(s) spoken about (*third person*).

EXAMPLES If I give **you my** address, will **you** write to **me**? **We** told **them** that **they** could go with **us**.

This textbook refers to the words *my, your, his, her, its, our, and their* as possessive pronouns. However, because they come before nouns and tell *which one* or *whose*, some authorities prefer to call these words adjectives. Follow your teacher's instructions regarding these possessive forms.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
First Person I, me, my, mine	we, us, our, ours
Second Person you, your,	yours you, your, yours
Third Person he, him, his, she, her,	they, them, their, hers, it, its theirs

2.2. Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns: A *reflexive pronoun* refers to the subject of a verb and functions as a complement or as the object of a preposition.

EXAMPLES Mary excused **herself** from the table. [*Herself* is the direct object of *excused*.]

He said the mastermind was, in fact, **himself**. [*Himself* is a predicate nominative referring to the subject, *He*.]

They took extra biscuits for **themselves**. [*Themselves* is the object of the preposition *for*.]

First Person	myself, ourselves
Second Person	yourself, yourselves
Third Person	himself, herself, itself, themselves

An *intensive pronoun* emphasizes its antecedent—a noun or another pronoun.

EXAMPLES Joseph Vásquez **himself** wrote the script. [*Himself* emphasizes the subject, *Joseph Vásquez*, but has no grammatical function in the sentence.]

The final speech was given by Maya Angelou **herself**. [*Herself* emphasizes the object, *Maya Angelou*, but has no grammatical function in the sentence.]

2.3. Demonstrative Pronouns: A *demonstrative pronoun* points out a noun or another pronoun. Demonstrative pronouns are: this/ that/ these/ those

EXAMPLES Is **this** the one you want? **That** may be the only reasonable solution.

These or **those** are the pictures from our vacation.

2.4. Interrogative Pronouns: An *interrogative pronoun* introduces a question.

'who whom whose which what'

EXAMPLES **What** is the capital of the Hawaiian Islands?

Whose is this red sweater?

To **whom** should I direct your call?

2.5. Relative Pronouns: A *relative pronoun* introduces a subordinate clause. Relative pronoun are: that/ /which/ who/ whom/ whose

EXAMPLES The college **that** I chose is in Texas.

The woman **who** chairs the committee is my aunt.

The birds, **which** usually have flown south by this time of the year, were still congregating in our backyard.

2.6. Indefinite Pronouns: An *indefinite pronoun* refers to a person, a place, a thing, or an idea that may or may not be specifically named. In other words, the pronoun may not have a specific antecedent.

EXAMPLES **All** of the members have voted. [*All* refers to *members*.]

Does **everyone** favor a weekly meeting? [*Everyone* has no specific antecedent.]

The fallen tree provided homes for **several** of the creatures of the woods. [*Several* refers to *creatures*.]

Common Indefinite Pronouns

All	Both	Few	No one	Several
Another	Each	Many	Nobody	Some
Any	Either	More	None	Somebody
Anybody	Everybody	Most	Nothing	Someone
Anyone	Everyone	Much	One	Something
Anything	Everything	Neither	Other	Such

2.7. Pronoun or Adjective?

Many of the words that can be used as pronouns can also be used as adjectives.

EXAMPLES **This** is the best baklava I have ever tasted. [*This* is a pronoun referring to *baklava*, the predicate nominative.]

This baklava is delicious. [*This* is an adjective modifying *baklava*.]

Which of the rooms is yours? [*Which* is a pronoun referring to *rooms*, the object of the preposition *of*.]

Which room is yours? [*Which* is an adjective modifying *room*.]

3) The Adjective: An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun.

To modify means “to describe” or “to make more definite.” An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun by telling *what kind, which one, how many, or how much*.

What Kind?	ripening apples	happy child	Asian country	up-to-date look
Which One?	this book last straw	those girls	next step	
How Many?	two students	both answers	several choices	many people
How Much?	one-half cup	enough time	more money	less trouble

An adjective usually precedes the word it modifies. EXAMPLE The **tired** and **hungry** hikers straggled into camp.

Sometimes, for emphasis, an adjective follows the word it modifies. EXAMPLE The hikers, **tired** and **hungry**, straggled into camp.

An adjective that modifies the subject may appear in the predicate. Such an adjective is called a *predicate adjective*.

EXAMPLES The hikers felt **tired** and **hungry**. **Tired** and **hungry** were the hikers.

3.1. Articles: The most frequently used adjectives are *a*, *an*, and *the*. These words are called *articles*.

A and *an* are called *indefinite articles* because they refer to any member of a general group. *A* is used before words beginning with a consonant sound; *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel sound.

EXAMPLES Felipe added **a** tomato and **an** avocado to the salad.

A European said, “It is **an** honor to be here with you.” [*A* is used before *European* because *European* begins with a consonant sound. *An* is used before *honor* because the *h* in *honor* is not pronounced; *honor* is pronounced as though it began with a vowel.]

The is called the *definite article* because it refers to a specific person, place, thing, or idea.

EXAMPLE We spent **the** hour discussing **the** revolution that began in 1791 in Haiti.

3.2.Adjective or Pronoun?

In different contexts, a word may be used as different parts of speech. For example, the following words may be used as *adjectives* and as *pronouns*.

All	Each	More	One	Such	Those
Another	Either	Most	Other	That	What
Any	Few	Much	Several	These	Which
Both	Many	Neither	Some	This	Whose

Remember that an adjective *modifies* a noun or a pronoun and that a pronoun *takes the place of* a noun or another pronoun.

ADJECTIVE Ntozake Shange wrote **both** poems. [*Both* modifies the noun *poems*.]

PRONOUN Ntozake Shange wrote **both**. [*Both* takes the place of the noun *poems*.]

ADJECTIVE **These** books are overdue. [*These* modifies the noun *books*.]

PRONOUN **These** are overdue. [*These* takes the place of the noun *books*.]

ADJECTIVE **Several** ducks had dark green heads. [*Several* modifies the noun *ducks*.]

PRONOUN **Several** had dark green heads. [*Several* takes the place of the noun *ducks*.]

NOTE: The words *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* are called **demonstrative pronouns** when they take the place of nouns or other pronouns and are called **demonstrative adjectives** when they modify nouns or pronouns.

3.3.Adjective or Noun?

Most words that are used as nouns can also be used as adjectives.

Nouns

sofa

hotel

taco

high school

Marine Corps

Adjectives

sofa cushion

hotel lobby

taco salad

high school senior

Marine Corps cadet

An adjective that is formed from a proper noun, such as *Marine Corps* in the last example above, is called a **proper adjective**. Proper adjectives, like proper nouns, are capitalized.

NOTE: Do not mistake part of a compound noun for an adjective. The entire word group is considered a noun.

COMPOUND NOUNS paper clips, cable TV, time capsule, United States...

4) The Verb: A *verb* expresses action or a state of being.

4.1.Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

- A **main verb** and one or more **helping verbs** (also called **auxiliary verbs**) make up a **verb phrase**.

EXAMPLES Daniel **has played**. [*Has* is the helping verb; *played* is the main verb.]

Simon **will be going**. [*Will* and *be* are the helping verbs; *going* is the main verb.]

Lynn **should have been working**. [*Should*, *have*, and *been* are the helping verbs; *working* is the main verb.]

Common Helping Verbs

Forms of Be am been was are being were be is, **Forms of Do** do does did, **Forms of Have** had has have,

Modals can might should could must will may shall would

A **modal** (or **modal auxiliary**) is a helping verb that is joined with a main verb to express an attitude such as necessity or possibility.

EXAMPLES We **must** win this game to reach the playoffs. [necessity]

Mr. Garza said that if we work hard enough on the play we are writing, we **may** get to perform it for the whole school. [possibility]

- A helping verb may be separated from the main verb.

EXAMPLES **Have** you **seen** Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*?

You **should** not **miss** it.

4.2.Action Verbs: An **action verb** expresses either physical or mental activity.

Physical speak sleep carry throw.

Mental think imagine dream know

EXAMPLES

The horse **galloped** across the field.

The Colorado River **runs** through the Grand Canyon.

If the ball **touched** the line, the umpire **made** the right call.

Do you ever **wonder** what dogs **dream**?

4.3.Linking Verbs: A **linking verb** connects the subject to a word or word group that identifies or describes the subject. Such a word or word group is called a **subject complement**.

EXAMPLES Wovoka **was** an influential Paiute prophet. [The subject complement *prophet* identifies the subject *Wovoka*.]

Marcy **looks** serious. [The subject complement *serious* describes the subject *Marcy*.]

Computers **were** once so large that they could fill a room but **are** now small enough, in some cases, to fit in a pocket. [The subject complements *large* and *small* describe the subject *Computers*.]

Common Linking Verbs

All forms of <i>Be</i> Appear Become	Feel Grow Look	Remain Seem Smell	Sound Stay Taste	Turn
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Some of the verbs listed in the chart above can be used as either linking verbs or action verbs, depending on the context of the sentence.

LINKING: The alarm **sounded** shrill.

ACTION: I **sounded** the alarm.

NOTE: The forms of *be* are not always used as linking verbs. That is, they are sometimes used as state-of-being verbs but are not used to connect subjects to subject complements. In such cases, words that tell *where* or *when* are generally used to complete the meanings of the verb forms.

EXAMPLE You **should have been** here yesterday. [*Here* tells *where*, and *yesterday* tells *when*.]

4.4.Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

A **transitive verb** has an **object**—a word or word group that tells who or what receives the action of the verb.

EXAMPLES The rain **lashed** the windows. [The object *windows* receives the action of the verb *lashed*.]

We **closed** and **bolted** the shutters. [The object *shutters* receives the action of the verbs *closed* and *bolted*.]

An **intransitive verb** does not have an object.

EXAMPLES The rain **fell**.

My cousin **arrived** yesterday.

Many English verbs can be either transitive or intransitive, depending on how they are used.

TR: The chorus **sang** patriotic songs. [The object *songs* receives the action of the verb *sang*.]

INTR: The chorus **sang** beautifully. [no object]

Like a one-word verb, a verb phrase may be classified as action or linking and as transitive or intransitive.

EXAMPLES The actors **are practicing** their lines. [action, transitive]

The director **is meeting** with the stage crew. [action, intransitive]

Preparation for the opening night **has been** hectic! [linking, intransitive]

NOTE: While action verbs may be transitive or intransitive, linking verbs and state-of-being verbs are always intransitive.

5) The Adverb: An *adverb* modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

An adverb tells *where, when, how, or to what extent (how much, how often, or how long)*. Adverbs are most commonly used to modify verbs and verb phrases. Adverbs may modify other adverbs.

EXAMPLES Teresa spoke **eloquently**. [The adverb *eloquently* modifies the verb *spoke*, telling *how*.]

Have you heard this melody **before**? [The adverb *before* modifies the verb phrase *Have heard*, telling *when*.]

They searched **everywhere**. [The adverb *everywhere* modifies the verb *searched*, telling *where*.]

He had **not** read the contract **thoroughly**. [The adverbs *not* and *thoroughly* modify the verb phrase *had read*, telling *to what extent*.]

Note: The word *not* and its contraction, *-n't*, are adverbs telling *to what extent*.

Adverbs may modify adjectives.

EXAMPLES Phuong Vu is **quite** creative. [The adverb *quite* modifies the adjective *creative*, telling *to what extent*.]

This species is found on an **extremely** remote island. [The adverb *extremely* modifies the adjective *remote*, telling *to what extent*.]

Adverbs may modify other adverbs.

EXAMPLES Jackie Joyner-Kersey runs **remarkably** swiftly. [The adverb *remarkably* modifies the adverb *swiftly*, telling *to what extent*.]

It's **too** soon to know the results. [The adverb *too* modifies the adverb *soon*, telling *to what extent*.]

Noun or Adverb?

Some words that are often used as nouns may also be used as adverbs.

EXAMPLES My parents left **yesterday**. [The noun *yesterday* is used as an adverb telling *when*.]

They will return **home Saturday**. [The noun *home* is used as an adverb telling *where*. The noun *Saturday* is used as an adverb telling *when*.]

6) The Preposition: A *preposition* shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun, called the *object of the preposition*, to another word.

Notice how changing the preposition in the following examples changes the relationship between the verb *swam* and the noun *raft*.

EXAMPLES I swam **to** the raft.

I swam **from** the raft.

I swam **around** the raft.

I swam **past** the raft.

I swam **under** the raft.

6.1.Object of a Preposition: The *object of a preposition* is a noun, a pronoun, or a word group that functions as a noun; in most cases, it follows a preposition. Together, the preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object make a *prepositional phrase*.

EXAMPLES: Did you see Juanita **at the last game**? The line starts **behind him**.

They played a new song **by Hootie and the Blowfish**.

Commonly Used Prepositions

about	before	but (means “except”)	in	outside	underneath
above	behind	by	inside	over	until
across	below	concerning	into	past	unto
after	beneath	down	like	since	up
against	beside	during	near	through	upon
along	besides	except	of	throughout	with
among	between	for	off	to	within
around	beyond	from	on	toward	without
at			out	under	

A preposition that consists of two or more words is called a *compound preposition*.

EXAMPLES: Alexandra has been accepted by several private colleges **in addition to** both state universities.

As of today, she hasn’t made her final choice.

Commonly Used Compound Prepositions

according to	as of	by means of	in place of	next to
along with	aside from	in addition to	in spite of	on account of
apart from	because of	in front of	instead of	out of

6.2.Adverb or Preposition?

Some of the words that are commonly used as prepositions may also be used as ad verbs. Keep in mind that an ad verb is a modifier and that it does not have an object. Prepositions always have objects.

ADV Jerry will meet you **outside** at noon. [*Outside* modifies *will meet*.]

PREP I will meet you **outside** the library. [*Outside* introduces a prepositional phrase and has an object, *library*.]

7) The Conjunction: A conjunction joins words or word groups.

7.1.Coordinating Conjunctions: A *coordinating conjunction* joins words or word groups that are used in the same way.

Coordinating Conjunctions : and/ but/ for/ nor/ or/ so/ yet. They are the initials of the word FANBOYS

EXAMPLES In A.D. 711, the Berbers invaded **and** conquered Spain. [*And* joins two verbs.]

We missed the opening scene, **but** we enjoyed the rest of the play. [*But* joins two clauses.]

7.2.Correlative Conjunctions : *Correlative conjunctions* are pairs of conjunctions that join words or word groups that are used in the same way.

both ... and	either ... or	whether ... or	not only ... but also	neither ... nor
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EXAMPLES **Either** Fred **or** Manuela will bring music for the party. [*Either . . . or* joins two nouns.]

Not only did Garrett Morgan patent the first gas mask, **but he also** invented the automatic traffic signal. [*Not only . . . but also* joins two clauses.]

7.3.Subordinating Conjunctions: A *subordinating conjunction* begins a subordinate clause and connects it to an independent clause.

Commonly Used Subordinating Conjunctions

after	as much as	how	since	though	whenever
although	as though	if	so that	unless	where
as	because	in order that	than	until	wherever
as if	before	provided	that	when	while

EXAMPLES: I gasped **when** I saw the headline.

A subordinating conjunction may come at the beginning of a sentence instead of between the clauses it joins.

EXAMPLE **When** I saw the headline, I gasped.

NOTE: Some words can be used either as prepositions or as subordinating conjunctions.

PREP: **After** the election, we celebrated.

SUB CONJ: **After** we won the election, we celebrated.

8) The Interjection: An *interjection* expresses emotion and has no grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence.

ah	alas	hey	oh	ouch	Swow	whew	yahoo
aha	aw	hooray	oops	ow	well	whoa	yeah

An interjection is often set off from the rest of the sentence by an exclamation point or one or more commas. Exclamation points indicate strong emotion. Commas indicate mild emotion.

EXAMPLES Hey! I think I know the answer! Well, I thought I knew the answer.

I think that, aw, you two are the greatest.

- **Determining Parts of Speech:** The way a word is used in a sentence determines what part of speech the word is.

EXAMPLES

This **plant** is native to North America. [noun]

We **plant** tomatoes every year. [verb]

Bacteria cause many **plant** diseases. [adjective]

Marisa led, and we followed **after**. [adverb]

We crossed the finish line **after** Marisa. [preposition]

We crossed it **after** all the other runners did, too. [conjunction]

This pillow is filled with **down** from geese. [noun]

I've always wanted a **down** pillow. [adjective]

Put it **down**; it's too expensive. [adverb]

We can find cheaper pillows at the store **down** the street. [preposition]