

# CHAPTER 01

*the art of language | language & identity | parts of speech*

The grammar system that we call **PARTS OF SPEECH** organizes words for us into categories. We take words, just words, random words, and we organize them into systems we can use. The **PARTS OF SPEECH** make up the building blocks we use to understand language and to construct sentences.

Some linguists organize language into eight Parts of Speech, while other linguists organize language into nine Parts of Speech.

We will designate nine Parts of Speech. We believe that will make things more clear for you.

In this Chapter, we'll look at five **PARTS OF SPEECH**.

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Pronouns
- Adjectives
- Adverbs

It's all about **nouns** and **verbs**. All the other **PARTS OF SPEECH** relate somehow to **nouns** and **verbs**.

You may already know some of these **PARTS OF SPEECH** well, perhaps all of them. In that case, you'll have a good review.

After we explain each **PART OF SPEECH** with examples, we'll give you one exercise for that **PART OF SPEECH**, so you get a little practice with it, a chance to get it into your memory. Then we'll give you more exercises at the end of this chapter. We'll go over the **PARTS OF SPEECH** throughout the book. In a short time, you'll know them all. Let's begin.



## Parts of Speech I: Nouns

What kind of words are **NOUNS**? What do **NOUNS** do?

A **NOUN** names:

- persons
- places
- things
- ideas

Before we had language, nothing had a name. Nothing. Look around the room. Without language, you couldn't name one thing that you see. Now, we do have language. We have **NOUNS**. We can name the things that we see.

A **NOUN** names:

a **PERSON**,

a **PLACE**,

a **THING**,

an **IDEA**

**Joey** lives in **Chicago** in an apartment **building**. He loves to maintain his good **health**. He loves to play basketball.

### **NOUNS:**

A *PERSON* : **JOEY**

A *PLACE* : **CHICAGO**

A *THING* : **BUILDING**

AN *IDEA* : **HEALTH**

### EXERCISES ON NOUNS

Fill in the missing **nouns**:

1. He rented an expensive \_\_\_\_\_ to drive up to San Francisco.
2. He played the \_\_\_\_\_ in the High School marching band.
3. The mother called her \_\_\_\_\_ in for dinner.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ called the roll before beginning class.
5. Yesterday, we saw a great \_\_\_\_\_ at the zoo.

## Parts of Speech II: Verbs

What kind of words are **VERBS**? What do **VERBS** do?

A **VERB** names an action, any action, every action, for example:

AN ACTION

↓  
*run*

AN ACTION

↓  
*talk*

AN ACTION

↓  
*sing*

AN ACTION

↓  
*write*

After Joey and his friends have **run** around the basketball court for an hour and have finished their game, they like to hang out together and **talk** for a while. Sometimes, they'll **sing** along with a song they play on an iPod. When Joey gets home, he **writes** down the names of everybody who played basketball that day and the final score of the game.

“Run,” “talk,” “sing,” and “writes” are all **VERBS**. They all **name** actions that somebody or something does.

### EXERCISES ON VERBS

Fill in the missing **verb**:

1. After running a mile, I \_\_\_\_\_ a half-gallon of water. {what **action** do you name?}
2. With my new iPhone, I \_\_\_\_\_ my grandmother in Hawaii. {what **action** do you name?}
3. Tonight, I will have to \_\_\_\_\_ my first paper for college. {what **action** do you name?}
4. I love to \_\_\_\_\_ soccer. {what **action** do you name?}
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ my boyfriend/girlfriend. {what **action** do you name?}

Now we know two **PARTS OF SPEECH**:

- A **NOUN** **names** persons, places, things, or ideas.
- A **VERB** **names** an action.

## Parts of Speech III: Pronouns

What is a **PRONOUN**? What can a **PRONOUN** do? When your writing becomes awkward because you have used the same **noun** over and over, you can use a **PRONOUN** to take the place of that noun. That will make your language sound better. Writing should read well. When you read your work out loud to a friend or to yourself, see if it sounds right. As for pronouns, take the following paragraph, for example:

Joanne studies marine biology. Joanne’s father wanted Joanne to become a lawyer, like Joanne’s father is, but Joanne always loved the sea. Now, Joanne studies the sea and all the plants and all the creatures in it, large and small, from whales to starfish. Yesterday, Joanne spent the whole day sitting in a tide pool at the beach watching little sea creatures move about—starfish and crabs and anemones and barnacles. Joanne took a lot of notes about those sea creatures,

including how they moved with the movement of the sea, how they ate, how they defended themselves against attack, and how they breathed. Tomorrow, Joanne will go out in a boat with her scuba gear so Joanne can dive into the sea to watch some larger fish. Joanne will take notes on those larger fish when she returns to her boat. In one more year, Joanne will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Biology.

That’s an OK paragraph. It tells us about Joanne and her studies. But it gets a little boring because it always repeats Joanne’s name: “Joanne does this; Joanne does that.” We can use **PRONOUNS** to make it read better.

Joanne studies marine biology. Joanne’s father wanted **HER** to become a lawyer, like **HE** is, but Joanne always loved the sea. Now, Joanne studies the sea and all the plants and all the creatures in it, large and small, from whales to starfish. Yesterday, **SHE** spent the whole day sitting in a tide pool at the beach watching little sea creatures—starfish and crabs and anemones and barnacles—move about. **SHE** took a lot of notes about those sea creatures, including how they moved with the movement of the sea, how they ate, how they defended themselves against attack, and how they breathed. Tomorrow, **SHE** will go out in a boat with **HER** scuba gear so **SHE** can dive into the sea to watch some larger fish. **SHE** will take notes on those larger fish when she returns to her boat. In one more year, Joanne will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Biology.

Some of the **PRONOUNS** in our English language are<sup>1</sup>:

I	we	me	us	my	our	mine	ours
you	you	you	you	your	your	yours	yours
he/she/it	they	him/her/it	them	his/her/its	their	his/her/its	theirs

We use **PRONOUNS** to make our writing sound better and flow more smoothly. But, when we use **PRONOUNS**, we can also cause confusion. We have to make sure our reader knows *who* or *what* the **PRONOUN** refers to.

## Pronoun Reference

Every **PRONOUN** refers to a **noun**. In the paragraph above, both of the **PRONOUNS** “**HER**” and “**SHE**” refer to the **noun** “Joanne.” The **PRONOUN** “**HE**” refers to the **noun** “father.”

<sup>1</sup>See the **Index of Pronouns** at the back of the book for a list of the different types of **pronouns**.

You must be sure that your **pronoun reference** is clear; you must be sure that your reader knows to *which noun* your **pronoun** refers. In the following sentence, we don't know whether the **pronoun** "he" refers to Paul or to Sam.

Paul and Sam bought a computer together, agreeing that **he** would use it first.

While in the sentence below, the **pronoun reference** is clear:

When Paul and Sam bought a computer together, Sam said **HE** would use **IT** first.

## EXERCISES ON PRONOUNS

Fill in the missing **PRONOUNS**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ wash \_\_\_\_\_ car every Saturday afternoon.
2. After Ronnie washes \_\_\_\_\_ car, she waxes \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ walks \_\_\_\_\_ dog every afternoon.
3. When Latasha came home, \_\_\_\_\_ helped cook dinner.
4. Joe met \_\_\_\_\_ friend, Ronald, at the corner at 2:30.
5. Alice played \_\_\_\_\_ saxophone all night long.

## Parts of Speech IV: Adjectives

What are **ADJECTIVES**? What can **ADJECTIVES** do?

**ADJECTIVES** describe → **NOUNS**

When you want to describe something—a **PERSON**, **PLACE**, **THING**, or **IDEA**—in more detail, adjectives do that for you. Let's say that, when you were young, your family moved from one state to another or from another country to the United States. You want to tell a friend about a tree that grew outside the house where you came from. Let's say you remember that tree from the summers, when green leaves filled its branches. Instead of just writing:

NOUN  
↓  
The tree grew outside my window,

you might add an adjective:

ADJECTIVE
NOUN  
 ↓            ↓  
 The green tree grew outside my window.

When you complete the sentence, you have:

ADJECTIVE
NOUN
ADJECTIVE
NOUN  
 ↓            ↓                    ↓            ↓  
 The green tree grew outside my bedroom window.

The **ADJECTIVE** “green” describes the **NOUN** “tree.” The **ADJECTIVE** “bedroom” describes the **NOUN** “window.”

### EXERCISES ON ADJECTIVES

Fill in the missing **adjectives**:

1. I just saw that \_\_\_\_\_ car run a red light.
2. Maureen wore a \_\_\_\_\_ dress that I loved.
3. He was a very \_\_\_\_\_ basketball player.
4. He wore one \_\_\_\_\_ earring in his right ear.
5. Her new \_\_\_\_\_ tennis shoes look great on her.

## Parts of Speech V: Adverbs

What are **ADVERBS**? What can **ADVERBS** do?

**ADVERBS** describe → **VERBS**.

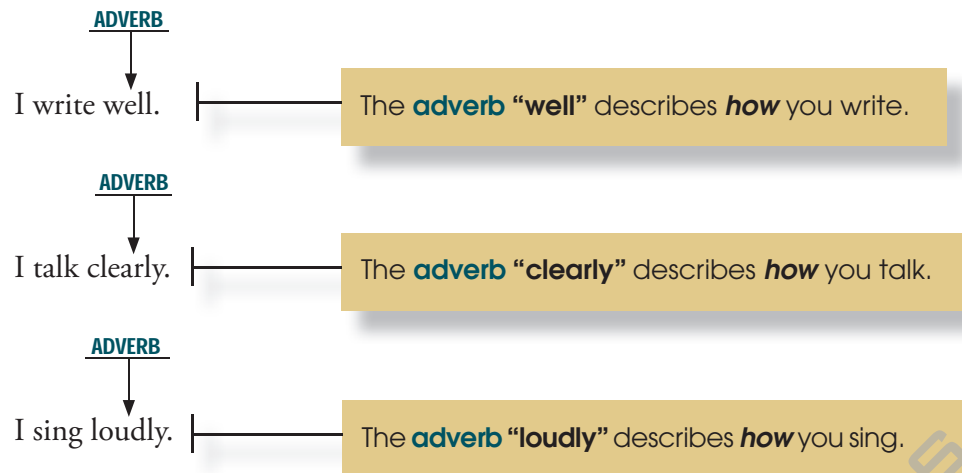
How can you *describe* a verb?

A **VERB** names an action: *run, write, talk, sing*.

An **ADVERB** describes that action. An **ADVERB** describes the **VERB**.

ADVERB  
 ↓  
 I run fast.

|—————| The **adverb** “fast” describes *how* you run.



If we use the **VERB** “waved” we could use the **ADVERB** “gently” to describe *how* the leaves waved in the tree outside my bedroom window.

VERB   ADVERB  
↓   ↓  
The green tree, whose leaves waved gently in the wind, grew outside my bedroom window.

The **ADVERB** “gently” describes the action of the **VERB** “waved.”

If we were to say the **VERB** “explained” and ask you to *describe* it further, you might use the **ADVERB** “clearly,” to describe the **VERB** “explained.”

VERB   ADVERB  
↓   ↓  
He explained clearly how a jet engine works.

The **ADVERB** “clearly” describes the action of the **VERB** “explained.”

If we were to give you the **VERB** “text” and ask you to describe it further, you might give us this sentence:

ADVERB   VERB  
↓   ↓  
She quickly texts her boyfriend.

The **ADVERB** “quickly” describes the **VERB** “texts.”

**ADVERBS** can change the meaning of a sentence.

VERB
ADVERB  
 ↓            ↓  
 He walked **quickly** to work.

VERB
ADVERB  
 ↓            ↓  
 He walked **slowly** to work.

When you *describe* the *action* (**walk**) with an **ADVERB** (**quickly** or **slowly**), you change the meaning of what you say, and you communicate more vividly. In the following example, notice how the **ADVERB** changes the meaning of the sentence.

ADVERB
VERB  
 ↓            ↓  
 I **passionately** asked my father to help me pay for college.

ADVERB
VERB  
 ↓            ↓  
 I **calmly** asked my father to help me pay for college.

Let's look at one more example. Let's try the **VERB** "dance."

VERB
ADVERB  
 ↓            ↓  
 He dances **wildly**.

As you can see, an **ADVERB** comes *either* before or after the **VERB**.

### EXERCISES ON ADVERBS

Fill in the missing **adverb**:

1. I ran home \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Yesterday, he spoke \_\_\_\_\_ in favor of civil rights.
3. The sign was big, so he could read it \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I \_\_\_\_\_ ate my lunch.
5. The sea roared \_\_\_\_\_.



## TRICKY:

“**Good**” is an **ADJECTIVE**; it describes **nouns**:

We won the game. It was a **good** day.

“**Well**” is an **ADVERB**; it describes a **verb**:

We won because we played **well**.

## Chapter Review: Parts of Speech

**NOUNS:** Name a person, place, thing, or idea.

**ADJECTIVES:** Describe a person, place, thing or idea.

**PRONOUNS:** Take the place of (and refer to) nouns.

**VERBS:** Name actions, any action, every action.

**ADVERBS:** Describe verbs. They describe the action.



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