



Parts of Speech

NOUNS

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, idea, or quality.

person = Marsha, twin, teacher

place = Oklahoma, city, lake, Metropolitan Museum of Art

thing = desk, water, class, *The Grapes of Wrath*

idea = capitalism, reincarnation, peace

quality = insight, courage, strength

Nouns are numerous and used frequently.

Marsha went to the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* with her *class*.

His *twin* has the *courage* to believe in *reincarnation*.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the nouns in the sentences below.

Example: Billy ordered two hamburgers and a drink.

1. The men working on the roof were sweating in the sun.
2. My parents received an expensive camera for Christmas.
3. The group of tourists was fascinated by the beautiful mosque.
4. Islam is a religion offering rules for each aspect of life.
5. How did Johnson get to your place so quickly?

IDENTIFYING SINGULAR AND PLURAL NOUNS

Nouns can be singular or plural. A **singular noun** refers to one. A **plural noun** refers to more than one. A plural noun usually ends in *-s* or *-es*:

Singular	Plural
student	students
tax	taxes
city	cities

Some nouns form their plurals in other ways:

Singular	Plural
woman	women
child	children
mouse	mice
knife	knives

Some nouns do not change in any way to form their plurals:

Singular	Plural
deer	deer
offspring	offspring

Some nouns do not usually form plurals because they refer to something that is not countable:

milk
rice
courage

Certain signal words can indicate whether a singular or plural noun follows.

Signal Words for Singular Nouns

a
an
a single
another
each
every
one

Signal Words for Plural Nouns

all
both
few
many
most
several
some
two, three, and so on

PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun or refers to a noun.

Example: Kathy Smith graduates this month. *She* will be a good nurse.

In the example, *she*, the pronoun, substitutes for *Kathy Smith*, the noun. *Kathy Smith* is called the antecedent, meaning the noun to which the pronoun refers.

Common Pronouns

I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they, them
my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs
myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves

this, that, these, those
everybody, everything, somebody, nobody, anybody, each
who, which, that

Look at the following pronouns and antecedents (nouns):

Ted refuses to adapt to the new departmental policy because he hates change.

pronoun = he
antecedent = Ted

The attorneys discussed their plan to hire a new partner.

pronoun = their
antecedent = attorneys

Roberta asked her son when the semester would end.

pronoun = her
antecedent = Roberta

The family who lives next door is on vacation in Utah.

pronoun = who
antecedent = family

Most pronouns function in sentences as nouns do. Pronouns give you versatility in writing because you do not have to repeat the names of nouns so often.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the pronouns in the sentences below.

Example: They do not understand the assignment.

1. Although Bob had good intentions, he lacked motivation.
2. She is able to finish the project.
3. The tall man who is holding a magazine resembles Jan's brother.
4. Raymond decided learning good writing skills would help him on the job.
5. Everyone thought the councilman's speech was confusing.

VERBS

A verb is a word that expresses physical or mental action, a state of being, or an occurrence.

physical action = dance, write, run, laugh, eat, sing

mental action = think, plan, decide, consider

state of being (existence) = be, am, is, are, was, were, seem

occurrence = become, happen

Verbs can be more than one word:

has been writing

had thought

will become

A verb gives power to your sentence; it is the “mover” of the sentence. Nouns and verbs together form the core of your sentence.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the verbs in the sentences below.

Example: Roxanne enjoyed the play.

1. The plane flew off its course.
2. The nursing students will graduate in one year.
3. The National Park Service will accept job applications in January.
4. The attorney met her client at the court house.
5. Maybe we should try a different route.

ADJECTIVES

An adjective is a word that modifies (describes or limits) a noun or pronoun. Here are some examples of adjectives and the words they modify:

the instructor
an electrician
beautiful rose
twelve cookies
this test

Adjectives often give your writing color and interest.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the adjectives in the sentences below.

Example: The weather is cold and uncomfortable.

1. Beautiful, green wheat sprouted in early October.
2. The elegant suit she wore was matched by gray shoes.
3. This is the most valuable diamond bracelet in the store.
4. He threw the champagne glass into the roaring fire.
5. Calcium is an indispensable mineral for women.

ADVERBS

An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a group of words. Adverbs usually answer the following questions:

How? Shamika sings *beautifully*.

When? We arrived *early* at the symphony hall.

Where? Randall looked *everywhere* for a job.

To what extent? We were *totally* disappointed with the service.

Look at the following examples of adverbs and the words they modify:

Adverb modifying a verb: Linda searched *frantically* for a key.

Adverb modifying an adjective: The child on the front row is *very* sleepy.

Adverb modifying another adverb: I recall facts *more* rapidly than he does.

Adverb modifying an entire sentence: *Unfortunately*, enrollment has been delayed a week.

Adverbs can expand your sentence and make it more specific and informative.

Try not to confuse adjectives and adverbs. Many adverbs end in *-ly*, and frequently you can change an adjective into an adverb by adding the *-ly*.

Adjective	Adverb
beautiful	beautifully
quick	quickly
real	really

Adjective: The woman is wearing a *real* leather coat.

Adverb: The accident on the highway was *really* horrible.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the adverbs in the sentences below.

Example: He slowly removed his coat.

1. The dance company arrived at the studio later in the afternoon.
2. Grandfather was always happy with Angela's gifts to him.
3. Could you possibly move to the right?
4. The sky was the most beautiful shade of turquoise.
5. The doctor soon diagnosed the patient's disease.

CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction is a word that connects two parts of a sentence. A conjunction can connect words or groups of words.

Common Conjunctions

and
but
or
yet
nor
not only ... but also
either ... or
although
because
if
since
when

In the following examples, the sentence meaning changes slightly when different conjunctions are used:

I was late for biology class, *and* I missed the quiz. (*And* shows addition.)

I missed the quiz *because* I was late for biology class. (*Because* shows cause and effect.)

The young man *or* his father will be here this afternoon. (*Or* shows choice.)

The young man *and* his father will be here this afternoon. (*And* shows addition.)

Conjunctions determine how your ideas are connected; consequently, the conjunctions you use will affect your audience's reaction to what you have written.



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the conjunctions in the sentences below.

Example: Victoria and Ann drove across the country in a week.

1. The house was damaged in the flood, but it could be repaired.
2. She suggested not only taking notes but also studying them in different ways.
3. I love to cook, but I hate to wash dishes.
4. Laurel and Hardy are my favorite comedians.
5. We listened to several madrigals in our music class because the instructor was emphasizing the music of the Renaissance.

PREPOSITIONS

A preposition is a word that connects a noun or pronoun to the rest of the sentence. A preposition shows the relationship between the noun or pronoun that follows it and another word in the sentence.

COMMON PREPOSITIONS

about	beneath	in spite of	through
above	beside	instead of	throughout
according to	between	into	till
across	beyond	like	to
after	by	near	toward
against	despite	next to	under
along	down	of	underneath
along with	during	off	unlike
among	except	on	until
around	except for	onto	up
as	for	out	upon
at	from	out of	with
away from	in	outside	within
because of	in addition to	outside of	without
before	in front of	over	
behind	in place of	past	
below	inside	since	

Look at the following prepositions used in sentences:

Suzanne swims every Tuesday and Thursday *at* the YMCA.
(*At* connects *the YMCA* to *swims*.)

He completed his dissertation *with* great relief.
(*With* connects *great relief* to *completed*.)

For several hours the committee debated Mr. Martin's proposal.
(*For* connects *several hours* to *debated*.)

Give the message *to* her.
(*To* connects *her* to *give*.)



EXERCISE 1 ► Underline the prepositions in the sentences below.

Example: We drove to the beach on Saturday.

1. Three days of rain ruined our vacation.
2. For seven hours weekly she rehearses in the studio on Remington Drive.
3. They waited in front of the theater all day.
4. The audience laughed aloud during the serious scenes in the movie.
5. The cat balanced on a branch far above our heads.

INTERJECTIONS

An interjection is a word that expresses surprise or strong emotion. An interjection is often set off with punctuation to make it stand out and get the reader's attention.

Examples: *Ouch!* You stepped on my toe.
Oh, I refuse to leave now!

