

English Grammar

Level I

Parts of Speech :

Noun

A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

Common nouns refer to common, everyday things.

The **dog** sleeps in her own **bed**.
His **friend** is crazy about **popcorn**.
My **cousin** went to **college**.

A proper noun refers to specific things that are unique or have names. Proper nouns begin with capital letters.

My friend **Miranda** is from **Wyoming**.
In 2001 **Halloween** falls on a **Wednesday**.
Most **Ecuadorians** practice **Christianity**.

Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns

A concrete noun names something you can experience with at least one of your senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell). Most nouns are concrete nouns.

My **ice** melted in the **sun**.
Darrel's **kitten** tore apart the **yarn**.
Thunder rattled our **windows**.

An abstract noun names something you cannot experience with your senses. Sometimes abstract nouns are called "idea nouns."

Sandra's **courage** and **curiosity** made her a good explorer.
It's important to have **respect** in a **friendship**.
Honesty is usually the best **policy**.

Pronoun

A pronoun is used in place of a noun or nouns. Common pronouns include he, her, him, I, it, me, she, them, they, us, and we. Here are some examples:

INSTEAD OF: Luma is a good athlete.

She is a good athlete. (The pronoun she replaces Luma.)

INSTEAD OF: The beans and tomatoes are fresh-picked.

They are fresh-picked. (The pronoun they replaces the beans and tomatoes.)

Often a pronoun takes the place of a particular noun. This noun is known as the antecedent. A pronoun "refers to," or directs your thoughts toward, its antecedent.

Let's call **Luma** and ask **her** to join the team. (Her is a pronoun; Luma is its antecedent.)

To find a pronoun's antecedent, ask yourself what that pronoun refers to. What does her refer to in the sentence above—that is, who is the her? The her in the sentence is Luma; therefore, Luma is the antecedent.

Subjective Pronouns

A subjective pronoun acts as the subject of a sentence—it performs the action of the verb. The subjective pronouns are he, I, it, she, they, we, and you.

He spends ages looking out the window.
After lunch, **she** and **I** went to the planetarium.

Objective Pronouns

An objective pronoun acts as the object of a sentence—it receives the action of the verb. The objective pronouns are her, him, it, me, them, us, and you.

Cousin Eldred gave **me** a trombone.
Take a picture of **him**, not **us**!

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun tells you who owns something. The possessive pronouns are hers, his, its, mine, ours, theirs, and yours.

The red basket is **mine**.
Yours is on the coffee table.

Demonstrative Pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun points out a noun. The demonstrative pronouns are that, these, this, and those.

That is a good idea.
These are hilarious cartoons.

A demonstrative pronoun may look like a demonstrative adjective, but it is used differently in a sentence: it acts as a pronoun, taking the place of a noun.

Interrogative Pronouns

An interrogative pronoun is used in a question. It helps to ask about something. The interrogative pronouns are what, which, who, whom, and compound words ending in "ever," such as whatever, whichever, whoever, and whomever.

What on earth is that?
Who ate the last Fig Newton?

An interrogative pronoun may look like an interrogative adjective, but it is used differently

in a sentence: it acts as a pronoun, taking the place of a noun.

Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun refers to an indefinite, or general, person or thing. Indefinite pronouns include all, any, both, each, everyone, few, many, neither, none, nothing, several, some, and somebody.

Something smells good.

Many like salsa with their chips.

An indefinite pronoun may look like an indefinite adjective, but it is used differently in a sentence: it acts as a pronoun, taking the place of a noun.

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun introduces a clause, or part of a sentence, that describes a noun. The relative pronouns are that, which, who, and whom.

You should bring the book **that** you love most.

That introduces "you love most," which describes the book.

Hector is a photographer **who** does great work.

Who introduces "does great work," which describes Hector.

Reflexive Pronouns

A reflexive pronoun refers back to the subject of a sentence. The reflexive pronouns are herself, himself, itself, myself, ourselves, themselves, and yourselves. Each of these words can also act as an intensive pronoun (see below).

I learned a lot about **myself** at summer camp. (Myself refers back to I.)

They should divide the berries among **themselves**. (Themselves refers back to they.)

Intensive Pronouns

An intensive pronoun emphasizes its antecedent (the noun that comes before it). The intensive pronouns are herself, himself, itself, myself, ourselves, themselves, and yourselves. Each of these words can also act as a reflective pronoun (see above).

I **myself** don't like eggs.
The queen **herself** visited our class.

Verb

A verb tells about an action or a state of being. There are three types of verbs: action, linking, and auxiliary.

Action Verbs

An action verb expresses action. It tells what a person or a thing does.

Muskrats **swim** in marshes.
We **built** a fantastic sandcastle.

To find out whether a word is an action verb, ask yourself whether that word expresses something you can do. Can you muskrat? No! Can you marsh? No. But can you swim? Yes—swim is an action verb.

Linking Verbs

A linking verb links the subject of the sentence with information about it. Sometimes linking verbs are called "state-of-being verbs."

Jeremy **is** tired.
This apple **tastes** so sweet.

In the first sentence, *is* links Jeremy to information about him—the fact that he is tired. That is his state of being.

In the second sentence, *tastes* links apple to information about it—its sweetness. Did you think *taste* was an action verb? Well, it is—when the subject is doing the tasting. But here,

the apple isn't doing any tasting. The apple itself tastes sweet. That is its state of being.

Auxiliary Verbs

An auxiliary verb goes with another verb. Sometimes auxiliary verbs are called "helping verbs" because they introduce or "help out" the main verb.

Ms. Sothros **is** reading our stories.
We **should** dig for buried treasure.

In the first sentence, the auxiliary verb, *is*, helps out the main verb, *reading*, by telling when the action is taking place—right now.

In the second sentence, the auxiliary verb, *should*, helps out the main verb, *dig*, by telling about its importance—digging must be important, if it is something that should happen.

Note that you can't *is* or *should*. This reminds you that they are not action verbs.

Be, *have*, and *do* are the most common auxiliary verbs. Other common auxiliary verbs include *can*, *could*, *should*, *would*, *may*, *might*, and *must*.

Check Its Function!

In English, the same word can have different functions. For instance, *paint* can be a verb or a noun. Here are some examples.

Let's **paint** the garage.
We brought **paint** to school.

In the first sentence, *paint* is a verb—it is something you can do. In the second sentence, *paint* is a noun—it is a thing.

Our rabbits **live** in a hutch.
Luis sang before a **live** audience.

In the first sentence, *live* is a verb—it is something you can do. In the second sentence, *live* is an adjective—it describes something.

Smile, *dance*, *contact*, *ski*, *color*, and *research* are just a few of the many other English words that can have different functions.

Adverb

An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. In this case, "modifies" means "tells more about." An adverb tells more about how the verb is being done. Many adverbs end in "-ly."

Susan writes **quickly** and **well**.
Herbie will visit **tomorrow**.
Let's go **home**.
That was a **very** funny joke.

Adverbs can answer questions like these: "How?" (quickly and well) "When?" (tomorrow) "Where?" (home) "To what extent?" (very funny)

Interrogative Adverbs

An interrogative adverb asks a question. The interrogative adverbs are how, when, where, and why.

How did you get here?
Where are you going next?

Conjunctive Adverbs

A conjunctive adverb joins two ideas. It can give emphasis to one of the ideas, or answer the question "How are they related?" Some common conjunctive adverbs are besides, however, indeed, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, and therefore.

I am allergic to cats; **nevertheless**, I love them.
It might rain later; **therefore**, we should pack our umbrellas.

A semicolon is used before a conjunctive adverb, and a comma is used after it.

Adjective

An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun. In this case, "modifies" means "tells more about." Adjectives are words that describe things.

I planted **orange** flowers in the **round** pot.
The **long-eared** rabbit nibbled the **little** carrots.

Adjectives can answer the question "What kind?" (orange flowers; little carrots)

Possessive Adjectives

A possessive adjective modifies a noun by telling whom it belongs to. It answers the question "Whose?" Possessive adjectives include his, her, its, my, our, their, and your.

You can share **my** rice.
Have you seen **their** house?

Demonstrative Adjectives

The demonstrative adjectives that, these, this, those, and what answer the question "Which?"

I'm going to open **that** present.
Those socks look warm.

A demonstrative adjective may look like a demonstrative pronoun, but it is used differently in the sentence: it is an adjective, used to modify a noun or pronoun.

Interrogative Adjectives

The interrogative adjectives what and which are used in a question. They help to ask about something.

What movie do you want to see?
Which leaves turn color first?

An interrogative adjective may look like an interrogative pronoun, but it is used differently in the sentence: it is an adjective, used to modify a noun or pronoun.

Indefinite Adjectives

An indefinite adjective gives indefinite, or general, information. Often, it answers the question "How much?" Some common indefinite adjectives are all, any, each, every, few, many, and some.

Many children like dinosaurs.
Did you want **some** bananas?

An indefinite adjective may look like an indefinite pronoun, but it is used differently in the sentence: it is an adjective, used to modify a noun or pronoun.

Conjunction

Conjunctions connect words or groups of words.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that connects two words or two groups of words that are used in the same way—that is, they are the same part of speech or they are grammatically alike. The coordinating conjunctions are and, but, for, nor, or, so, and yet.

Do you want to play checkers **or** cards?

We're going to be Calvin **and** Hobbes this Halloween.

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs. They connect two words or two groups of words that are used in the same way—that is, they are the same part of speech or they are grammatically alike. They include both . . . and; either . . . or; neither . . . nor; not only . . . but; and whether . . . or.

Both Andy **and** Rex are coming to dinner.
I would like **either** a red marker **or** an orange marker.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction is a word that connects two groups of words that are not used in the same way—that is, they are not the same part of speech and they are not grammatically alike. Some common subordinating conjunctions are after, because, before, how, if, since, than, though, until, when, where, and while.

Bobby played in the park **until** it got dark.
The movie was funnier **than** I had expected.

Sometimes a subordinating conjunction comes at the beginning of a sentence.

Since you are here, let's rehearse.
After Margaret had lunch, she took a nap.

Interjection

An interjection expresses an emotion. It might show excitement or surprise.

Wow! That is a giant pumpkin!

Ouch, you stepped on my toe!

Yippee! We won!

Whoa! Hold your horses!

Bravo, you did a great job!

An interjection often appears at the beginning of a sentence. It is usually followed by an exclamation point or a comma.

Prepositions

A preposition links a noun, pronoun, or phrase to another part of a sentence. Because many prepositions show direction, some say that "a preposition is anywhere a cat can go."

The cat walked **across** the couch.

The cat leaned **against** the couch.

The cat strolled **along** the couch.

The cat sneaked **around** the couch.

The cat leapt **at** the couch.

The cat crept **behind** the couch.

The cat hid **below** the couch.

The cat scampered **beneath** the couch.
The cat leaned **beside** the couch.
The cat tip-toed **by** the couch.
The cat crawled **inside** the couch.
The cat strutted **near** the couch.
The cat jumped **off** the couch.
The cat marched **over** the couch.
The cat rambled **past** the couch.
The cat plodded **to** the couch.
The cat stalked **toward** the couch.
The cat wiggled **underneath** the couch.
The cat settled **upon** the couch.
The cat snuggled **within** the couch.

A preposition leads to an object, which is the part of the sentence that receives the action of the verb. The preposition also tells how the object is related to the rest of the sentence.

The cat walked **across** the couch.

The couch is the object, because it receives the action of the verb—the walking. The preposition, across, tells how the couch is related to the rest of the sentence. It links the fact that the cat walked with information about where it walked: across the couch.

Prepositions can help show not just where something took place, but how and when. Besides the ones listed above, some common prepositions are about, after, among, between, beyond, but, despite, during, for, of, since, through, until, and without.