

Level II

Parts of Speech

Noun

A noun is a word that names a person, place, or thing. Nouns, like house guests, come in different varieties. House guests include those you want, those you hate, and those you're stuck with regardless. Nouns come in these varieties: common nouns, proper nouns, compound nouns, and collective nouns.

1. Common nouns name any one of a class of person, place, or thing.

boy
city
food

2. Proper nouns name a specific person, place, or thing.

Bob
New York City
Rice-a-Roni

3. Compound nouns are two or more nouns that function as a single unit. A compound noun can be two individual words, words joined by a hyphen, or two words combined.

individual words: time capsule
hyphenated words: great-uncle
combined words: basketball

4. Collective nouns name groups of people or things.

audience
family
herd
crowd

Pronoun

Say you wrote this sentence:

Mr. Hufnagle gave Mr. Hufnagle's pen to Mr. Hufnagle's wife, Mrs. Hufnagle; Mrs. Hufnagle was grateful for the pen.

You would be reduced to this sorry state were it not for the delightful and ever useful little pronoun. Thanks to Mr. Pronoun, you can write this graceful sentence instead:

Mr. Hufnagle gave his pen to his wife, Mrs. Hufnagle; she was grateful for it.

Now, I know you have to agree that the pronoun is a thing of beauty indeed.

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or another pronoun. Pronouns help you avoid unnecessary repetition in your writing and speech.

A pronoun gets its meaning from the noun it stands for. The noun is called the antecedent. Here's an example:

Although Seattle is damp, it is my favorite city

Of course, there are different kinds of pronouns. Most of them have antecedents, but a few do not. Meet the pronoun family.

1. Personal pronouns refer to a specific person, place, object, or thing. Here are the major players:

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

2. Possessive pronouns show ownership. The possessive pronouns are yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs, whose.

Is this nice dead cat yours?
Yes, it's ours.

3. Reflexive pronouns add information to a sentence by pointing back to a noun or pronoun near the beginning of the sentence. Reflexive pronouns end in -self or -selves.

Herman bought himself a life-size inflatable woman.
They all enjoyed themselves at Herman's expense.

4. Intensive pronouns also end in -self or -selves, but they just add emphasis to the noun or pronoun.

Herman himself blew up the doll.
Herman said that he would be able to deflate the doll himself.

5. Demonstrative pronouns direct attention to a specific person, place, or thing. Not to panic—there are only four demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these, and those.

This is the invisible car that came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.
That was the slow-moving, sad-faced old gentleman who bounced off the roof of my car.

6. Relative pronouns begin a subordinate clause. Only five, folks: that, which, who, whom, and those.

Mr. Peepers claimed that the other car collided with his without giving warning of its intention.
Louise was the driver who had to swerve a number of times before she hit the other car.

7. Interrogative pronouns ask a question. High fives: what, which, who, whom, and whose.

Who claimed he was coming home when he drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree he doesn't have?
Which insurance adjuster had these headaches?

8. Indefinite pronouns refer to people, places, objects, or things without pointing to a specific one.

Here are the most common indefinite pronouns:

Singular _____ **Plural** _____ **Singular or Plural** _____

another _____ both _____ all _____
anyone _____ few _____ any _____

each _____ many _____ more
everyone _____ others _____ most
everybody _____ several _____ none
everything _____ some
much
nobody
nothing
other
someone
anybody
anything
either
little
neither
no one
one
somebody
something

Verb

Verbs are words that name an action or describe a state of being. Verbs are seriously important, because there's no way to have a sentence without them.

While we're on the topic, every sentence must have two parts: a subject and a predicate.

- A subject tells who or what the sentence is about. The subject is a noun or a pronoun.
- A predicate tells what the subject is or does. The verb is found in the predicate.

There are four basic types of verbs: action verbs, linking verbs, helping verbs, verb phrases.

Action Verbs

Action verbs tell what the subject does. For example: jump, kiss, laugh.

The mobsters broke Irving's kneecaps.
Some people worry about the smallest things.

An action verb can be transitive or intransitive. Transitive verbs need a direct object.

The boss dropped the ball.
The workers picked it up.

Intransitive verbs do not need a direct object.

Who called?
Icicles dripped from his voice.

Linking Verbs

Linking verbs join the subject and the predicate. Linking verbs do not show action. Instead, they help the words at the end of the sentence name and describe the subject. Here are the most common linking verbs: be, feel, grow, seem, smell, remain, appear, sound, stay, look, taste, turn, become.

Although small in size as well as number, linking verbs are used a great deal. Here are two typical examples:

The manager was happy about the job change.
He is a fool.

Many linking verbs can also be used as action verbs. For example:

Linking: The kids looked sad.
Action: I looked for the dog in the pouring rain.

Helping Verbs

Helping verbs are added to another verb to make the meaning clearer. Helping verbs include any form of to be. Here are some examples: **do, does, did, have, has, had, shall, should, will, would, can, could, may, might, must.**

Verb phrases are made of one main verb and one or more helping verbs.

They will run before dawn.
They do have a serious problem.

Adverb

Adverbs are words that describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Adverbs answer the questions "When?" "Where?" "How?" or "To what extent?" For example:

When? left yesterday, begin now

Where? fell below, move up

How? happily sang, danced badly

To what extent? partly finished, eat completely

Fortunately for us, most adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective. This makes recognizing an adverb fairly easy. Of course, we don't want things to be too easy, so there are a bunch of adverbs that don't end in -ly. Here are some of the most common non-ly adverbs:

Quote:

afterward

already

almost

back

even

often

far

quick

fast

rather

hard

slow

here

so

how
soon
late
still
long
then
low
today
more
tomorrow
near
too
never
when
next
where
now
yesterday

Now, what can you do with an adverb? Try this: Use an adverb to describe a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

1. Use an adverb to describe a verb.
Experiments using dynamite must be done carefully.
2. Use an adverb to describe an adjective.
Charles had an unbelievably huge appetite for chips.
3. Use an adverb to describe another adverb.
They sang so clearly.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Conjunctive adverbs are used to connect other words. Therefore, conjunctive adverbs act like conjunctions, these wily devils—even though they are not technically considered to be conjunctions. Despite their tendency to be mislabeled, conjunctive adverbs are very useful when you want to link ideas and paragraphs. Here are the fan favorites:

Quote:

accordingly
however

again
indeed

also
moreover

besides
nevertheless

consequently
on the other hand

finally
otherwise

for example
then

furthermore
therefore

Adjective

Adjectives are words that describe nouns and pronouns. They're the color commentators of language, the words that give your writing and speech flavor. Adjectives answer the questions "What kind?" "How much?" "Which one?" and "How many?" For example:

What kind? red nose, gold ring
How much? more sugar, little effort
Which one? second wife, those nuts
How many? several wives, six husbands

Spice Up Your Sentences with Adjectives

There are five kinds of adjectives: common adjectives, proper adjectives, compound adjectives, articles, and indefinite adjectives.

1. Common adjectives describe nouns or pronouns.

strong man
green plant
pretty child

2. Proper adjectives are formed from proper nouns.

California vegetables
Mexican food

3. Compound adjectives are made up of more than one word, like these two examples:

far-off country
teenage person

4. Articles are a special type of adjective. There are three articles: a, an, and the.

The is called a "definite article" because it refers to a specific thing.

A and an are called "indefinite articles" because they refer to general things. Use a when the word that follows begins with a consonant sound; use an before words that begin with vowel sounds.

5. Indefinite adjectives don't specify the amount of something. Instead, they describe general quantities. Most of the indefinite adjectives were pronouns in their first lives. For example:

Quote:

all
either

another
few

any
many

both
more

each
most

neither
several

other
some

Adjectives for Non-Native Speakers

The indefinite articles *a* and *an* are grammatically the same. They both mean “one of many.” They are used only with singular nouns. As you learned earlier, use *a* when the word that follows begins with a consonant sound; use *an* before words that begin with vowel sounds. Here are some additional guidelines:

1. *A* is sometimes used with the words “little” and “few.” The meaning is slightly different, depending on whether you use the article *a* before the words “little” and “few.” Study these examples:

a little, *a few* = a small amount of something
little, *few* = less than expected
a few carrots, *few carrots*
a little sugar, *little sugar*

2. *A* and *an* are rarely used with proper nouns.

Now that you know what adjectives are, it's time to learn how to use them. Follow these easy-as-pie guidelines:

1. Use an adjective to describe a noun or a pronoun

2. Use vivid adjectives to make your writing more specific and descriptive.

3. Use an adjective after a linking verb. A linking verb connects a subject with a descriptive word. Here are the most common linking verbs: *be* (*is*, *am*, *are*, *was*, *were*, and so on), *seem*, *appear*, *look*, *feel*, *smell*, *sound*, *taste*, *become*, *grow*, *remain*, *stay*, and *turn*.

Chicken made this way tastes more delicious (not deliciously).

Conjunction

Conjunctions connect words or groups of words and show how they are related. There are three kinds of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinating conjunctions. Let's look at each one.

1. Coordinating conjunctions link words or word groups. Here are the seven coordinating conjunctions:

for
and
but
or
yet
so
nor

And now for some examples:

Eat one live toad the first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.

Meddle not in the affairs of dragons, for thou art crunchy and taste good with ketchup.

2. Correlative conjunctions also link similar words or word groups, but they are always used in pairs. Here are the correlative conjunctions:

both ... and
either ... or
neither ... nor
not only ... but also
whether ... or

Some examples:

He lost both his shirt and his pants.

Either you come with us now, or you will miss the boat.

3. Subordinate conjunctions link an independent clause (a complete sentence) to a dependent clause (a fragment). There are only seven coordinating conjunctions and five correlative conjunctions, but you have more subordinating conjunctions than Custer had

Native Americans. Here are the most often used subordinating conjunctions:

after
as long as

although
as soon as

as
as though

as if
because

before
till

even though
unless

if
until

in order that
when

since
whenever

so, so that
where

though
wherever

And a few examples culled from actual insurance forms:

The guy was all over the road so I had to swerve a couple of times before I finally hit him.

I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.

Interjection

Zap! Pow! Wow!

Unlike movie stars Steven Seagal and Morris the Cat (okay, so he's dead), interjections show strong emotion. Because interjections are not linked grammatically to other words in the sentence, they are set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or an exclamation mark.

Oh! What a shock you gave me with that gorilla suit.
Wow! That's not a gorilla suit?

With interjections, a little goes a long way. Use these marks of punctuation as you would hot pepper or hysterics, because they are strong and edgy.

Preposition

Prepositions are the mighty mites of grammar and writing, small but powerful little puppies. Prepositions are words that link a noun or a pronoun to another word in the sentence.

Use this list to help you recognize some of the most common prepositions:

Quote:

about
between

above
beyond

across
but

after
by

against
despite

along
down

amid
during

around
except

as
for

at
from

before
in

behind
inside

below
into

beneath
like

beside
near

of
since

off
through

on
toward

onto
under

opposite
underneath

out
until

outside
upon

over
with

past
within

A noun always follows a preposition. A prepositional phrase is a preposition and its object. A prepositional phrase can be two or three words long, as these examples show:

on the wing
in the door

However, prepositional phrases can be much longer, depending on the length of the preposition and number of words that describe the object of the preposition. Here are two super-size prepositional phrases:

near the violently swaying oak trees
on account of his nearly depleted bank account

Prepositions for Non-Native Speakers

Using prepositions correctly presents special problems for people whose first language is not English. That's because so many prepositional phrases are idiomatic: They have evolved through use and do not necessarily make logical sense. Here are some guidelines:

1. Use *in* before seasons of the year. Also use *in* with months and years not followed by specific dates.

in the summer
in January
in 2003

2. Use *on* before days of the week, holidays, and months, if the date follows.

on Wednesday
on Thanksgiving
on July 20

depend on _____ Everything depends on the bus schedule.
differ from (something) _____ The airplane differs from the train.
differ with (a person) _____ I differ with your argument.
displeased with _____ Nina is displeased with the plan.
fond of _____ We are all fond of Mrs. Marco.
grateful for (something) _____ The child was grateful for a snow day.
grateful to (someone) _____ We are grateful to the doctor.
identical with _____ This cake is identical with hers.
interested in _____ Chris is interested in martial arts.
interfere with _____ Homework can interfere with your social life.
object to _____ We object to the income tax hike.
protect against _____ An umbrella protects against rain.
reason with _____ You can't reason with a two-year-old.
responsible for _____ I am responsible for bringing the salad.
shocked at _____ We are shocked at your hair color!
similar to _____ It is similar to a rainbow.
specialize in _____ The hairdresser must specialize in humor.
take advantage of _____ They surely take advantage of kids!
worry about _____ I worry about you

Pronouns & Case

When Quentin Crisp told the people of Northern Ireland that he was an atheist, a woman in the audience stood up and said, "Yes, but is it the God of the Catholics or the God of the Protestants in whom you don't believe?" Hey, we don't need religious strife—we have who and whom to contend with. And that's not to mention all the rest of the pronouns. You've got to figure out how to use them correctly, too.

Here you'll learn about the grammatical role a pronoun plays in a sentence. Armed with this knowledge, you can use all pronouns—even the dreaded who and whom—correctly, with skill and confidence

Why Can't a Pronoun Be More Like a Noun?

Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. Between you and I, pronouns drive myself crazy, and I bet they do yourself, too. A quick look at the disastrous last sentence and a brief survey of English explains why pronouns are more maddening than a hormone-crazed teenager.

Old English, like Latin, depended on word endings to express grammatical relationships. These endings are called inflections. For example, consider the Old English word for stone, "stan." Study this chart.

<u>Case</u>	<u>Word</u>
Nominative and accusative singular	_____ stan
Genitive singular	_____ stane
Dative singular	_____ stane
Nominative and accusative plural	_____ stanas
Genitive plural	_____ stana
Dative plural	_____ stanum

Fortunately, contemporary English is greatly simplified from Old English. (Would I lie/lay to you?) Today, nouns remain the same in the nominative and accusative cases and inflect only for the possessive and the plural. Here's how our version of "stan" (stone) looks today: stone, stone's, stones, and stones'. Huh? Sounds like Greek? Not to worry. It will all be clear by the end of this section.

Pronouns, on the other hand, have retained more of their inflections, and more's the pity. The first-person pronoun, for example, can exist as I, me, mine, my, myself, we, us, our, ours, ourself, and ourselves—11 written forms! Because pronouns assume so many more forms than nouns, these otherwise adorable words can be a real pain in the butt.

Head Case OR The Three Cases

Case is the form of a noun or pronoun that shows how it is used in a sentence. English has three cases: nominative, objective, and possessive. The following chart shows the three cases.

<u>Nominative</u> <u>(Pronoun as Subject)</u>	<u>Objective (Pronoun</u> <u>Showing Object)</u>	<u>Possessive</u> <u>(Pronoun as</u> <u>Ownership)</u>
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I _____	me _____	my, mine
you _____	you _____	your, yours
he _____	him _____	his
she _____	her _____	her, hers

it _____ it _____ its
we _____ us _____ our, ours
they _____ them _____ their, theirs
who _____ whom _____ whose
whoever _____ whomever _____ whoever

The Rules

Let's review the rules for using pronouns so these little words won't make you crazy as you write and speak.

1. Use the nominative case to show the subject of a verb. Remember that the subject is the noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb.

Question: I know of no other person in the company who is as smarmy as (he, him.)

Answer: He is the subject of the understood verb is. Therefore, the sentence would read: "I know of no other person in the company who is as smarmy as he."

Question: (Who, Whom) do you believe is the best writer?

Answer: Who is the subject of the verb is. Therefore, the sentence would read, "Who do you believe is the best writer?"

Of course, anything associated with grammar can't be that easy. Here's the exception to the rule you just learned: A pronoun used as the subject of an infinitive is in the objective case. For example: "Billy Bob expects Frankie Bob and (I, me) to make squirrel stew." The correct pronoun here is me, because it is the subject of the infinitive to make.

2. A pronoun used as a predicate nominative is in the nominative case. A predicate nominative is a noun or pronoun after some form of to be (is, was, might have been, and so on).

Predicate nominatives are the bad boys in the back row of homeroom because they equal trouble. Here's what I mean:

The verb to be, in all of its forms, is the same as an equal sign. Whatever comes before it (almost always a pronoun in the nominative case) must also follow it.

Question: It was (they, them) who first suggested getting the 90-pound puppy.

Answer: It was they who first suggested getting the 90-pound puppy.

3. Use the objective case to show that the noun or pronoun receives the action.

Question: (Who, Whom) can you send to help us?

Answer: Whom is the direct object of the verb can send. Therefore, the sentence should read: "Whom can you send to help us?"

Question: The taxidermist promised to notify Herman and (I, me) of his plans for the moose.

Answer: Me (together with Herman) is the object of the infinitive to notify. Therefore, the sentence should read: "The taxidermist promised to notify Herman and me of his plans for the moose."

Question: It is always a pleasure for (we, us) employees to have a day-long meeting.

Answer: Here, us is the object of the preposition for. Therefore, the sentence should read: "It is always a pleasure for us employees to have a day-long meeting."

Question: The Internet gave my sister and (I, me) some interesting ideas.

Answer: Me (together with my sister) is the indirect object of the verb gave. Therefore, the sentence should read: "The Internet gave my sister and me some interesting ideas."

You can tell a word is an indirect object if you can insert to or for before it without changing the meaning. For example: The Internet gave (to) my sister and (to) me some interesting ideas.

4. A pronoun used in apposition with a noun is in the same case as the noun. An appositive is a noun or pronoun placed after another noun or pronoun to identify, explain, or rename it.

Question: Two bond traders, Alice and (she, her) were given bonuses large enough to buy their own banana republic.

Answer: The pronoun must be in the nominative case (she) because it is in apposition with the noun bond traders, which is in the nominative case. Therefore, the sentence should read: "Two bond traders, Alice and she, were given bonuses large enough to buy their own banana republic."

5. Use the possessive case to show ownership.

Question: The manager refused to acknowledge that the memo was (her's, hers).

Answer: Hers is the correct spelling of the possessive case, which is needed here to express ownership (belonging to her). Therefore, the sentence should read: "The manager refused to acknowledge that the memo was hers."

Be careful not to confuse possessive pronouns and contractions. To help you remember the difference, carve this chart into your desk at work.

6. Use the subjective case after linking verbs. Remember that a linking verb connects a subject to a word that renames it. This one actually makes perfect sense: Because a pronoun coming after a linking verb renames the subject, the pronoun must be in the subjective (nominative) case.

Question: The flasher of the month was (I, me).

Answer: Use I, because the pronoun renames the subject, the flasher of the month.

Question: The one who will benefit from this honor is they and (me, I).

Answer: Again, go with I, because the pronoun renames the subject.

Who Versus Whom

Contemporary writer and humorist Calvin Trillin once claimed, "Whom is a word invented to make everyone sound like a butler. Nobody who is not a butler has ever said it out loud without feeling just a little bit weird."

Trillin isn't alone in his frustration with who/whom. More than half a century ago, a professor named Arthur H. Weston voiced his feelings over who/whom this way:

It's hard to devise an appropriate doom
For those who say who when they ought to say whom.
But it's even more hard to decide what to do
With those who say whom when they ought to say who.

No one will argue that *who* and *whom* are the most troublesome pronouns in English. Anyone who has ever grappled with *who* and *whom* might use stronger language than that. Here are some reasons why *who/whom* are so perplexing:

- *Who* is used as an interrogative pronoun in questions.
- *Who* is also used as a relative pronoun in complex sentences (see *Sentences* for more on this).
- *Whoever* is usually found only in complex sentences (again, see *Sentences*).
- Who knows how to use these suckers?

We can't do much about the national debt, frown lines, or those Mets, but we can straighten out *who/whom* use. Even though I discussed *who/whom* earlier in this section, these little words cause such distress that they deserve their own subsection.

Adjectives Versus Adverbs

Introduction

Adjectives and adverbs are describing words; the former describes a noun or pronoun; the latter, a verb, adjective, or other adverb. Here, you learn how to use these words with skill and confidence so you'll never again face the dreaded bad/well dilemma.

Both adjectives and adverbs are modifiers—words that describe other words. For example:

Adjective: The quick fox jumped.

Adverb: The fox jumped quickly.

Ah ha! you say. Adverbs end in *-ly*; adjectives don't, so that's how I can tell these suckers apart. Not so fast, kemosabe. Some adverbs end in *-ly*, but not all. Further, some adjectives also end in *-ly*, such as *lovely* and *friendly*. As a result, the *-ly* test doesn't cut the mustard. Instead, the key to telling the difference between adjectives and adverbs is understanding how they work:

- Adjectives describe a noun or pronoun.

- Adverbs describe a verb, adjective, or other adverb.

As you learned in Parts of Speech, the only dependable way to tell whether you should use an adjective or an adverb is to see how the word functions in the sentence. If a noun or pronoun is being described, use an adjective. If a verb, adjective, or other adverb is being described, use an adverb. Here's an example to refresh your memory:

- He is a skillful driver.

(The adjective skillful describes the noun driver.)

- The cabby drove skillfully.

(The adverb skillfully describes the verb drove.)

Graphic Proof

Use the following table to keep adjectives and adverbs straight. That way, we'll all be reading from the same sheet music as we play together in the rest of this section.

In the Know: Adjective or Adverb?

Modifier	Function	Example
Adjectives _____ (The noun is bee.)	Describe nouns _____	The busy bee never rests.
Adjectives _____ (The pronoun is she.)	Describe pronouns _____	She felt disappointed.
Adverbs _____ (The verb is cried.)	Describe verbs _____	The child cried bitterly.
Adverbs _____ (The adverb is bitterly.)	Describe adverbs _____	The child cried very bitterly.
Adverbs _____ (The adjective is annoyed.)	Describe adjectives _____	The child was truly annoyed.

Three Degrees of Separation

Often, you'll want to compare things rather than just describe them. Not to worry; English has this covered. Adjectives and adverbs have different forms to show degrees of comparison. We even have a name for each of these forms of degree: positive, comparative, and superlative. Let's meet the whole gang.

Positive degree: the base form of the adjective or adverb. It does not show comparison.

Comparative degree: the form an adjective or adverb takes to compare two things.

Superlative degree: the form an adjective or adverb takes to compare three or more things.

The following table shows the three degrees of comparison with some sample adjectives and adverbs

Comparative Levels of Adjectives and Adverbs

<u>Part of Speech</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
Adjective	low	lower	lowest
Adjective	big	bigger	biggest
Adjective	fat	fatter	fattest
Adverb	highly	more highly	most highly
Adverb	widely	more widely	most widely
Adverb	easily	more easily	most easily

As you can see from this table, the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs are formed differently. Here's how:

1. All adverbs that end in -ly form their comparative and superlative degree with more and most.

quickly, more quickly, most quickly
slowly, more slowly, most slowly

2. Avoid using more or most when they sound awkward, as in "more soon than I expected." In general, use -er/-est with one- and two-syllable modifiers.

fast, faster, fastest
high, higher, highest

3. When a word has three or more syllables, use more and most to form the comparative and superlative degree.

beloved, more beloved, most beloved
detested, more detested, most detested

Size Does Matter

Now that you know how to form comparisons with adjectives and adverbs, follow these guidelines to make these comparisons correct.

1. Use the comparative degree (-er or more form) to compare two things.
Your memory is better than mine.

Donald Trump is more successful than Donald Duck, Don Ameche, or Don Ho.

2. Use the superlative form (-est or most) to compare three or more things.

This is the largest room in the house.
This is the most awful meeting.

3. Never use -er and more or -est and most together. One or the other will do the trick nicely.

No: This is the more heavier brother.
Yes: This is the heavier brother.
No: He is the most heaviest brother.
Yes: He is the heaviest brother.

Irregular Adjectives and Adverbs

Of course, life can't be that easy in the land of adjectives and adverbs. And so it isn't. A few adjectives and adverbs don't follow these rules. They sneer at them, going their own separate ways. Like errant congressmen, there's just no predicting what these adjectives and adverbs will do next.

The following table shows the most common irregular adjectives and adverbs. Tap the noggin and memorize these forms.

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
-----------------	--------------------	--------------------

good	_____ better	_____ best
well	_____ better	_____ best
bad	_____ worse	_____ worst
badly	_____ worse	_____ worst
far	_____ farther	_____ farthest
far	_____ further	_____ furthest
late	_____ later	_____ later or latest
little (amount)	_____ less	_____ least
many	_____ more	_____ most
much	_____ more	_____ most
some	_____ more	_____ most

Keep Your Balance

In most cases, the comparative and superlative degree shouldn't present any more difficulty than doing pick-up brain surgery with a screw driver or dealing with your two-year-old. Upon occasion, however, the way the sentence is phrased may make your comparison unclear. You balance your tires and your checkbook, so balance your sentences. Here's how:

Compare similar items.
Finish the comparison.

No: Nick's feet are bigger than Charles's. (Charles's what?)

Yes: Nick's feet are bigger than Charles's feet.

No: My wife's CD collection is larger than my son's.

Yes: My wife's CD collection is larger than my son's CD collection.

Other and Else

Another common error is illogical comparisons. Why bother creating new illogical situations, when the world is filled with existing ones that fit the bill so nicely?

Because the thing you're comparing is part of a group, you have to differentiate it from the group by using the word other or else before you can set it apart in a comparison.

Therefore, to avoid adding to the world's existing stock of stupidity, when you compare one item in a group with the rest of the group, be sure to include the word other or else. Then,

your comparison will make sense.

Dopey: The Godfather was greater than any modern American movie.

Sensible: The Godfather was greater than any other modern American movie.

Dopey: Francis Ford Coppola won more awards than anyone at the ceremony.

Sensible: Francis Ford Coppola won more awards than anyone else at the ceremony.

Using Adjectives After Linking Verbs

Remember that linking verbs describe a state of being or a condition. They include all forms of to be (such as am, is, are, were, was) and verbs related to the senses (look, smell, sound, feel). Linking verbs connect the subject of a sentence to a word that renames or describes it.

Sticky situations arise with verbs that sometimes function as linking verbs but other times function as action verbs. Life just isn't fair sometimes. As linking verbs, these verbs use adjectives as complements. As action verbs, these verbs use adverbs. For example:

Charlie looks cheerful.
(looks is a linking verb; cheerful is an adjective)

Charlie looks cheerfully at the buffet table.
(looks is an action verb; cheerfully is an adverb)

The Badlands

The adjective bad and the adverb badly are especially prone to such abuse. For instance:

No-No: The guest felt badly.
Yes-Yes: The guest felt bad.
No-No: The food tasted badly.
Yes-Yes: The food tasted bad.

Good News; Well News

Good and well are as dicey as bad and badly. That's because well functions both as an adverb and as an adjective:

1. Good is always an adjective.

You did a good job.
You're a good egg.

2. Well is an adjective used to describe good health.

You look well.
You sound well after your recent bout with pneumonia.

3. Well is an adverb when it's used for anything else.

You cook well.
They eat well

Note

When you make comparisons using adjectives and adverbs, pay attention to elements that can be counted and those that cannot. As you read earlier, remember that less and fewer cannot be interchanged. Less refers to amounts that form a whole or can't be counted (less money, less filling), while fewer refers to items that can be counted (fewer coins, fewer calories).

1. For nouns that can be counted, use few, fewer, or fewest rather than little, less, or least to count down.

Incorrect: Carrot sticks have less calories than chocolate.
Correct: Carrot sticks have fewer calories than chocolate.
Because calories can be counted, use the adjective fewer rather than the adjective less.

2. For mass nouns (which cannot be counted) use little, less, or least rather than few, fewer, or fewest to count down.

Incorrect: There's fewer water in this bucket than I expected.
Correct: There's less water in this bucket than I expected.
Because water is a mass noun that cannot be counted, use the adjective less rather than the adjective fewer.

3. For nouns that can be counted, use the adjective many, not much.

Incorrect: Foi gras has much calories.
Correct: Foi gras has many calories.

Because calories can be counted, use the adjective many rather than the adjective much.

No Double Negatives

A double negative is a statement that contains two negative describing words. For instance:

Double negative: The shopper did not have no money left over after the binge.

Correct: The shopper did not have any money left over after the binge.

Or:

The shopper had no money left over after the binge.

To avoid this grammatical faux pas, use only one negative word to express a negative idea. Here are the most frequently used negative words:

Quote:

no
never
not
none
nothing
hardly
scarcely
barely

Double negatives are sneaky little critters. They are especially likely to cause problems with contractions. When the word not is used in a contraction—such as isn't, doesn't, wouldn't, couldn't, don't—the negative tends to slip by. As a result, writers and speakers may add another negative.

Double negative: He didn't say nothing.

Correct: He didn't say anything.

Or:

He said nothing.

Phrasal Verbs and other multi-word verbs

Phrasal verbs are part of a large group of verbs called "multi-word verbs". Phrasal verbs and other multi-word verbs are an important part of the English language. Multi-word verbs, including phrasal verbs, are very common, especially in spoken English. A multi-word verb is a verb like "pick up", "turn on" or "get on with". For convenience, many people refer to all multi-word verbs as phrasal verbs. These verbs consist of a basic verb + another word or words. The other word(s) can be prepositions and/or adverbs. The two or three words that make up multi-word verbs form a short "phrase"—which is why these verbs are often all called "phrasal verbs".

The important thing to remember is that a multi-word verb is still a verb. "Get" is a verb. "Get up", is also a verb, a different verb. "Get" and "get up" are two different verbs. They do not have the same meaning. So you should treat each multi-word verb as a separate verb, and learn it like any other verb. Look at these examples. You can see that there are three types of multi-word verb:

1. single-word verb:

look_____ direct your eyes in a certain direction
"You must look before you leap"

2. multi-word verbs:

prepositional verbs

look after _____ take care of
"Who is looking after the baby? "

phrasal verbs

look up _____ search for and find information in a reference book
"You can look up my number in the telephone directory. "

phrasal-prepositional verbs:

look forward _____ to anticipate with pleasure
"I look forward to meeting you. "

Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are a group of multi-word verbs made from a verb plus another word or words. Many people refer to all multi-word verbs as phrasal verbs. On these pages we make a distinction between three types of multi-word verbs: prepositional verbs, phrasal verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs. On this page we look at phrasal verbs proper.

Phrasal verbs are made of:

Quote:

verb + adverb

Phrasal verbs can be:

- intransitive (no direct object)
- transitive (direct object)

Here are some examples of phrasal verbs:

phrasal verbs **meaning** **examples** **direct object**

intransitive phrasal verbs:

get up _____ rise from bed _____ I don't like to get up.
break down _____ cease to function _____ He was late because his car broke down.

transitive phrasal verbs :

put off _____ postpone _____ We will have to put off _____ the meeting
turn down _____ refuse _____ They turned down my offer.

Separable Phrasal Verbs

When phrasal verbs are transitive (that is, they have a direct object), we can usually separate the two parts. For example, "turn down" is a separable phrasal verb. We can say: "turn down my offer" or "turn my offer down". Look at this table:

transitive phrasal verbs are separable

They turned down my offer.
They turned my offer down.

However, if the direct object is a pronoun, we have no choice. We must separate the phrasal verb and insert the pronoun between the two parts. Look at this example with the separable phrasal verb "switch on":

direct object pronouns must go between the two parts of transitive phrasal verbs

John switched on the radio
John switched the radio on.
John switched it on.

It would be wrong to say :

John switched on it.

Prepositional Verbs

Prepositional verbs are a group of multi-word verbs made from a verb plus another word or words. Many people refer to all multi-word verbs as phrasal verbs. On these pages we make a distinction between three types of multi-word verbs: prepositional verbs, phrasal verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs. On this page we look at prepositional verbs.

Prepositional verbs are made of:

Quote:

verb + preposition

Because a preposition always has an object, all prepositional verbs have direct objects. Here are some examples of prepositional verbs:

<u>prepositional verbs</u>	<u>meaning</u>	<u>examples</u>
----------------------------	----------------	-----------------

believe in _____	have faith in _____	the existence of I believe in God.
look after _____	take care of _____	He is looking after the dog.
talk about _____	discuss _____	Did you talk about me?
wait for _____	await _____	John is waiting for Mary.

Prepositional verbs cannot be separated. That means that we cannot put the direct object between the two parts. For example, we must say "look after the baby". We cannot say "look the baby after":

prepositional verbs are inseparable:

Incorrect: Who is looking the baby after?

Correct: Who is looking after the baby?

Phrasal-prepositional Verbs

Phrasal-prepositional verbs are a small group of multi-word verbs made from a verb plus another word or words. Many people refer to all multi-word verbs as phrasal verbs. On these pages we make a distinction between three types of multi-word verbs: prepositional verbs, phrasal verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs. On this page we look at phrasal-prepositional verbs.

Phrasal-prepositional verbs are made of:

Quote:

verb + adverb + preposition

Look at these examples of phrasal-prepositional verbs:

phrasal-prepositional verbs meaning examples

get on with _____ have a friendly relationship with _____ He doesn't get on with his wife.

put up with _____ tolerate _____ I won't put up with your attitude.

look forward _____ to anticipate with pleasure _____ I look forward to seeing you.

run out of _____ use up, exhaust _____ We have run out of eggs.

Because phrasal-prepositional verbs end with a preposition, there is always a direct object. And, like prepositional verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs cannot be separated. Look at these examples:

phrasal-prepositional verbs are inseparable

We ran out of fuel.
We ran out of it.

Active Voice, Passive Voice

There are two special forms for verbs called voice:

Active voice
Passive voice

The active voice is the "normal" voice. This is the voice that we use most of the time. You are probably already familiar with the active voice. In the active voice, the object receives the action of the verb:

Quote:

Structure : subject verb object

Expression : Cats eat fish.

The passive voice is less usual. In the passive voice, the subject receives the action of the verb:

Quote:

Structure : subject verb object

Expression : Fish are eaten by cats.

The object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb:

Active : Everybody drinks water.

Passive : Water is drunk by everybody.

Passive Voice

The passive voice is less usual than the active voice. The active voice is the "normal" voice. But sometimes we need the passive voice. In this lesson we look at how to construct the passive voice, when to use it and how to conjugate it.

Construction of the Passive Voice

Quote:

The structure of the passive voice is very simple:

subject + auxiliary verb (be) + main verb (past participle)

The main verb is always in its past participle form.

Look at these examples:

subject _____ **auxiliary verb (to be)** _____ **main verb (past participle)**

Water _____ is _____ drunk by everyone.

100 people _____ are _____ employed by this company.

I _____ am _____ paid in euro.

We _____ are not _____ paid in dollars.

Are they _____ paid in yen?

Use of the Passive Voice

We use the passive when:

- we want to make the active object more important
- we do not know the active subject

give importance to active object (President Kennedy) : President Kennedy was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald.

active subject unknown : My wallet has been stolen.

Note that we always use by to introduce the passive object (Fish are eaten by cats).

Look at this sentence:

He was killed with a gun.

Normally we use by to introduce the passive object. But the gun is not the active subject. The gun did not kill him. He was killed by somebody with a gun. In the active voice, it would be: Somebody killed him with a gun. The gun is the instrument. Somebody is the "agent" or "doer".

Conjugation for the Passive Voice

We can form the passive in any tense. In fact, conjugation of verbs in the passive tense is rather easy, as the main verb is always in past participle form and the auxiliary verb is always **be**. To form the required tense, we conjugate the auxiliary verb. So, for example:

- present simple: It is made
- present continuous: It is being made
- present perfect: It has been made

Here are some examples with most of the possible tenses:

infinitive _____ **to be washed**

simple

present : _____ It is washed.
past : _____ It was washed.
future : _____ It will be washed.

conditional : _____ It would be washed.

continuous

present : _____ It is being washed.
past : _____ It was being washed.
future : _____ It will be being washed.
conditional : _____ It would be being washed.

perfect simple

present : _____ It has been washed.
past : _____ It had been washed.
future : _____ It will have been washed.
conditional : _____ It would have been washed.

perfect continuous

present : _____ It has been being washed.
past : _____ It had been being washed.
future : _____ It will have been being washed.
conditional : _____ It would have been being washed.
