

Summary of Basic Grammar

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Part of Speech

Noun = naming words

Forms that can function as nouns:

Common noun: names a thing (house), person (man), or concept (love)

Proper noun: names a specific person (Sharon) or place (Long Beach) – always capitalized.

Gerund: the ing form of a verb (swimming)

Infinitive: the word “to” followed by a verb (to run)

Noun Clause: a unit that has a subject and a verb that go together (whatever you say, how you solve the problem)

How nouns function:

Subject: The house burned down.

Swimming is my favorite sport.

Direct object: We saw Sharon.

Indirect Object: I bought Carl a gift.

Object of the Preposition: The team played on the field.

Nominal Complement (also called Subject Complement or Predicate Noun):
The doctor is my friend. The answer is whatever you say.

NOTE: Once you identify a word(s) in a sentence as a noun, then it must be serving one of the six noun functions in that sentence: subject, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, nominal complement, appositive.

Pronoun = substitute for a noun

Kinds of pronouns:

Personal: I, they, us, etc.

Indefinite: everybody, many, both, somebody, anybody, etc.

Demonstrative: this, that, these, those

Relative: who, whom, which, that

Interrogative: who, whom, whose, which, what

Reflexive and Intensive: myself, itself, themselves, etc,

Reciprocal: each other, one another

How pronouns function

Pronouns substitute for nouns.

Subject: I like you.

Direct Object: I like you.

Indirect Object: Dennis sent me a note.

Object of the Preposition: The player threw the ball at him.

Nominal Complement: The winner is she.

Appositive: I urge the audience, everybody, to sign this petition.

Verb

Kinds of verbs:

Action = shows action

Linking = connects two words that refer to the same person or thing

Helping = goes before other verbs and changes the form of the verb (also called "auxiliary")

Being = used with words or phrases that show the location of people or things or the time of something.

How verbs function

Action: He walked down the street.

Action: He sings well.

Linking: Carrie is the captain.

Linking: Alice looks happy.

Helping Action: We have walked down the street.

Helping Action: He is singing well.

Helping Linking: Carrie will be the captain.

Being = The cars were in the garage.

Being: The party is on Friday.

Modifiers

Adjectivals = a word or phrase that describes nouns. Forms that can function as adjectivals:

Adjectives (red balloon, large dog, three girls)

Proper (English muffins, Christian beliefs)

Possessive (Mary's aunt, teacher's chalk, his bat)

Participle (the form of a verb that ends in -ing or -d, -ed, -en, or -n: diving board, tired actor, broken arm)

Participle phrase (the man wearing a red shirt, the child sitting in that chair)

Infinitive (the car to buy quickly, the man to see about tickets)

Prepositional phrase (a preposition followed by a noun or pronoun: the girl with the red hat, a friend of mine)

Adjective clause (the play, which starred a famous actor, the party that you had, the nurse who works here)

How adjectivals function

Adjectivals modify nouns and pronouns by making them more specific. For example, the red balloon is more specific than the balloon.

Adjectivals answer these questions:

How many? three balls, many trees, several classes

Which one? broken window, this table, these people, the clothes to wash, the car that you drove.

What kind? large dent, heavy box, sugar cookie, trusting child, a book of poems.

Whose? teacher's pencil, Pat's coat, nurse's uniform, a painting of his (prepositional phrase), the horse that belongs to Sally (clause).

Note: A single-word adjective usually comes in front of the noun it modifies; a phrase or clause that is functioning as an adjective nearly always comes immediately after the noun it modifies.

Adverbials = words or phrases that describe a verb.

Forms that can function as adverbials:

Adverb (walk slowly, drive carefully, sing softly)

Noun (He arrived Friday.)

Infinitive (She eats to live, he ran to win)

Prepositional Phrase (They were standing on the corner, she was jumping over the fence, Sue laughed at the man.)

Adverb clause (After the party was over, we ate a pizza; I like this book because it's short; if you like the stew, I'll give you the recipe.)

Note: Single-word adverbs often end in -ly.

How adverbials function:

Adverbials modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb – makes them more specific. For example, walks slowly is more specific than walk.

Adverbials answer these questions:

HOW – He walked slowly (adverb). She walked as if her legs hurt (clause). The old man walked with a cane (prepositional phrase).

WHEN – He walked yesterday (noun). Everyone danced while the band was playing (clause). We ate before the game (prepositional phrase).

WHERE – He walked home (noun). We are at McDonald's (prepositional phrase). I put the keys where you will see them (clause).

WHY – He walked because his car was not working (clause). Because it was raining, we canceled the picnic (clause). They went home to study (infinitive).

TO WHAT EXTENT OR DEGREE – He walked very slowly (very is an adverb modifying another adverb, slowly). This paper is much better (much is an adverb modifying the adjective better). She is quite strong (quite is an adverb modifying the adjective strong).

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS – If it rains, the game will be canceled (clause). You can ride the bus even though you forgot your ticket (clause).

Connectives

Prepositions

Prepositions are often short words: up, in, to, by, at, etc.

They often indicate direction: under, down, across, above, around, through, etc.

A preposition is the first word in a unit called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and an object (a noun or pronoun).

No part of a prepositional phrase, or the phrase itself, may be the subject, verb, object, or nominal complement of a sentence.

How prepositions function

A prepositional phrase is used as an adjectival or an adverbial.

We drove to the beach (adverbial modifying drove, telling where we drove).

Sally rode with Dan (adverbial modifying Dan, telling how she rode).

The book of short stories is very good (adjectival modifying book, telling what kind of book).

The bridge across the river was burned down (adjectival modifying bridge, telling which bridge)

Conjunctions

Kinds of conjunctions

Coordinate (and, but, or, nor, yet, so, for)

Correlative (both . . . and, not only . . . but also, either . . . or, neither . . . nor)

Subordinating (although, because, if, unless, while, etc.)

Conjunctive adverbs (however, therefore, consequently, nevertheless, otherwise, etc.) Also called transitional words.

Note: A semicolon or a period (not a comma) must be used at the end of the first clause and thus before the conjunctive adverb.

How conjunctions function

A conjunction joins words, phrases, or clauses.

Joins similar kinds of words or word groups—the words are equal, such as two phrases or two clauses.

- Sue and Sam (joins two nouns)
- Run and play (joins two verbs)
- Down the hill and across the river (joins two prepositional phrases)
- We went shopping, and then we went home (joins two independent clauses)

Joins two similar equal words or word groups, but these conjunctions are always used in pairs.

- Both Mary and Lisa are late.
- Either Chris or Mike will bring the cake.

Joins an independent clause and a dependent clause; the subordinating conjunction is the first word in the dependent clause.

- Independent clause – dependent clause
The team played well – although it was raining.
- Dependent clause – independent clause
If it rains tomorrow – the game will be canceled.

Links two independent clauses and indicates a special relationship between the clauses.

- It may rain tomorrow; however, the game will not be canceled.
- You earned an "A" on the test; therefore, you will pass the class.

Interjections

Examples: yes, no, well, oh, hi, hey, etc.

How interjections function

Interjections express an attitude, emotion, or an exclamation

Yes, I'll meet you at the park.

Well, what do you think of that?

Hey! That's my car you just hit.

