



ENGLISH FUNDAMENTALS

Grammar



Boost confidence & test scores!

What Is Grammar?

Grammar is a set of rules on how to put words, phrases, and clauses together to express ideas clearly. It describes the various kinds of words and their uses in a sentence.

PARTS OF SPEECH

Words are classified into the following parts of speech: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. Each part refers to the role a word plays in a sentence. Many words can belong to more than one part of speech, depending on how they are used. For example, the word **back** can be used as a noun, an adjective, a verb, an adverb, and a preposition.

- EX:** My **back** is aching. (*noun*)
 He entered through the **back** door. (*adjective*)
 Both candidates said they would **back** the bill. (*verb*)
 Give **back** my books. (*adverb*)
 Mom put the pizza **back** in the refrigerator. (*preposition*)

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

noun	n.	preposition	prep.
pronoun	p.	conjunction	conj.
adjective	adj.	interjection	interj.
verb	v.	singular	sing.
adverb	adv.	plural	pl.

NOUNS

FUNCTION

Name people, places, things, or ideas

WITHIN A SENTENCE

Nouns can have different **FUNCTIONS** in a sentence: **subject**, **direct object**, **indirect object**, **object of a preposition**.

EX: **John** is my best friend.
 (*subject*)

I saw that **movie**.
 (*direct object*)

We bought **Eva** some ice cream.
 (*indirect object*)

My friends went to **the mall**.
 (*object of preposition*)

TYPES

PROPER AND COMMON

PROPER nouns name **specific** people, places, or things and always begin with a capital letter.

COMMON nouns name **nonspecific** people, places, or things and are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence.

PROPER NOUNS	COMMON NOUNS
Abraham Lincoln	president
Philadelphia	city
Statue of Liberty	monument

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE

ABSTRACT nouns refer to states of being, concepts, feelings, or qualities.

CONCRETE nouns refer to tangible things that can be perceived through the senses.

ABSTRACT NOUNS	CONCRETE NOUNS
loneliness	star
joy	ice cream
beauty	song

COUNT AND NONCOUNT

COUNT nouns name things that can be expressed in plural form, usually with an **-s**, such as **dog/dogs**, **hat/hats**, **plate/plates**, and **teacher/teachers**.

NONCOUNT nouns, also known as **MASS nouns**, refer to things that usually cannot be counted, such as **flour**, **weather**, **milk**, and **thunder**. Noncount nouns are always considered singular and take a singular verb.

- EX:** The **lightning** *n. sing.* *v. sing.* lights up the night sky.
 There is plenty of **food** *v. sing.* *n. sing.* for all of us.

COLLECTIVE

COLLECTIVE nouns refer to groups of people or things, such as **team**, **audience**, **class**, **committee**, and **jury**; they are usually singular unless it is clear that the members within the group are acting as individuals, as indicated in the second example.

- EX:** A **colony** *n. sing.* *v. sing.* of bees lives in my garden.
 The **jury** *n. pl.* *v. pl.* disagree on the guilt of the accused.

COMPOUND

COMPOUND nouns are those that join more than one term together; they function as one common noun.

- EX:** The **runner-up** will try again next year.
 My **mother-in-law** is coming for the weekend.

PLURAL

PLURAL nouns indicate more than one of something; most form the plural by adding **-s** to the end.

- EX:** boy → boys
 town → towns
 table → tables

Nouns ending in **s**, **sh**, **ch**, **x**, or **z** form the plural by adding **-es**.

- EX:** bus → buses
 bush → bushes
 church → churches
 box → boxes
 Cortez → Cortezes

Most nouns ending in **f** drop the **f** and add **-ves**.

- EX:** loaf → loaves
 wharf → wharves

Nouns ending in a consonant + **y** drop the **y** and add **-ies**.

- EX:** baby → babies
 sky → skies

Nouns ending in an **o** preceded by a vowel add **-s**.

- EX:** video → videos
 stereo → stereos

Nouns ending in an **o** preceded by a consonant add **-es**.

- EX:** hero → heroes
 potato → potatoes

HYPHENATED COMPOUNDS add **-s** to the main word.

- EX:** brother-in-law → brothers-in-law
 maid-of-honor → maids-of-honor
 runner-up → runners-up

Several nouns have **IRREGULAR plural forms**. These can be found in a dictionary.

- EX:** child → children
 woman → women
 mouse → mice
 goose → geese

Some nouns keep their **LATIN** or **GREEK form** in the plural. These can also be found in a dictionary.

- EX:** nucleus → nuclei
 fungus → fungi
 crisis → crises
 criterion → criteria

POSSESSIVE

POSSESSIVE nouns express **ownership** of a noun, known as an **antecedent**; most possessive nouns are formed by adding **-s**.

- EX:** That jacket? It's **John's**.
 (*The jacket belongs to John.*)

Those toys are the **children's**.
 (*The toys belong to the children.*)

This pen is **Matthew's**.
 (*The pen belongs to Matthew.*)

PLURAL nouns that end in **-s** add an apostrophe to become possessive.

- EX:** That soccer ball is the **boys'**.
 (*The soccer ball belongs to more than one boy.*)

Those books are the **students'**.
 (*The books belong to more than one student.*)

That house is the **Gomez's**.
 (*The house belongs to the Gomezes.*)

Possessive nouns can also be used as **ADJECTIVES** and are formed in the same way, by adding **-s** or simply an apostrophe, depending on whether the noun is singular or plural.

EX: That is **Harry's** car.
(The car belongs to Harry.)

The **singers'** voices are highly trained.
(The voices belong to the singers.)

Possessive nouns that are singular and end in **-s** can be made plural by adding an **APOSTROPHE** or by adding **-s**.

EX: **James'** pen is out of ink.

James's pen is out of ink.

Note: Adding the extra **-s** is usually based on preference or what sounds better, though some style guides dictate one or the other.

APPOSITIVES

APPOSITIVES are noun phrases that can come before or after other nouns or pronouns to explain or describe them.

EX: **A miniature black poodle**, Tony's dog is very cuddly.

Margie, **my sister**, is on the varsity basketball team.

PRONOUNS

FUNCTION

Take the place of nouns

TYPES

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

PERSONAL pronouns refer to **specific** persons or things. Pronouns often refer back to their noun **antecedent**. Therefore, it is important to use them correctly so that your meaning is clear.

EX: When my friends heard, **they** called me.

As each student arrives, **she** takes a seat.

As each student arrives, **they** take a seat.

The plural antecedent (**friends**) in the first sentence takes a plural pronoun (**they**). The singular antecedent (**student**) in the second sentence takes singular pronouns (**he/she**). A singular antecedent can also take the plural pronoun **they** if gender is unknown or if **they** is the known preference of the antecedent.

SUBJECT PRONOUNS

The personal pronouns in the sentences above are called **SUBJECT pronouns** because they function as the **subjects** of the main verbs.

SUBJECT PRONOUNS	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
I	we
you	you
he/she/it	they

OBJECT PRONOUNS

OBJECT pronouns are personal pronouns used as the **object** of a verb, preposition, or infinitive phrase, as in the examples below. Note how each object pronoun refers back to its antecedent.

EX: The eagle? Did Meg really see **it**?

The children are bored; please amuse **them**.

Marsha? I was hoping to call **her** today.

OBJECT PRONOUNS	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
me	us
you	you
him/her/it	them

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

POSSESSIVE pronouns are used to indicate ownership, as in, "Is the hat **mine** or **yours**?" Possessive pronouns can also be used as **adjectives** that modify nouns or noun phrases, as

in, "The *Lord of the Rings* is his favorite movie." Possessive pronouns and adjectives can refer back to a noun and must agree with it in gender and number, as in the following examples.

EX: Marisol isn't wearing **hers** today.

The students must turn in **their** reports.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS/ADJECTIVES	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
mine/my	ours/our
yours/your	yours/your
his, hers, its, theirs / his, her, its, their	theirs/their

Note that the **possessive** pronoun **their** can be used as both singular and plural, especially when gender is unknown.

EX: The student must turn in **their** report by Monday.

Don't confuse possessive adjectives with contractions.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE	CONTRACTION
its (belonging to it)	it's (short for "it is")
your (belonging to you)	you're (short for "you are")
their (belonging to them)	they're (short for "they are")
whose (belonging to whom)	who's (short for "who is")

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

DEMONSTRATIVE pronouns point to or identify nouns. **This** and **these** refer to things that are nearby or close in time. **That** and **those** refer to things that are farther away or more distant in time. Demonstrative pronouns often function as **adjectives**.

EX: I have many hats, but **this** is my favorite.

adj.
That hat is exquisite!

adj.
These books are my all-time favorites.

adj. **p.**
That pile of books? **Those** aren't very good at all.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS/ADJECTIVES	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
this	these
that	those

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

REFLEXIVE pronouns refer back to the subject of a sentence or back to a clause; they are used when

the subject and the object of a verb or preposition are the same.

EX: Dottie cut **herself** on the sharp knife.
(*Herself* refers back to the subject, Dottie.)

They bought bagels for **themselves**.
(*Themselves* refers back to the subject, they.)

The winning team is in a class by **itself**.
(*Itself* refers back to the subject, team.)

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
myself	ourselves
yourself	yourselves
herself	themselves
himself	themselves
itself	themselves

INTENSIVE PRONOUNS

INTENSIVE pronouns are similar to reflexive pronouns. They both refer back to something, but intensive pronouns add emphasis. Unlike reflexive pronouns, they can be removed from a sentence without altering its meaning.

EX: We need to hear from the woman **herself**.

The celebrity wrote the book **himself**.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

INTERROGATIVE pronouns are used to ask questions. **Who** acts as the **subject** of a verb, and **whom** acts as the **object** of a verb or a preposition. Know when to use **who** and **whom** by substituting either **he** or **him**, or by answering a question with **he** or **him**.

subject
EX: **Who** is knocking at the door?
(*He* is knocking at the door.)

object of prep.
To **whom** should I give the flowers?
(*I should give the flowers to him.*)

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS	
who	which
whom	what
whose	

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

RELATIVE pronouns introduce **subordinate clauses** that function as adjectives and refer back to the noun or pronoun that the clause modifies. Like the interrogative pronoun, the relative pronoun **who** functions as the subject of a clause or sentence, and **whom** functions as the object of a verb or preposition.

subject of subordinate clause

EX: The girl **who** won the tennis match is my cousin.

object of prep.

These are the people for **whom** we are fighting.

RELATIVE PRONOUNS	
who	which
whom	that
whose	

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

INDEFINITE pronouns refer to **nonspecific** persons or things. Most are always singular and take a singular verb. Some are always plural and take a plural verb. Some can also function as adjectives.

p. sing.

EX: Does **everyone** have paper and a pencil?
(*Everyone refers to each individual person, so it is singular.*)

p. pl.

Many have the means to succeed.
(*Many refers to more than one person, so it is plural.*)

adj. pl.

All books must be returned to the library by Saturday.
(*All refers to more than one book, so it is plural.*)

adj. sing.

Each member of the team will receive a trophy.
(*Each refers to the individual members, so it is singular.*)

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

all	anything	everything	one
another	both	many	several
any	each	nobody	some
anybody	everybody	none	somebody
anyone	everyone	no one	someone

RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS

RECIPROCAL pronouns indicate a **mutual action** in which two or more people participate equally. When two people are involved, use **each other**. When more than two people are involved, use **one another**.

EX: The girls talk to **each other** every day after school.

The members of the team gave **one another** a high-five after winning the game.

Reciprocal pronouns can also be used as **possessive adjectives**.

EX: Sue and Mary borrowed **each other's** dresses.

The students read **one another's** reports.

ADJECTIVES

FUNCTION

Describe people or things in a sentence

TYPES

DESCRIPTIVE

DESCRIPTIVE adjectives always come before the noun or noun phrase they modify and answer one of these questions: **Which one? What kind? How many?**

EX: The **black** hat is mine.
(*Which one?*)

Long-stemmed roses are elegant.
(*What kind?*)

There were **ten** candles on the cake.
(*How many?*)

PREDICATE

PREDICATE adjectives follow linking verbs and describe the subject.

EX: Keisha is **happy**.

The books seem **interesting**.

Mark's help has been **invaluable**.

COMPARATIVE

COMPARATIVE adjectives are used to compare two things. The suffix **-er** is used to form most comparatives. When a two-syllable adjective ends in **y**, **-ier** is used. Adjectives with three or more syllables are preceded by the word **more**.

EX: The Ohio River is **longer** than the Mississippi River.

Susan is **happier** than Paul.

Mark is **more intelligent** than Tim.

SUPERLATIVE

SUPERLATIVE adjectives are used to compare three or more things. The suffix **-est** is used to form most superlatives. When a two-syllable adjective ends in **y**, **-iest** is used. Adjectives with three or more syllables are preceded by the word **most**.

EX: The Missouri River is the **longest** river in the United States.

Debra is the **happiest** of all my friends.

Yuko is the **most intelligent** student of all.

PROPER

PROPER adjectives come from proper names and are always capitalized; note that only the adjective is capitalized.

EX: delicious **French** bread
a **Spanish** omelet
the **English** countryside

IRREGULAR FORMS

Some adjectives have **IRREGULAR** comparative and superlative forms.

BASE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
much	more	most
far	farther	farthest
	further	furthest

VERBS

FUNCTION

Express **action** or a **state of being** and tell something about the subject

TYPES

MAIN/FINITE

MAIN, or **FINITE**, verbs change to match the **form** (number and person) of the subject or the **tense** of the verb (present, past, future, etc.). There are two types of main verbs: **ACTION** verbs and **LINKING** verbs.

Action verbs

ACTION verbs express **action** that the subject carries out.

EX: Dan **drove** to his friend's house.

The horse **jumped** over the fence.

Linking verbs

LINKING verbs express a **state of being** and connect subjects to predicates, describing or renaming the subjects. Linking verbs include the "sense" verbs (**to feel, to look, to taste, to smell**). But the most common linking verb is **to be**.

EX: Carl and his brother **are** painters.

Mercedes **seems** happy today.

COMMON LINKING VERBS

appear	remain
be	seem
become	smell
feel	sound
grow	stay
look	taste
prove	turn

AUXILIARY VERBS

AUXILIARY verbs are also called **helping** verbs because they are next to a main verb. They help that verb to be more clear. When there is no other verb, the auxiliary verb can also serve as the main verb of a sentence.

When they are together, these verbs create **verb phrases**. In the following sentences, the auxiliary verbs are bold, and the main verbs are italic.

EX: I **will** *help* you wash the car today.

Has Mary *called* you yet about the report?

Knowing all the **AUXILIARY** verbs can help identify the **PRIMARY** verb in a sentence.

Memorize all the auxiliary verbs by learning them to the tune of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*: **be, am, is, are, was, were, been / has, have, had / do, does, did / can, could, shall, should, will, would, may / might, must, being.**

AUXILIARY VERBS

be/being/am/is/are/was/were/been

have/has/had

do/does/did

can/could/should/would

may/will/shall

must/might

CHARACTERISTICS

Main verbs share five main attributes: **NUMBER, PERSON, VOICE, MOOD,** and **TENSE**. Main verbs can also be **TRANSITIVE** or **INTRANSITIVE**.

NUMBER

NUMBER indicates **how many** things a verb refers to (singular, one; plural, more than one).

PERSON

PERSON tells **who** or **what** does the action (**first person** is the self; **second person** is the person(s) spoken to; **third person** is the person(s) or thing(s) spoken about).

EX: I **sit** in silence, listening to the birds.
(*first person singular*)

You all **have** your books.
(*second person plural*)

Josh **writes** beautifully.
(*third person singular*)

VOICE

ACTIVE VOICE indicates that the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb.

PASSIVE VOICE indicates that the subject receives the verb's action. Passive voice is easily recognized when the preposition **by** introduces the doer of the action.

EX: Mary **wrote** the book.
(*active*)

The book **was written** by Mary.
(*passive*)

MOOD

MOOD indicates the **manner** in which an action or condition is expressed.

INDICATIVE MOOD expresses a statement, exclamation, or question.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD expresses wishes, doubts, or statements that are contrary to fact.

IMPERATIVE MOOD makes a demand or a request.

indicative

EX: What time **is** it?
(*question*)

subjunctive

I wish you **were** here to see the show.
(*wish*)

subjunctive

If he **had been** in charge, that would not have happened.

(*contrary to fact*)

imperative

Please **pass** the salt.
(*request*)

TENSE

TENSE indicates the time of an **action** or condition; the basic verb tenses are **present**, **past**, and **future**.

PERFECT tenses are used to refer to an **action** or **state** that is **completed** at a specific time.

EX: She **had met** him before camp started.
(**Past perfect** shows that an action was completed at a specific time.)

EX: She **has met** everyone in her cabin.
(**Present perfect** shows that an action is currently being completed.)

EX: She **will have met** the rest of the camp by the end of the week.
(**Future perfect** shows that an action will be completed.)

PROGRESSIVE tenses indicate **ongoing action** in the present, past, or future.

TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE VERBS

TRANSITIVE verbs take a **direct object**. Asking "who" or "what" after a verb will let you know whether or not a verb is transitive. Transitive verbs transfer their action to an object.

EX: She **made** a cake. (*made what? a cake*)

Anna **saw** them last week at the movies.
(*saw whom? them*)

INTRANSITIVE verbs have **no** direct object; the verb may express action, but the action is not done to anyone or anything.

EX: The dog **barked**.
(*barked at whom or what?*)

Ruthie **winked**.
(*at whom or what?*)

Some verbs can be either transitive or intransitive.

TRANSITIVE	INTRANSITIVE
She cheered for the band.	She cheered.
John tripped on the step.	John tripped.

IRREGULAR VERBS

The past tense can create **IRREGULAR** verbs, those that are not made past tense simply by adding an **-ed**.

IRREGULAR VERB FORMS	
be	been
have	had
do	did
go	went
say	said
can	could
will	would
see	saw
take	took
get	got

VERB FORMS (VERBALS)

INFINITIVES ("TO" + BASE WORD)

INFINITIVES can be used as a **noun** or an **adjective**.

EX: **To love** is important.
(*noun, subject of the auxiliary verb "is"*)

Jen wants **to sing**.
(*noun, object of the verb "wants"*)

Lori has stories **to tell**.
(*adjective, modifies "stories"*)

PARTICIPLES (BASE VERB + SUFFIX)

PARTICIPLES can be used as **adjectives** to modify nouns or pronouns. Like infinitives and gerunds, participles are based on verbs and express action or a state of being. **Present participles** end in **-ing**. **Past participles** end in **-ed**, **-en**, **-d**, **-t**, or **-n**.

EX: The **singing** canary flew out the window.
(*present*)

Exhausted, she went to bed to take a nap.
(*past*)

The **frozen** man sat by the fire to warm up.
(*past*)

GERUNDS

GERUNDS are present participles that are used in sentences as **nouns** and can be used in any way that a noun can—as a subject, object, or object of a preposition.

EX: **Driving** without a seatbelt can be dangerous.
(*subject*)

I always like **reading** a good book at the beach.
(*object*)

Max wrote an essay about the benefits of **eating** well.
(*object of preposition*)

VERB TENSES

TENSE	TIME	EXAMPLE
present	present action/condition	He writes every day. We are happy today.
past	completed action	We watched television last night.
future	future action	I will go to the beach next summer.
Progressive		
present progressive	ongoing action	She is eating lunch right now.
past progressive	past ongoing action interrupted by another action	I was studying when you called.
future progressive	future ongoing action	I will be sitting in the park for the afternoon.
Perfect		
present perfect	action begun in the past and leading up to and including present	They have seen this movie twice.
past perfect	action begun and completed in the past before another action	Missy had already left the gym by the time I arrived.
future perfect	action to be completed by or before a specific future action	By next week, my parents will have sold their house.
Perfect Progressive		
present perfect progressive	ongoing action begins in the past, continues in the present, and may continue into the future	I have been cleaning my room since Tuesday, and I still haven't finished!
past perfect progressive	ongoing past action completed before another action occurred	She had been shopping for two hours by the time we met for lunch.
future perfect progressive	ongoing action begins in the past and continues to a specific future time	I will have been writing my paper for hours when the clock strikes 12!

PREPOSITIONS

FUNCTION

PREPOSITIONS combine nouns or pronouns to create phrases that modify verbs, nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. Prepositions and objects make up **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES** that give details on time, space, and direction to make a sentence clearer. Prepositional phrases can function as a **noun**, an **adjective**, or an **adverb**.

EX: She rummaged **through the attic** of her house looking for old treasures.

Note: The first prepositional phrase, “**through the attic**,” functions as an adverb because it modifies the verb by describing where she rummaged. The second phrase, “**of her house**,” modifies the noun, **attic**, which is the object of the first prepositional phrase and describes which attic she rummaged through.

COMMON PREPOSITIONS

about

above

across

after

against

along

among

around

at

before

behind

below

beneath

beside

between

beyond

by

down

during

except

for

from

in/inside/into

like

near

of

off

on/onto

out/outside

over

past

since

through

throughout

to

toward

under

underneath

until

up/upon

with/within

without

PARTICIPLES

FUNCTION

PARTICIPLES modify a noun or pronoun. A participle is a **verb** that functions as an **adjective**, modifying a noun or pronoun.

PRESENT participle ends in **-ing**.

EX: You are **sharing** your book well.
(Participle “sharing” modifies verb “are.”)

PAST participle typically ends in **-ed**.

EX: He was **finished** dancing.
(Participle “finished” modifies verb “was.”)

PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

includes a **participle**, at least one **modifier**, and at least one **object**; it looks like a verb, but it functions like an adjective.

EX: The students waited off-stage, **brimming with excitement**.

Not wanting to arrive late, Kelly left ten minutes early.

ADVERBS

FUNCTION

Modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs

TYPES

VERB MODIFIERS

When adverbs **modify verbs**, they answer questions such as **How? When? Where?** or **How often?** Many adverbs are easily recognized because they end with the suffix **-ly**.

EX: Jane spoke **softly**.
(how)

Li went to the library **yesterday**.
(when)

Jen left her backpack **here**.
(where)

It rains **frequently** in the country.
(how often)

ADJECTIVE MODIFIERS

When adverbs modify adjectives, they always come before the adjectives they modify.

EX: That statement is **entirely** true.

It was a **wonderfully** quiet afternoon.

Adverbs that modify other adverbs are also known as

INTENSIFIERS and always come before the adverb they modify. These adverbs typically do not end in **-ly**.

EX: The baby cried **quite** loudly because she was hungry.

We stared **rather** intently at the painting.

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS are used to join two clauses and are often preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

EX: I should have gone to bed; **instead**, I watched a movie.

It is raining; **otherwise**, I would have gone to the beach.

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

also	meanwhile
consequently	nevertheless
finally	next
furthermore	otherwise
however	similarly
indeed	still
instead	then
lately	therefore
likewise	thus

CONJUNCTIONS

FUNCTION

Join words or groups of words in a sentence

TYPES

COORDINATING

COORDINATING conjunctions connect words and clauses of **equal status**.

EX: We bought apples **and** bananas.

We saw many clouds, **yet** it didn't rain.

The most common coordinating conjunctions spell **FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

for	or
and	yet
nor	so
but	

SUBORDINATING

SUBORDINATING conjunctions join clauses of **unequal status**; in other words, one clause is **dependent** on the other.

EX: **After** Ted ran the marathon, he collapsed in exhaustion.

Because she didn't have any money, Linda didn't want to go shopping.

A clause that begins with a subordinating conjunction is called a **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE**. It is also called a **dependent clause** because it can't stand on its own. A subordinate clause without an independent clause is one type of **sentence fragment**.

EX: **After** Ted ran the marathon → sentence fragment
(subordinate clause because of the subordinating conjunction “after”)

After Ted ran the marathon, he collapsed in exhaustion.
→ complete sentence
(complete sentence because of addition of independent clause)

Because she didn't have any money
→ sentence fragment
(subordinate clause because of the subordinating conjunction “because”)

Because she didn't have any money, Linda didn't want to go shopping.
→ complete sentence
(complete sentence because of addition of independent clause)

CORRELATIVE

CORRELATIVE conjunctions must join elements that are **alike**; one correlative conjunction should not be used without its partner following later in the sentence.

EX: I had to **either** study for the test **or** risk failing it.

Not only did she forget to bring the cake, **but** she **also** forgot to bake it.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

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

COMMON SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

after	before	than	when
although	how	that	where
as	if	though	whether
because	since	until	while

ABBREVIATIONS

FUNCTION

ABBREVIATIONS share information in a condensed way; abbreviations stand for something else.

i.e. “that is”—means “in other words” when offering clarification

EX: Tim loves crossword puzzles, **i.e.**, having fun with words.

e.g. “exempli gratia”—means “for example”

EX: Mary avoided the busy parts of the school, **e.g.**, the cafeteria and the gym.

aka “also known as”—used to provide an alternative name for something

EX: Dwane Johnson, **aka** “The Rock,” used to be a professional wrestler.

INTERJECTIONS

FUNCTION

INTERJECTIONS convey **emotion** in a sentence. Interjections often start a sentence but are not part of the sentence’s structure. Interjections often end with an **exclamation point**.

EX: **Well**, she said she’d be here at 8 o’clock.

Wow! That was some ride.

ARTICLES

FUNCTION

ARTICLES indicate a noun and a noun’s **specificity**; they are placed directly before a noun. **The** is a **DEFINITE** article. The noun following it is **specific**.

EX: We ran toward **the** tree.

A and **an** are **INDEFINITE** articles. The nouns following them are **not specific**.

EX: We ran toward **a** tree.

She picked **an** apple.

MODIFIERS

FUNCTION

A **MODIFIER** adds **more information** to—or modifies—another word. **Adjectives** modify nouns. **Adverbs** modify verbs.

MISUSED MODIFIERS

Good/Well

Well is often used when **good** is the correct choice.

EX: I don’t feel **well**. → *I have lost my sense of touch.*
I don’t feel **good**. → *I feel sick.*

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

Modifying phrases or clauses can **alter the intended meaning** of a sentence by modifying the wrong word.

EX: We could see the water tower, **coming down the hill**. (*The water tower is coming down the hill.*)

We could see the water tower **as we came down the hill**.

EX: My dad yelled at the dog **in his pajamas**. (*The dog is in the pajamas.*)

Wearing his pajamas, my dad yelled at the dog.

COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

A lot

Always two words

EX: I like to read **a lot**.

All right

Always two words; **alright** is often used but is nonstandard.

EX: The dog is **all right**.

Irregardless

Nonstandard word; use **regardless** in its place.

EX: We hopped the fence, **regardless** of the “No Trespassing” sign.

Supposed to

Not **suppose to**

EX: August was **supposed to** clean his room.

Could have / Would have / Should have

Not **could of / would of / should of**; the contractions are **could’ve / would’ve / should’ve**.

EX: We **could have** made it to the finals.

EX: She **would’ve** gone if we had asked.

A/an

Use **an** before a vowel sound, not just a vowel letter.

EX: He is **an** NBA player.

Accept/Except

Accept is to agree to receive something.

EX: August plans to **accept** the job.

Except is something that is not included.

EX: Everyone **except** his mom thinks it’s a good offer.

Affect/Effect

Affect is to influence something.

EX: The weather **affected** our plans.

Effect is the result.

EX: The **effect** was disappointing.

Between/Among

Between is used with only two items.

EX: She sat **between** Tom and Frank.

Among is used with three or more items.

EX: She sat **among** the rest of the students.

Eager/Anxious

Eager is to be excited about something and happy for it.

EX: I am **eager** for the weekend.

Anxious is to be nervous about something, almost to the point of dread.

EX: I am **anxious** for the big exam.

Everyday / Every Day

Everyday is an adjective.

EX: These are my **everyday** shoes.

Every day is a phrase to define how often something happens. If **single** can be added between **every** and **day**, then it needs to be two words.

EX: I wear them **every day**. (*I wear them every single day.*)

Further/Farther

Further is a nonmeasurable or nonspecific distance.

EX: We fell **further** in love.

Farther is a measurable, specific distance.

EX: The car traveled **farther** down the road.

Good/Well

Good is an adjective. It modifies a noun.

EX: Her **shoes** do not smell **good**.

Well is an adverb. It modifies a verb.

EX: Her nose does not **smell well**.

Irritate/Aggravate

Irritate is to annoy.

EX: Her behavior is **irritating**.

Aggravate is to make a problem worse.

EX: Her bad advice only **aggravated** the problem.

Lie/Lay

Present tense

To **lie** is to recline.

EX: I’m going to **lie** around all weekend

To **lay** is to put or place.

EX: I will **lay** the books on the table.

Lay/Laid

Past tense of **lie/lay**

EX: I **lay** around all weekend.

EX: I **laid** the books on the table.

Lain/Laid

Past participle of **lie/lay**

EX: I have **lain** around all weekend.

EX: I have **laid** the books on the table.

Less/Fewer

Less is a smaller amount of something that is not being counted.

EX: Suzie was **less** happy than Amy.

Fewer is a smaller amount of something that is being counted.

EX: Suzie spent four **fewer** hours at the amusement park.

Me/I

When paired with other nouns and pronouns, remove the other noun or pronoun to see which sounds correct.

Me is an object pronoun. It **receives** the action.

EX: Will you go with Sally and **me**? (*Will you go with me?*)

I is a subject pronoun. It **performs** the action.

EX: Sally and **I** are going to a movie. (*I am going to the movie.*)

She/Her and **He/Him** follow the same rule when paired with other nouns and pronouns.

EX: **He** and Sally are going to a movie. (*He is going to the movie.*)

EX: Will you go with Sally and **her**? (*Will you go with her?*)

Saw/Seen

Saw is the past tense of **see**.

EX: I **saw** a flock of seagulls.

Seen is the past participle of **see**.

It must be preceded by **have** or **has**.

EX: I **have seen** ten flocks today.

EX: She **has seen** just two.

There/Their/They’re

There indicates a place or location or a role in a situation.

EX: We went to Minnesota and stayed **there**.

There are four of us in this group.

Their is possessive.

EX: **Their** group is even bigger.

They’re is a contraction for **they are**.

EX: **They’re** happier in a bigger group.

Then/Than

Then can indicate a time. It can also mean next or “in that case.”

EX: I was living in Minnesota **then**.

EX: I lived in Maryland, **then** in Minnesota.

EX: If you want to move, **then** we will.

Than is a comparison.

EX: She was always smarter **than** her classmates.

To/Too/Two

To is the **infinitive** form of a verb. It can also be a **direction**.

EX: We like **to** swim.

EX: We walked **to** the pool.

Too means also.

EX: They like to swim, **too**.

Note: The comma before **too** is optional, but note that it is either required or not allowed by certain style guides.

Two is a number.

EX: There are just **two** of us.

Was/Were

Was is singular.

EX: She **was** one of the smartest in the class.

Were is plural.

EX: We **were** even smarter.

Who/That/Which

Who refers to people.

EX: Laura is the one **who** saved the bird.

That refers to things.

EX: Don’t use any products **that** endanger wildlife.

Which introduces a part of a sentence that can be removed without altering the sentence.

EX: The article about the birds, **which** appeared in Sunday’s newspaper, explained what the team was doing.

Who’s/Whose

Who is a contraction.

EX: **Who’s** that masked man?

Whose is possessive.

EX: **Whose** mask was that?

Your/You’re

Your is possessive.

EX: **Your** hair shines like the sun.

You’re is a contraction for “you are.”

EX: **You’re** so stunning.

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