

Grammar Handbook

1 Quick Reference: Parts of Speech

Part of Speech	Definition	Examples
Noun	Names a person, place, thing, idea, quality, or action.	Beowulf, England, boxes, liberty, kindness, hiking
Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun or another pronoun.	
Personal	Refers to the one speaking, spoken to, or spoken about.	I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours, you, your, yours, she, he, it, her, him, hers, his, its, they, them, their, theirs
Reflexive	Follows a verb or preposition and refers to a preceding noun or pronoun.	myself, yourself, herself, himself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves
Intensive	Emphasizes a noun or another pronoun.	(Same as reflexives)
Demonstrative	Points to specific persons or things.	this, that, these, those
Indefinite	Refers to person(s) or thing(s) not specifically mentioned.	both, all, most, many, anyone, everybody, several, none, some
Interrogative	Signals questions.	who, whom, whose, which, what
Relative	Introduces subordinate clauses and relates them to words in the main clause.	who, whom, whose, which, that
Verb	Expresses action, condition, or state of being.	
Action	Tells what the subject does or did, physically or mentally.	run, reaches, listened, consider, decides, dreamt
Linking	Connects subjects to that which identifies or describes them.	am, is, are, was, were, sound, taste, appear, feel, become, remain, seem
Auxiliary	Precedes and introduces main verbs.	be, have, do, can, could, will, would, may, might
Adjective	Modifies nouns or pronouns.	strong women, two epics, enough time
Adverb	Modifies verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.	walked out, really funny, far away
Preposition	Relates one word to another (following) word.	at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, with
Conjunction(s)	Joins words or word groups.	
Coordinating	Joins words or word groups used the same way.	and, but, or, for, so, yet, nor
Correlative	Join words or word groups used the same way and are used in pairs.	both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor
Subordinating	Joins word groups not used the same way.	although, after, as, before, because, when, if, unless
Interjection	Expresses emotion.	wow, ouch, hurrah

2 Nouns

A noun is a word used to name a person, place, thing, idea, quality, or action. Nouns can be classified in several ways. All nouns can be placed in at least two classifications. They are either common or proper. All are also either abstract or concrete. Some nouns can be classified as compound, collective, and possessive as well.

2.1 Common Nouns are general names, common to an entire group.

EXAMPLES: *author, poem, valor, battle*

2.2 Proper Nouns name specific, one-of-a-kind things. (See Capitalization, page 1415.)

EXAMPLES: *Denmark, Beowulf, Viking*

2.3 Concrete Nouns name things that can be perceived by the senses.

EXAMPLES: *bird, scream, Troy, Homer*

2.4 Abstract Nouns name things that cannot be observed by the senses.

EXAMPLES: *intelligence, fear, joy, loneliness*

	Common	Proper
Abstract	bravery	Middle Ages
Concrete	monster	Denmark

2.5 Compound Nouns are formed from two or more words but express a single idea. They are written as single words, as separate words, or with hyphens. Use a dictionary to check the correct spelling of a compound noun.

EXAMPLES: *kingmaker, mead hall, ring-giver*

2.6 Collective Nouns are singular nouns that refer to groups of people or things. (See Subject-Verb Agreement, page 1410.)

EXAMPLES: *army, flock, class, species*

2.7 Possessive Nouns show who or what owns something. Consult the chart below for the proper use of the possessive apostrophe.

Category	Possessive Nouns	Examples
All singular nouns	Add apostrophe plus -s	Beowulf's witness's, city's father-in-law's
Plural nouns not ending in -s	Add apostrophe plus -s	children's women's people's
Plural nouns ending in -s	Add apostrophe only	witnesses' churches' males' Johnsons'

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

A. For each underlined noun, first tell whether it is common or proper. Then tell whether it is concrete or abstract.

1. The story of Beowulf is a great epic.
2. Warriors praised his heroism.
3. Grendel was a powerful force.
4. The roof boards swayed, and the Danes shook with terror.
5. Their footprints were bloody.
6. The group had high hopes of victory.
7. Beowulf killed the fire dragon.
8. In doing so, he defeated evil.
9. Heroism is a common theme of great literature.
10. Is there any similarity to today's society?

B. 11–15. From the sentences above, write three compound nouns and two collective nouns.

C. Write the possessive forms of the following nouns.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 16. Hrothgar | 21. oceans |
| 17. Danes | 22. army |
| 18. heroism | 23. warrior |
| 19. family | 24. scop |
| 20. darkness | 25. companions |

3 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun or another pronoun. The word or word group to which the pronoun refers is called its antecedent.

3.1 Personal Pronouns are pronouns that change their form to express person, number, gender, and case. The forms of these pronouns are shown in the chart that follows.

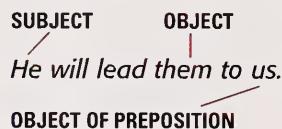
	Nominative	Objective	Possessive
Singular			
First Person	I	me	my, mine
Second Person	you	you	your, yours
Third Person	she, he, it	her, him, it	her, hers, his, its
Plural			
First Person	we	us	our, ours
Second Person	you	you	your, yours
Third Person	they	them	their, theirs

3.2 Pronoun Agreement Pronouns should agree with their antecedents in number and person. Singular pronouns are used to replace singular nouns. Plural pronouns are used to replace plural nouns. Pronouns must also match the gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter) of the nouns they replace.

3.3 Pronoun Case Personal pronouns change form to show how they function in a sentence. This change of form is called *case*. The three cases are **nominative**, **objective**, and **possessive**.

A nominative pronoun is used as the subject or the predicate nominative of a sentence.

An objective pronoun is used as the direct or indirect object of a sentence or as the object of a preposition.



A possessive pronoun shows ownership. The pronouns *mine*, *yours*, *hers*, *his*, *its*, *ours*, and *theirs* can be used in place of nouns.

EXAMPLE: *This horse is mine.*

The pronouns *my*, *your*, *her*, *his*, *its*, *our*, and *their* are used before nouns.

EXAMPLE: *This is my horse.*

USAGE TIP To decide which pronoun to use in a comparison, such as *He tells better tales than (I or me)*, fill in the missing words: *He tells better tales than I tell*.

WATCH OUT! Many spelling errors can be avoided if you watch out for *its* and *their*. Don't confuse the possessive pronoun *its* with the contraction *it's*, meaning *it is* or *it has*. The homonyms *they're* (contraction for *they are*) and *there* (a place or an expletive) are often mistakenly used for *their*.

3.4 Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

These pronouns are formed by adding *-self* or *-selves* to certain personal pronouns. Their forms are the same, and they differ only in how they are used.

Reflexive pronouns follow verbs or prepositions and reflect back on an earlier noun or pronoun.

EXAMPLES: *He likes himself too much. She is now herself again.*

Intensive pronouns intensify or emphasize the nouns or pronouns to which they refer.

EXAMPLES: *They themselves will educate their children. You did it yourselves.*

Singular	
First Person	myself
Second Person	yourself
Third Person	herself, himself, itself
Plural	
First Person	ourselves
Second Person	yourselves
Third Person	themselves

WATCH OUT! Avoid using *hisself* or *theirselves*. Standard English does not include these forms.

NONSTANDARD: *John enjoyed hisself at the play.*

STANDARD: *John enjoyed himself at the play.*

USAGE TIP Reflexive and intensive pronouns should never be used without antecedents.

INCORRECT: *Read a tale to my brother and myself.*

CORRECT: *Read a tale to my brother and me.*

3.5 Demonstrative Pronouns point out things and persons near and far.

	Singular	Plural
Near	this	these
Far	that	those

WATCH OUT! Avoid using the objective pronoun *them* in place of the demonstrative *those*.

INCORRECT: *Let's dramatize one of them tales.*

CORRECT: *Let's dramatize one of those tales.*

3.6 Indefinite Pronouns do not refer to specific persons or things and usually have no antecedents. The chart shows some commonly used indefinite pronouns:

Singular	Plural	Singular or Plural	
each	both	all	half
either	few	any	plenty
neither	many	more	none
another	several	most	some

Here is another set of indefinite pronouns, all of which are singular. Notice that, with one exception, they are spelled as one word:

anyone	everyone	no one	someone
anybody	everybody	nobody	somebody
anything	everything	nothing	something

USAGE TIP Since all these are singular, pronouns referring to them should be singular.

INCORRECT: *Did everybody play their part well?*

CORRECT: *Did everybody play his or her part well?*

If the antecedent of the pronoun is both male and female, *his or her* may be used as an alternative, or the sentence may be recast:

EXAMPLES: *Did everybody play his or her part well?*

Did all the students play their parts well?

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Write the correct form of all incorrect pronouns in the sentences below.

1. Chaucer hisself appears as a pilgrim in one tale.
2. Each student selected one of them tales to read aloud.
3. Did everybody have their turn?
4. My best friend and myself read "The Pardon's Tale."
5. After the performance, the students treated themselves to a medieval supper.

3.7 Interrogative Pronouns tell a reader or listener that a question is coming. The interrogative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *what*.

EXAMPLES: *Who is going to rehearse with you?*
From whom did you receive the script?

USAGE TIP *Who* is used for subjects, *whom* for objects. To find out which pronoun you need to use in a question, change the question to a statement:

QUESTION: (*Who/Whom?*) *did you meet there?*
STATEMENT: *You met (?) there.*

Since the verb has a subject (*you*), the needed word must be the object form, *whom*.

EXAMPLE: *Whom did you meet there?*

WATCH OUT! A special problem arises when you use an interrupter such as *do you think* within a sentence:

EXAMPLE: (*Who/Whom*) *do you think will win?*

If you eliminate the interrupter, it is clear that the word you need is *who*.

3.8 Relative Pronouns relate, or connect, clauses to the words they modify in sentences. The noun or pronoun that the clause modifies is the antecedent of the relative pronoun. Here are the relative pronouns and their uses:

Replacing:	Subject	Object	Possessive
Persons	who	whom	whose
Things	which	which	whose
Things/Persons*	that	that	whose

* That generally will not replace specific names, such as *Geoffrey Chaucer*.

Often short sentences with related ideas can be combined using relative pronouns to create a more effective sentence.

SHORT SENTENCE: *Chaucer was the father of English poetry.*

RELATED SENTENCE: *Chaucer wrote The Canterbury Tales.*

COMBINED SENTENCE: *Chaucer, who wrote The Canterbury Tales, was the father of English poetry.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Choose the appropriate interrogative or relative pronoun from the words in parentheses.

1. Can you name most of the characters (who, whom) Chaucer portrayed?
2. The pilgrims, (who/whom) were traveling to Canterbury, told tales to one another.
3. The Pardoner, (which/ whose) greed is exceptional, is not a sympathetic character.
4. (Who/Whom) do you think is the most sympathetic character?
5. Chaucer portrays himself as a somewhat foolish man (who/whom) others might overlook.

4 Verbs

A verb is a word that expresses an action, a condition, or a state of being. There are two main kinds of verbs: action and linking. Other verbs, called auxiliary verbs, are sometimes used with action verbs and linking verbs.

4.1 Action Verbs tell what action someone or something is performing, physically or mentally.

PHYSICAL ACTION: *You hit the target.*

MENTAL ACTION: *She dreamed of me.*

4.2 Linking Verbs do not express action.

Linking verbs link subjects to complements that identify or describe them. Linking verbs may be divided into two groups:

FORMS OF TO BE: *She is our queen.*

VERBS THAT EXPRESS CONDITION: *The writer looked thoughtful.*

4.3 Auxiliary Verbs, sometimes called helping verbs, precede action or linking verbs and modify their meanings in special ways. The most commonly used auxiliary verbs are parts of the verbs *be*, *have*, and *do*.

Be: *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been*

Have: *have, has, had*

Do: *do, does, did*

Other common auxiliary verbs are *can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, and must*.

EXAMPLES: *I always have admired her.*

You must listen to me.

4.4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Action verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. A transitive verb directs the action toward someone or something. The transitive verb has an object. An intransitive verb does not direct the action toward someone or something. It does not have an object. Since linking verbs convey no action, they are always intransitive.

Transitive: *The storm sank the ship.*

Intransitive: *The ship sank.*

4.5 Principal Parts Action and linking verbs typically have four principal parts, which are used to form verb tenses. The principal parts are the *present*, the *present participle*, the *past*, and the *past participle*.

If the verb is a regular verb, the past and past participle are formed by adding the ending *-d* or *-ed* to the present part. Here is a chart showing four regular verbs:

Present	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
risk	(is) risking	risked	(have) risked
solve	(is) solving	solved	(have) solved
drop	(is) dropping	dropped	(have) dropped
carry	(is) carrying	carried	(have) carried

Note that the present participle and past participle forms are preceded by a form of *be* or *have*. These forms cannot be used alone as main verbs and always need an auxiliary verb.

EXAMPLES: *The rescuers were risking their lives.*
The doctor has solved the problem.

The past and past participle of irregular verbs are not formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present; they are formed in irregular ways.

Present	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
begin	(is) beginning	began	(have) begun
break	(is) breaking	broke	(have) broken
bring	(is) bringing	brought	(have) brought
choose	(is) choosing	chose	(have) chosen
go	(is) going	went	(have) gone
lose	(is) losing	lost	(have) lost
see	(is) seeing	saw	(have) seen
swim	(is) swimming	swam	(have) swum
write	(is) writing	wrote	(have) written

4.6 Verb Tense The tense of a verb tells the time of the action or the state of being. An action or state of being can occur in the present, the past, or the future. There are six tenses, each expressing a different range of time.

Present tense expresses an action that is happening at the present time, occurs regularly, or is constant or generally true. Use the present part.

EXAMPLES

NOW: *That ballad sounds great.*

REGULAR: *I read every day.*

GENERAL: *The sun rises in the east.*

Past tense expresses an action that began and ended in the past. Use the past part.

EXAMPLE: *The storyteller finished his tale.*

Future tense expresses an action (or state of being) that will occur. Use *shall* or *will* with the present part.

EXAMPLE: *They will attend the next festival.*

Present perfect tense

expresses action (1) that was completed at an indefinite time in the past or (2) that began in the past and continues into the present. Use *have* or *has* with the past participle.

EXAMPLE: *Poetry has inspired readers throughout the ages.*

Past perfect tense shows an action in the past that came before another action in the past. Use *had* before the past participle.

EXAMPLE: *The messenger had traveled for days before he delivered his knight's response.*

Future perfect tense shows an action in the future that will be completed before another action in the future. Use *shall have* or *will have* before the past participle.

EXAMPLE: *They will have finished the novel before seeing the movie version of the tale.*

4.7 Progressive Forms

The progressive forms of the six tenses show ongoing action. Use a form of *be* with the present participle of a verb.

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE: *She is rehearsing her lines.*

PAST PROGRESSIVE: *She was rehearsing her lines.*

FUTURE PROGRESSIVE: *She will be rehearsing her lines.*

PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE: *She has been rehearsing her lines.*

PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE: *She had been rehearsing her lines.*

FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE: *She will have been rehearsing her lines.*

WATCH OUT! Do not shift tense needlessly. Watch out for these special cases.

- In most compound sentences and in sentences with compound predicates, keep the tenses the same.

INCORRECT: *We work hard, and they paid us well.*

CORRECT: *We work hard, and they pay us well.*

- If one past action happens before another, do shift tenses—from the past to the past perfect:

INCORRECT: *They wished they started earlier.*

CORRECT: *They wished they had started earlier.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Identify the tense of the verb(s) in each of the following sentences. If you find an unnecessary tense shift, correct it.

- Many consider *Le Morte d' Arthur* one of the greatest legends in Western culture.
- King Arthur himself led his knights into battle.
- While King Arthur is fighting in France, Sir Modred usurped his throne.
- After Launcelot had defeated the French army, he settled in France.
- A terrible struggle began, and each knight wounds the other.

4.8 Active and Passive Voice The voice of a verb tells whether the subject of a sentence performs or receives the action expressed by the verb. When the subject performs the action, the verb is in the active voice. When the subject is the receiver of the action, the verb is in the passive voice.

Compare these two sentences:

ACTIVE: *Launcelot beat Gawain in the battle.*

PASSIVE: *Gawain was beaten by Launcelot in the battle.*

To form the passive voice use a form of *be* with the past participle of the main verb.

WATCH OUT! Use the passive voice sparingly. It tends to make writing less forceful and less direct. It can also make the writing awkward.

AWKWARD: *An oath of allegiance was sworn by the knights.*

CORRECT: *The knights swore an oath of allegiance.*

There are occasions when you will choose to use the passive voice because

- you want to emphasize the receiver: *The king was shot.*
- the doer is unknown: *My books were stolen.*
- the doer is unimportant: *French is spoken here.*

4.9 Mood The mood identifies the manner in which the verb expresses an idea. There are three moods.

The indicative mood states a fact or asks a question. You use this mood most often.

EXAMPLE: *His trust was shattered by the betrayal.*

The imperative mood is used to give a command or make a request.

EXAMPLE: *Be there by eight o'clock sharp.*

The subjunctive mood is used to express a wish or a condition that is contrary to fact.

EXAMPLE: *If I were you, I wouldn't get my hopes up.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Identify the verbs as active or passive.

- Le Morte d'Arthur* has influenced many other Arthurian stories.
- It was written by Sir Thomas Malory, the son of a gentleman.
- Malory did not live a settled life.
- He was put in prison for his various offenses.
- Malory was buried near Newgate, in a chapel at the Grey Friars.

For the following items, identify the boldfaced verb as indicative or subjunctive in mood.

6. If Malory **were** alive today, he'd probably be writing romance fiction.
7. Scholars **have praised** the style of *Le Morte d'Arthur* very highly.
8. The stories **were printed** by William Caxton in 1485.
9. Malory's knights **were** chivalrous.
10. If there **were** female knights then, would they have slain dragons?

5 Modifiers

Modifiers are words or groups of words that change or limit the meanings of other words. The two kinds of modifiers are adjectives and adverbs.

5.1 Adjectives An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun by telling *which one, what kind, how many, or how much*.

WHICH ONE: *this, that, these, those*

EXAMPLE: *Those shoes need new soles.*

WHAT KIND: *small, ugly, brave, black*

EXAMPLE: *The brave knight won the battle.*

HOW MANY: *some, few, thirty, none, both, each*

EXAMPLE: *Each village paid a tax for protection.*

HOW MUCH: *more, less, enough, scarce*

EXAMPLE: *Food was scarce.*

The **articles** *a, an, and the* are usually classified as adjectives. These are the most common adjectives that you will use.

EXAMPLES: *The bridge was burned before the attack.*

A group of peasants led the procession in the town.

5.2 Predicate Adjectives Most adjectives come before the nouns they modify, as in the examples above. Predicate adjectives, however, follow linking verbs and describe the subject.

EXAMPLE: *My friends are very intelligent.*

Be especially careful to use adjectives (not adverbs) after such linking verbs as *look, feel, grow, taste, and smell*.

EXAMPLE: *The weather grows cold.*

5.3 Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs by telling *where, when, how, or to what extent*.

WHERE: *The children played outside.*

WHEN: *The author spoke yesterday.*

HOW: *We walked slowly behind the leader.*

TO WHAT EXTENT: *He worked very hard.*

Unlike adjectives, adverbs tend to be mobile words; they may occur in many places in sentences.

EXAMPLES: *Suddenly the wind shifted. The wind suddenly shifted. The wind shifted suddenly.*

Changing the position of adverbs within sentences can vary the rhythm in your writing.

5.4 Adjective or Adverb Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to adjectives.

EXAMPLES: *sweet, sweetly; gentle, gently*

However, *-ly* added to a noun will usually yield an adjective.

EXAMPLES: *friend, friendly; woman, womanly*

5.5 Comparison of Modifiers The form of an adjective or adverb indicates the degree of comparison that the modifier expresses. Both adjectives and adverbs have three forms, or degrees: the positive, comparative, and superlative.

The positive form is used to describe individual things, groups, or actions.

EXAMPLES: *Arthur's jousting team is strong. The new weapons are useful.*

The comparative form is used to compare two things, groups, or actions.

EXAMPLES: *Arthur's jousting team is stronger than theirs. The new weapons are more useful than Stone Age clubs.*

The superlative form is used to compare more than two things, groups, or actions.

EXAMPLES: *Arthur's jousting team is the strongest in the land. The new weapons are the most useful they have ever had.*

5.6 Regular Comparisons One-syllable and some two-syllable adjectives and adverbs form their comparative and superlative forms by adding -er or -est. All three-syllable and most two-syllable modifiers form their comparative and superlative by using *more* or *most*.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
small	smaller	smallest
thin	thinner	thinnest
sleepy	sleepier	sleepiest
useless	more useless	most useless
precisely	more precisely	most precisely

WATCH OUT! Note that spelling changes must sometimes be made to form the comparative and superlative of modifiers.

EXAMPLES: *friendly, friendlier* (change *y* to *i* and add the ending)
sad, sadder (double the final consonant and add the ending)

5.7 Irregular Comparisons Some commonly used modifiers have irregular comparative and superlative forms. You may wish to memorize them.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
far	farther or further	farthest or furthest
little	less or lesser	least
many	more	most
well	better	best
much	more	most

5.8 Using Modifiers Correctly Study the tips that follow to avoid common mistakes.

Farther and Further *Farther* is used for distances; use *further* for everything else.

Avoiding double comparisons You make a comparison by using -er/-est or by using *more/most*. Using -er with *more* or using -est with *most* is incorrect.

INCORRECT: *I like her more better than she likes me.*

CORRECT: *I like her better than she likes me.*

Avoiding illogical comparisons An illogical or confusing comparison results if two unrelated things are compared or if something is compared with itself. The word *other* or the word *else* should be used in a comparison of an individual member with the rest of the group.

ILLOGICAL: *Sir Walter Raleigh was as interesting as any English explorer. (Was Raleigh an English explorer?)*

LOGICAL: *Sir Walter Raleigh was as interesting as any other English explorer.*

Bad vs. Badly *Bad*, always an adjective, is used before nouns or after linking verbs to describe the subject. *Badly*, always an adverb, never modifies a noun. Be sure to use the right form after a linking verb.

INCORRECT: *Ed felt badly after his team lost.*

CORRECT: *Ed felt bad after his team lost.*

Good vs. Well *Good* is always an adjective. It is used before nouns or after a linking verb to modify the subject. *Well* is often an adverb meaning "expertly" or "properly." *Well* can also be used as an adjective after a linking verb, when it means "in good health."

INCORRECT: *Helen writes very good.*

CORRECT: *Helen writes very well.*

CORRECT: *Yesterday I felt bad; today I feel well.*

Double negatives If you add a negative word to a sentence that is already negative, the result will be an error known as a double negative. When using *not* or *-n't* with a verb, use “any-” words, such as *anybody* or *anything*, rather than “no-” words, such as *nobody* or *nothing*, later in the sentence.

INCORRECT: *I don't have no money.*

CORRECT: *I don't have any money.*

INCORRECT: *We haven't seen nobody.*

CORRECT: *We haven't seen anybody.*

Using *hardly*, *barely*, or *scarcely* after a negative word is also incorrect.

INCORRECT: *They couldn't barely see two feet ahead.*

CORRECT: *They could barely see two feet ahead.*

Misplaced modifiers A misplaced modifier is one placed so far away from the word it modifies that the intended meaning of the sentence is unclear. Place modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify.

MISPLACED: *We found the child in the park who was missing.* (The child was missing, not the park.)

CLEARER: *We found the child who was missing in the park.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Rewrite these sentences, correcting mistakes in modifiers.

1. The author of “Female Orations” enjoyed the most freedom than almost any other Englishwoman of her time.
2. Her education and position allowed her to travel further than many men.
3. Many feel that women of the 17th century had the most hardest lives.
4. The life of a farmer’s wife was particularly difficult, especially when important crops failed bad.
5. Farmers forced to leave their land didn’t have nowhere to go.
6. It is hard to tell whether a farmer’s wife or an aristocratic lady had the most interesting life.
7. Although Cavendish wrote good on a number of subjects, some people thought she was mad.

6 Prepositions, Conjunctions, and Interjections

6.1 Prepositions A preposition is a word used to show the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in the sentence.

Commonly Used Prepositions

above	down	near	through
at	for	of	to
before	from	on	up
below	in	out	with
by	into	over	without

The preposition is always followed by a word or group of words which serve as its object. The preposition, its object, and modifiers of the object are called the **prepositional phrase**. In each example below, the prepositional phrase is underlined and the object of the preposition is in boldface type.

EXAMPLES:

The future of the entire kingdom is uncertain.
We searched through the deepest woods.

Prepositional phrases may be used as adjectives or as adverbs. The phrase in the first example is used as an adjective modifying the noun *future*. In the second example, the phrase is used as an adverb modifying the verb *searched*.

WATCH OUT! Prepositional phrases must be as close as possible to the word they modify.

MISPLACED: *We have clothes for leisure wear of many colors.*

CLEARER: *We have clothes of many colors for leisure wear.*

6.2 Conjunctions A conjunction is a word used to connect words, phrases, or sentences. There are three kinds of conjunctions: **coordinating conjunctions**, **correlative conjunctions**, and **subordinating conjunctions**.

Coordinating conjunctions connect words or word groups that have the same function in a sentence. These include *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *so*, *yet*, and *nor*.

Coordinating conjunctions can join nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, and clauses in a sentence.

These examples show coordinating conjunctions joining words of the same function:

EXAMPLES:

I have many friends but few enemies. (two noun objects)

We ran out the door and into the street. (two prepositional phrases)

They are pleasant yet seem aloof. (two predicates)

We have to go now, or we will be late. (two clauses)

Correlative conjunctions are similar to coordinating conjunctions. However, correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs.

Correlative Conjunctions

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

Subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses—clauses that cannot stand by themselves as complete sentences. The subordinating conjunction shows how the subordinate clause relates to the rest of the sentence. The relationships include time, manner, place, cause, comparison, condition, and purpose.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

TIME	<i>after, as, as long as, as soon as, before, since, until, when, whenever, while</i>
MANNER	<i>as, as if</i>

PLACE	<i>where, wherever</i>
CAUSE	<i>because, since</i>
COMPARISON	<i>as, as much as, than</i>
CONDITION	<i>although, as long as, even if, even though, if, provided that, though, unless, while</i>
PURPOSE	<i>in order that, so that, that</i>

In the example below, the boldface word is the conjunction, and the underlined words are called a subordinate clause:

EXAMPLE: *I whistle a happy tune whenever I feel afraid.*

I whistle a happy tune is an independent clause because it can stand alone as a complete sentence. *Whenever I feel afraid* cannot stand alone as a complete sentence; it is a subordinate clause.

Conjunctive adverbs are used to connect clauses that can stand by themselves as sentences. Conjunctive adverbs include *also*, *besides*, *finally*, *however*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *otherwise*, and *then*.

EXAMPLE: *She loved the fall; however, she also enjoyed winter.*

6.3 Interjections are words used to show strong emotion, such as *wow* and *cool*. Often followed by an exclamation point, they have no grammatical relationship to the rest of a sentence.

EXAMPLE: *Whew! It's really hot outside.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Label each of the boldface words as a preposition, conjunction, or interjection.

1. Fanny Burney went to the party **because** she wished to hear the great tenor sing.
2. **After** Burney arrived, she greeted her hosts **and** listened to the singer perform.
3. **Because of** the great heat in the crowded room, the singer decided to move **into** another one.
4. Lady Say and Sele accosted Burney **before** the writer could escape.
5. "Oh!" cried Lady S. and S. "Tis the authoress of *Evelina*."

7 Quick Reference: The Sentence and Its Parts

The diagrams that follow will give you a brief review of the essentials of the sentence—subjects and predicates—and of some of its parts.

The Pilgrims' ship reached North America.

The **complete subject** includes all the words that identify the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about.

ship

The **simple subject** tells exactly whom or what the sentence is about. It may be one word or a group of words, but it does not include modifiers.

The **complete predicate** includes all the words that tell or ask something about the subject.

reached

The **simple predicate**, or **verb**, tells what the subject does or is. It may be one word or several, but it does not include modifiers.

During the harsh winter,	Native Americans	had given the starving Pilgrims food.
A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object. In this phrase, <i>during</i> is the preposition and <i>winter</i> is its object.	subject	An indirect object is a word or a group of words that tells <i>to whom</i> or <i>for whom</i> or <i>to what</i> or <i>for what</i> about the verb. A sentence can have an indirect object only if it has a direct object. The indirect object always comes before the direct object in a sentence.
	Verbs often have more than one part. They may be made up of a main verb , like <i>given</i> , and one or more auxiliary , or helping , verbs , like <i>had</i> .	A direct object is a word or group of words that tells who or what receives the action of the verb in the sentence.

8 The Sentence and Its Parts

A sentence is a group of words used to express a complete thought. A complete sentence has a subject and predicate.

8.1 Kinds of Sentences Sentences make statements, ask questions, give commands, and show feelings. There are four basic types of sentences.

Type	Definition	Example
Declarative	states a fact, wish, intent, or feeling	I read Malory's poem recently.
Interrogative	asks a question	Did you read his poem?
Imperative	gives a command, request, or direction	Read the poem or else.
Exclamatory	expresses strong feeling or excitement	This writer is good!

WRITING TIP One way to vary your writing is to employ a variety of different types of sentences. In the first example below, each sentence is declarative. Notice how much more interesting the revised paragraph is.

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH: *You have to see Niagara Falls in person. You can truly appreciate their awesome power in no other way. You should visit them on your next vacation. They are a spectacular sight.*

REVISED PARAGRAPH: *Have you ever seen Niagara Falls in person? You can truly appreciate their awesome power in no other way. Visit them on your next vacation. What a spectacular sight they are!*

WATCH OUT! Conversation frequently includes parts of sentences, or **fragments**. In formal writing, however, you need to be sure that every sentence is a complete thought and includes a subject and predicate. (See Correcting Fragments, page 1409.)

8.2 Complete Subjects and Predicates

A sentence has two parts: a subject and a predicate. The complete subject includes all the words that identify the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about. The complete predicate includes all the words that tell what the subject did or what happened to the subject.

Complete Subject	Complete Predicate
The poets of the time	wrote about nature.
This new approach	was extraordinary.

8.3 Simple Subjects and Predicates

The simple subject is the key word in the complete subject. The simple predicate is the key word in the complete predicate. In the examples that follow they are underlined.

Simple Subject	Simple Predicate
The poets of the time	wrote about nature.
This new approach	was extraordinary.

8.4 Compound Subjects and Predicates

A compound subject consists of two or more subjects that share the same verb. They are typically joined by the coordinating conjunction *and* or *or*.

EXAMPLE: *The knight and his horse rode into the forest.*

A compound predicate consists of two or more predicates that share the same subject. They, too, are usually joined by the coordinating conjunction *and*, *but*, or *or*.

EXAMPLE: *Sir Gawain beheaded the Green Knight but did not kill him.*

8.5 Subjects and Predicates in Questions

In many interrogative sentences, the subject may appear after the verb or between parts of a verb phrase.

INTERROGATIVE: *Was Gawain living by the code of chivalry?*

INTERROGATIVE: *Why is this story very popular?*

8.6 Subjects and Predicates in Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences give commands, requests, or directions. The subject of an imperative sentence is the person spoken to, or *you*. While it is not stated, it is understood to be *you*.

EXAMPLE: (*You*) Please tell me what you're thinking.

8.7 Subjects in Sentences That Begin with There and Here

When a sentence begins with *there* or *here*, the subject usually follows the verb. Remember that *there* and *here* are never the subjects of a sentence. The simple subjects in the example sentences are underlined.

EXAMPLES

Here is the solution to the mystery.

There is no time to waste now.

There were too many passengers on the boat.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Copy each of the following sentences. Then draw one line under the complete subject and two lines under the complete predicate.

1. The Old English alliterative tradition emerged about 1350.
2. There were four texts in the manuscript.
3. None of the four texts originally had a title.
4. The last of the four texts was *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
5. It may well be the greatest Arthurian romance in English.
6. Twelve rough illustrations accompanied the original texts.
7. The Pearl Poet evidently was not an artist.
8. Think about the way that the Green Knight tests Gawain's virtues.
9. Why has the code of chivalry disappeared?
10. The knights of King Arthur's court have all become legendary figures.

8.8 Complements

A complement is a word or group of words that completes the meaning of the sentence. Some sentences contain only a subject and a verb. Most sentences, however, require additional words placed after the verb to complete the meaning of the sentence. There are three kinds of complements: **direct objects**, **indirect objects**, and **subject complements**.

Direct objects are words or word groups that receive the action of action verbs. A direct object answers the question *what?* or *whom?* In the examples that follow the direct objects are underlined.

EXAMPLES

The students asked many questions.
(asked what?)

The teacher quickly answered them.
(answered what?)

The school accepted girls and boys.
(accepted whom?)

Indirect objects tell *to* or *for whom* or *what* the action of the verb is performed. Indirect objects come before direct objects. In the examples that follow the indirect objects are underlined.

EXAMPLES

My sister usually gave her friends good advice. (gave to whom?)

Her brother sent the post office a heavy package. (sent to what?)

His kind grandfather mailed him a new tie.
(mailed to whom?)

Subject complements come after linking verbs and identify or describe the subject. Subject complements that name or identify the subject of the sentence are called **predicate nominatives**. These include **predicate nouns** and **predicate pronouns**. In the examples that follow the subject complements are underlined.

EXAMPLES

My friends are very hard workers.

The best writer in the class is she.

Other subject complements describe the subject of the sentence. These are called **predicate adjectives**.

EXAMPLE: *The pianist appeared very energetic.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Write all of the complements in the following sentences and label them as direct objects, indirect objects, predicate nouns, predicate pronouns, or predicate adjectives.

1. William Wordsworth inaugurated the English Romantic period.
2. With Samuel Taylor Coleridge, he published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798.
3. That volume quickly became immensely popular.
4. The last poem in *Lyrical Ballads* was “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey.”
5. Wordsworth wrote the poem after a walking tour in June 1798.
6. In 1800, while living at Dove Cottage near Grasmere, Wordsworth and his friend enlarged their famous collection.
7. In that edition, Wordsworth gave the world his famous “Preface.”
8. He stated his convictions and intentions about poetry.
9. He would draw his material from nature and everyday events.
10. Wordsworth offered readers a radical new philosophy.

9 Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words that does not have a subject and predicate and functions in a sentence as a single part of speech.

9.1 Prepositional Phrases A prepositional phrase is a phrase that consists of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object. Prepositional phrases that modify nouns or pronouns are called **adjective phrases**. Prepositional phrases that modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb are **adverb phrases**.

ADJECTIVE PHRASE: *The central character of the story is a wicked villain.*

ADVERB PHRASE: *He reveals his nature in the first scene.*

9.2 Appositives and Appositive Phrases

An appositive is a noun or pronoun that usually comes directly after another noun or pronoun and identifies or provides further information about that word. An appositive phrase includes the appositive and all its modifiers. In the following examples, the appositive phrases are underlined.

EXAMPLES

We were discussing Mary Shelley, my hero.

Mary Wollstonecraft, the famous feminist, was considered a radical.

Occasionally, an appositive phrase may precede the noun it tells about.

EXAMPLE: *A great feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote many essays.*

10 Verbs and Verbal Phrases

A verbal is a verb form that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. A verbal phrase consists of a verbal, all its modifiers, and all its complements. There are three kinds of verbals: infinitives, participles, and gerunds.

10.1 Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

An infinitive is a verb form that usually begins with *to* and functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. The infinitive and its modifiers constitute an infinitive phrase. The examples that follow show several uses of infinitives and infinitive phrases. Each infinitive phrase is underlined.

NOUN: *To know her is my only desire.* (subject)

She wrote to voice her opinions. (direct object)

Her goal was to promote women's rights. (predicate nominative)

ADJECTIVE: *We saw his need to be loved.*
(adjective modifying *need*)

ADVERB: *I'm planning to walk with you.*
(adverb modifying *planning*)

Like verbs themselves, infinitives can take objects (*her* in the first noun example), be made passive (*to be loved* in the adjective example), and take modifiers (*with you* in the adverb example).

Because *to*, the sign of the infinitive, precedes infinitives, it is usually easy to recognize them. However, sometimes *to* may be omitted.

EXAMPLE: *Let no one dare [to] enter this shrine.*

10.2 Participles and Participial Phrases

A participle is a verb form that functions as an adjective. Like adjectives, participles modify nouns and pronouns. Most participles use the present participle form, ending in *-ing*, or the past participle form, ending in *-ed* or *-en*. In the examples below the participles are underlined.

MODIFYING A NOUN: *The dying man had a smile on his face.*

MODIFYING A PRONOUN: *Frustrated, everyone abandoned the cause.*

Participial phrases are participles with all their modifiers and complements.

MODIFYING A NOUN: *The dogs searching for survivors are well trained.*

MODIFYING A PRONOUN: *Having approved your proposal, we are ready to act.*

10.3 Dangling and Misplaced

Participles A participle or participial phrase should be placed as close as possible to the word that it modifies. Otherwise the meaning of the sentence may not be clear.

MISPLACED: *The boys were looking for squirrels searching the trees.*

CLEARER: *The boys searching the trees were looking for squirrels.*

A participle or participial phrase that does not clearly modify anything in a sentence is called a **dangling participle**. A dangling participle causes confusion because it appears to modify a word that it cannot sensibly modify.

Correct a dangling participle by providing a word for the participle to modify.

CONFUSING: *Running like the wind, my hat fell off.* (The hat wasn't running.)

CLEARER: *Running like the wind, I lost my hat.*

10.4 Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

A gerund is a verb form ending in *-ing* that functions as a noun. Gerunds may perform any function nouns perform.

SUBJECT: *Running is my favorite pastime.*

DIRECT OBJECT: *I truly love running.*

SUBJECT COMPLEMENT: *My deepest passion is running.*

OBJECT OF PREPOSITION: *Her love of running keeps her strong.*

Gerund phrases are gerunds with all their modifiers and complements. The gerund phrases are underlined in the following examples.

SUBJECT: *Wishing on a star never got me far.*

OBJECT OF PREPOSITION: *I will finish before leaving the office.*

APPOSITIVE: *Her avocation, flying airplanes, finally led to full-time employment.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Identify the underlined phrases as appositive phrases, infinitive phrases, participial phrases, or gerund phrases.

- Concerned about the injustices in Ireland, Swift wrote his satiric essay "A Modest Proposal."
- Irony, a contrast between expectations and reality, can be an effective literary device.
- Swift's modest proposal to prevent the children of Ireland from becoming a burden is ironic.
- Referring to people as a commodity is a strong insult.
- Was Swift a misanthrope, someone who mistrusts mankind?
- What can be done to change the abhorrent conditions of the Irish poor?
- Gulliver's Travels*, an English satire, has many admiring readers.

11 Clauses

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb. There are two kinds of clauses: independent clauses and subordinate clauses.

11.1 Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Independent Clauses An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence, as the word *independent* suggests.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE: *The English are noted for their independence.*

A sentence may contain more than one independent clause.

EXAMPLE: *The English are noted for their independence, and they are proud of their history of leadership in the Western world.*

In the example above the coordinating conjunction *and* joins the two independent clauses.

A subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a sentence. It is subordinate to, or dependent on, the main clause.

EXAMPLE: *The English are known for their independence, although they are also very willing to work with others.*

Although they are also very willing to work with others cannot stand by itself.

11.2 Adjective Clauses An adjective clause is a subordinate clause used as an adjective. It usually follows the noun or pronoun it modifies.

EXAMPLE: *William Wordsworth is someone whom millions have read.*

Adjective clauses are typically introduced by the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that* (see Relative Pronouns, page 1395). In the examples that follow, the adjective clauses are underlined.

EXAMPLES

A person who wants friends should be a friend.

Mary Ann Evans, whose pen name was George Eliot, wrote several great novels.

I read novels that let me escape from daily life.

WATCH OUT! The relative pronouns *whom*, *which*, and *that* may sometimes be omitted when they are objects of their own clauses.

EXAMPLE: *William Wordsworth is someone [whom] millions admire.*

11.3 Adverb Clauses An adverb clause is a subordinate clause that is used as an adverb to modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. It is introduced by a subordinating conjunction (see Subordinating Conjunctions, page 1401).

Adverb clauses typically occur at the beginning or end of sentences. The clauses are underlined in these examples.

MODIFYING A VERB: *When we need you, we will call.*

MODIFYING AN ADVERB: *I'll stay here where there is shelter from the rain.*

MODIFYING AN ADJECTIVE: *Roman felt good when he finished his essay.*

11.4 Noun Clauses A noun clause is a subordinate clause that is used in a sentence as a noun. A noun clause may be used as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, a predicate nominative, or an object of a preposition. Noun clauses are often introduced by pronouns such as *that*, *what*, *who*, *whoever*, *which*, and *whose*, and by subordinating conjunctions, such as *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *whether*. (See Subordinating Conjunctions, page 1401.)

USAGE TIP Because the same words may introduce adjective and noun clauses, you need to consider how the clause functions within its sentence.

To determine if a clause is a noun clause, try substituting *something* or *someone* for the clause. If you can do it, it is probably a noun clause.

EXAMPLES: *I know whose woods these are.*

(“I know something.” The clause is a noun clause, direct object of the verb *know*.)

Give a copy to whoever wants one. (“Give a copy to someone.” The clause is a noun clause, object of the preposition *to*.)

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Identify each underlined clause as an adjective clause, an adverb clause, or a noun clause.

- Some people think that John Keats is the best Romantic poet.
- When I read the last line of "Ode on a Grecian Urn," I cried.
- Did Keats, who wrote "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be," have a premonition of his own early death?
- At first, Keats could not decide whether he wanted to be a poet or a surgeon.
- He made the fateful decision, which the world welcomed, at about the age of 21.

12 The Structure of Sentences

When classified by their structure, there are four kinds of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.

12.1 Simple Sentences A simple sentence is a sentence that has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses. The fact that they are called "simple" does not mean that such sentences are uncomplicated. Various parts of simple sentences may be compound, and they may contain grammatical structures such as appositives and verbals.

EXAMPLES

Lord Byron, a symbol of romanticism, has influenced poets, composers, and artists. (appositive and compound direct object)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, best known for writing poetry, was also an essayist. (participial and gerund phrases)

12.2 Compound Sentences A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses. The clauses are joined together with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, yet, for, so*), a semicolon, or a conjunctive adverb with a semicolon. Like simple sentences, compound sentences do not contain any dependent clauses.

EXAMPLES

I love Shelley's poem "Ozymandias," yet I don't admire Ozymandias himself.

Jane Austen lived a relatively quiet life; however, that did not prevent her from writing great novels.

WATCH OUT! Do not confuse compound sentences with simple sentences that have compound parts.

EXAMPLE: *A subcommittee drafted a document and immediately presented it to the entire group.* (*here and* signals a compound predicate, not a compound sentence)

12.3 Complex Sentences A complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses. Each subordinate clause can be used as a noun or as a modifier. If it is used as a modifier, a subordinate clause usually modifies a word in the main clause, and the main clause can stand alone. However, when a subordinate clause is a noun clause, it is a part of the independent clause; the two cannot be separated.

MODIFIER: *One should not complain, unless she or he has a better solution.*

NOUN CLAUSE: *We sketched pictures of whomever we wished.* (noun clause is the object of the preposition *of* and cannot be separated from the rest of the sentence)

12.4 Compound-Complex Sentences

A compound-complex sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses. Compound-complex sentences are, simply, both compound and complex. If you start with a compound sentence, all you need to do to form a compound-complex sentence is add a subordinate clause.

COMPOUND: *All the students knew the answer, yet they were too shy to volunteer.*

COMPOUND-COMPLEX: *All the students knew the answer that their teacher expected, yet they were too shy to volunteer.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Tell whether each sentence is a simple sentence, a compound sentence, a complex sentence, or a compound-complex sentence.

1. Keats is my favorite romantic poet.
2. His life was tragically short, but he produced a remarkable body of work.
3. Although he became engaged to Fanny Brawne, poverty and poor health prevented him from marrying her.
4. Despite his illness, he produced many great works.
5. As his illness progressed, Keats moved to the milder climate of Italy, but he died six months later.

13 Writing Complete Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. In writing that you wish to share with a reader, try to avoid both sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

13.1 Correcting Fragments A sentence fragment is a group of words that is only part of a sentence. It does not express a complete thought and may be confusing to the reader or the listener. A sentence fragment may be lacking a subject, a predicate, or both.

FRAGMENT: waited for the boat to arrive (no subject)

CORRECTED: We waited for the boat to arrive.

FRAGMENT: people of various races, ages, and creeds (no predicate)

CORRECTED: People of various races, ages, and creeds gathered together.

FRAGMENT: near the old cottage (neither subject nor predicate)

CORRECTED: The burial ground is near the old cottage.

In your own writing, fragments are usually the result of haste or incorrect punctuation. Sometimes fixing a fragment will be a matter of attaching it to a preceding or following sentence.

FRAGMENT: We saw the two girls. Waiting for the bus to arrive.

CORRECTED: We saw the two girls waiting for the bus to arrive.

FRAGMENT: Newspapers appeal to a wide audience. Including people of various races, ages, and creeds.

CORRECTED: Newspapers appeal to a wide audience, including people of various races, ages, and creeds.

13.2 Correcting Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence is made up of two or more sentences written as though they were one. Some run-ons have no punctuation within them. Others may use only a comma where a conjunction or stronger punctuation is necessary. Use your judgment in correcting run-on sentences, as you have choices. You can make two sentences if the thoughts are not closely connected. If the thoughts are closely related, you can keep the run-on as one sentence by adding a semicolon or a conjunction.

RUN-ON: We found a place by a small pond for the picnic it is three miles from the village.

MAKE TWO SENTENCES: We found a place by a small pond for the picnic. It is three miles from the village.

RUN-ON: We found a place by a small pond for the picnic it was perfect.

USE A SEMICOLON: We found a place by a small pond for the picnic; it was perfect.

ADD A CONJUNCTION: We found a place by a small pond for the picnic, and it was perfect.

WATCH OUT! When you add a conjunction, make sure you use appropriate punctuation before it: a comma for a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon for a conjunctive adverb. (See Conjunctions, page 1401.) A very common mistake is to use a comma instead of a conjunction or an end mark. This error is called a **comma splice**.

INCORRECT: He finished the apprenticeship, then he left the village.

CORRECT: He finished the apprenticeship, and then he left the village.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Rewrite the following paragraph, correcting all fragments and run-ons.

Rudyard Kipling was born in India. Where his father was a teacher at the University of Bombay. When he was only six years old. He was sent to school in England. There, at an early age, he wrote verses, some of them were very good. He turned many of his earlier experiences to literary use. In such works as *The Light That Failed*.

14**Subject-Verb Agreement**

The subject and verb of a sentence must agree in number. Agreement means that when the subject is singular, the verb must be singular; when the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

14.1

Basic Agreement Fortunately, agreement between subject and verb in English is simple. Most verbs show the difference between singular and plural only in the third person present tense. The present tense of the third person singular ends in -s.

Present Tense Verb Forms

Singular	Plural
I sleep	we sleep
you sleep	you sleep
she, he, it sleeps	they sleep

14.2

Agreement with Be The verb *be* presents special problems in agreement because this verb does not follow the usual verb patterns.

Forms of Be

Present Tense		Past Tense	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
I am	we are	I was	we were
you are	you are	you were	you were
she, he, it is	they are	she, he, it was	they were

14.3**Words Between Subject and Verb**

A verb agrees only with its subject. When words come between a subject and its verb, ignore them when considering proper agreement. Identify the subject and make sure the verb agrees with it.

EXAMPLES

A story in the newspapers tells about the 1890s.

Dad as well as Mom reads the paper daily.

14.4**Agreement with Compound Subjects**

Use a plural verb with most compound subjects joined by the word *and*.

EXAMPLE: *My father and his friends (they) read the paper daily.*

You could substitute the plural pronoun *they* for *my father and his friends*. This shows that you need a plural verb.

If the compound subject is thought of as a unit, you use the singular verb. Test this by substituting the singular pronoun *it*.

EXAMPLE: *Peanut butter and jelly [it] is my brother's favorite sandwich.*

Use a singular verb with a compound subject that is preceded by *each*, *every*, or *many a*.

EXAMPLE: *Each novel and short story seems grounded in personal experience.*

With *or*, *nor*, and the correlative conjunctions *either . . . or* and *neither . . . nor*, make the verb agree with the noun or pronoun nearest the verb.

EXAMPLES

Cookies or ice cream is my favorite dessert.

Either Cheryl or her friends are being invited.

Neither ice storms nor snow is predicted today.

14.5**Personal Pronouns as Subjects**

When using a personal pronoun as a subject, make sure to match it with the correct form of the verb *be*. (See the chart in 14.2.) Note especially that the pronoun *you* takes the verbs *are* and *were*, regardless of whether it is referring to the singular *you* or to the plural *you*.

WATCH OUT! *You is* and *you was* are nonstandard forms and should be avoided in writing and speaking. *We was* and *they was* are also forms to be avoided.

INCORRECT: *You was my best friend. They was going away.*

CORRECT: *You were my best friend. They were going away.*

14.6 Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

Some indefinite pronouns are always singular; some are always plural. Others may be either singular or plural.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

another	either	neither	other
anybody	everybody	nobody	somebody
anyone	everyone	no one	someone
anything	everything	nothing	something
each	much	one	

EXAMPLES

Each of the writers was given an award.

Somebody in the room upstairs is sleeping.

The indefinite pronouns that are always plural include *both*, *few*, *many*, and *several*. These take plural verbs.

EXAMPLES

Many of the books in our library are not in circulation.

Few have been returned recently.

Still other indefinite pronouns may be either singular or plural.

Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns

all	enough	most	plenty
any	more	none	some

The number of the indefinite pronouns *any* and *none* depends on the intended meaning.

EXAMPLES

Any of these topics has potential for a good article. (any singular topic)

Any of these topics have potential for a good article. (any of the many topics)

The indefinite pronouns *all*, *some*, *more*, *most*, and *none* are singular when they refer to a quantity or part of something. They are plural when they refer to a number of individual things. Context will usually give a clue.

EXAMPLES

All of the flour is gone. (referring to a quantity)

All of the flowers are gone. (referring to individual items)

14.7 Inverted Sentences

Problems in agreement often occur in inverted sentences beginning with *here* or *there*; in questions beginning with *why*, *where*, and *what*; and in inverted sentences beginning with a phrase. Identify the subject—wherever it is—before deciding on the verb.

EXAMPLES

There clearly are far too many cooks in this kitchen.

What is the correct ingredient for this stew?

Far from the embroiled cooks stands the master chef.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Locate the subject of each sentence. Then choose the correct verb.

1. Many writers have been controversial, but few (is/are) as controversial as D. H. Lawrence.
2. Neither his novels nor that shocking short story (is/are) censored today, however.
3. Nearly everybody who has read him either (love/loves) him or (hate/hates) him.
4. There (is/are) no opinions in between.
5. He and his wife Frieda searched for new ways to relate to people; they (was/were) a remarkable couple.

14.8 Sentences with Predicate

Nominatives When a predicate nominative serves as a complement in a sentence, use a verb that agrees with the subject, not the complement.

EXAMPLES

The novels of Dickens are a milestone in British literature. (*Novels* is the subject, not *milestone*, and it takes the plural verb *are*.)

A milestone in British literature is the novels of Dickens. (The subject is the singular noun *milestone*.)

14.9 Don't and Doesn't as Auxiliary Verbs

Verbs The auxiliary verb *doesn't* is used with singular subjects and with the personal pronouns *she*, *he*, and *it*. The auxiliary verb *don't* is used with plural subjects and with the personal pronouns *I*, *we*, *you*, and *they*.

SINGULAR

He doesn't know Elizabeth Barrett Browning's famous "Sonnet 43."

Doesn't the young man read very much?

PLURAL

I don't know what time it is now.

Novelists don't necessarily write short stories.

14.10 Collective Nouns as Subjects

Collective nouns are singular nouns that name a group of persons or things. *Team*, for example, is the collective name of a group of individuals. A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group acts as a single unit. It takes a plural verb when the members of the group act separately.

EXAMPLES

Our team usually wins. (the team as a whole wins)

Our team vote differently on most issues. (the individual members vote)

14.11 Relative Pronouns as Subjects

When a relative pronoun is used as a subject of its clause—*who*, *which*, and *that* can serve as subjects—the verb of the clause must agree in number with the antecedent of the pronoun.

SINGULAR: *I didn't read the book on trees that was given to me, but I did leaf through it.*

The antecedent of the relative pronoun *that* is the singular *book*; therefore, *that* is singular and must take the singular verb *was*.

PLURAL: *D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce, who were very different from each other, are both outstanding novelists.*

The antecedent of the relative pronoun *who* is the plural compound subject *D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce*. Therefore, *who* is plural, and it takes the plural verb *were*.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Choose the correct verb for each of the following sentences.

1. "The Rocking-Horse Winner" (don't/doesn't) end happily.
2. Nevertheless, it is a story that (entertain/entertains) most readers.
3. Even a collection of toys (hear/hears) the secret whisper.
4. The boy asked why some people (attract, attracts) luck.
5. Paul (are/is) partners with the older men.
6. What do you think the voices in the house that (were/was) speaking to Paul symbolize?
7. Why is it that Paul's horse (don't/doesn't) have a name?
8. Our class (vote/votes) on each story we read.
9. Lawrence's story about Paul's family, which (were/was) read last week, was a big winner in our poll.
10. A group of students (have/has) decided to dramatize it.

Quick Reference: Punctuation

Punctuation	Function	Examples
End Marks	to end sentences	It was the best time of my life. Was it the best time for you? What an architect Inigo Jones was!
period, question mark, exclamation point	initials and other abbreviations	Dr. Robert Boyle, I. M. Pei, McDougal Littell Inc., A.M., B.C., yds., ft., Ave., St.
	items in outlines	I. Volcanoes A. Central-vent 1. Shield
	exception: P.O. states	NE (Nebraska), NV (Nevada)
Commas	before conjunction in compound sentence	I have never disliked poetry, but now I really love it.
	items in a series	She is brave, loyal, and kind. The slow, easy route is best.
	words of address	"Bright star, would I were steadfast . . ." We need to solve this problem, men.
	parenthetical expressions	Well, just suppose that we can't? Hard workers, as you know, don't quit. I'm not a quitter, believe me.
	introductory phrases and clauses	In the beginning of the day, I feel fresh. While she was out, I was here. Having finished my chores, I went out.
	nonessential phrases and clauses	Ed Pawn, captain of the chess team, won. Ed Pawn, who is the captain, won. The two leading runners, sprinting toward the finish line, ended in a tie.
	in dates and addresses	Send it by June 20, 1998, to Maple Industry, 22 Spring Street, York, PA
	in letter parts	Dear Jim, Sincerely yours,
	for clarity, or to avoid confusion	By noon, time had run out. What the minister does, does matter. While cooking, Jim burned his hand.
Semicolons	in compound sentences that are not joined by coordinators <i>and</i> , etc.	The last shall be first; the first shall be last. I read the Bible; however, I have not memorized it.
	with items in series that contain commas	We invited my sister, Jan; her friend, Don; my uncle Jack; and Mary Dodd.
	in compound sentences that contain commas	After I ran out of money, I called my parents; but only my sister was home, unfortunately.

Punctuation	Function	Examples
Colons	to introduce lists	Correct: Those we wrote were the following: Dana, John, and Will.
	before a long quotation	Incorrect: Those we wrote were: Dana, John, and Will.
	after the salutation of a business letter	Winston Churchill wrote: "It would be foolish, however, to disguise the gravity of the hour. It would be still more foolish to lose heart."
	with certain numbers	To Whom It May Concern: Dear Prime Minister: 1:28 P.M., Genesis: 2–5
Dashes	to indicate an abrupt break in thought	I was thinking of my mother—who is arriving tomorrow—just as you walked in.
Parentheses	to enclose less important material	Like Dave (but without his English accent), Fran told many funny stories. Big Ben (Have you ever seen it?) is really big!
Hyphens	with a compound adjective before nouns	I come from a line of big-boned Englishmen.
	in compounds with <i>all-, ex-, self-, -elect</i>	She's an ex-MP but all-British. Our senator-elect is too self-important.
	in compound numbers (to <i>ninety-nine</i>)	Today, I turn twenty-one.
	in fractions used as adjectives	My cup is one-third full.
	between prefixes and words beginning with capital letters	Who was the best pre-Elizabethan poet? The weather was good in mid-May.
	when dividing words at the end of a line	Churchill won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1953.
Apostrophes	to form possessives of nouns and indefinite pronouns	my friend's book, my friends' book, anyone's guess, somebody else's problem
	for omitted letters in numbers/contractions	don't (omitted o); he'd (omitted woul)
	to form plurals of letters and numbers	the class of '99 (omitted 19)
Quotation Marks	to set off a speaker's exact words	I had two A's and no 2's on my report card.
	for titles of stories, short poems, essays, songs, book chapters	Sara said, "I'm finally ready." "I'm ready," Sara said, "finally." Did Sara say, "I'm ready"? Sara said, "I'm ready!"
Ellipses	for material omitted from a quotation	I liked Joyce's "Araby," Brooke's "The Soldier," and Orwell's "A Hanging." My favorite is the Beatles' "Yesterday."
Italics	for titles of books, plays, magazines, long poems, operas, films, names of ships	<i>Pride and Prejudice, Macbeth, Time, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Carmen, Titanic, HMS Queen Elizabeth II</i>

Quick Reference: Capitalization

Category/Rule	Examples
People and Titles	
Names and initials of people	Isabel Allende, A. E. Housman
Titles with names or in place of them	Professor Holmes, Senator Long, The Senator has arrived.
Deities and members of religious groups	Jesus, Allah, the Buddha, Zeus, Baptists, Roman Catholics
Names of ethnic and national groups	Hispanics, Jews, African Americans
Geographical Names	
Cities, states, countries, continents	London, Avon, Ireland, Australia
Regions, bodies of water, mountains	the Far West, Loch Lomond, Mount Ida
Geographic features, parks	Great Plains, Kensington Gardens
Streets and roads, planets	55 West Third Avenue, Green Lane, Mars, Saturn
Organizations and Events	
Companies, organizations, teams	Maxwell Industries, the Masons
Buildings, bridges, monuments	Blarney Castle, Westminster Bridge, Vietnam War Memorial
Documents, awards	Magna Carta, Distinguished Flying Cross
Special named events	Super Bowl, World Series
Governmental bodies, historical periods and events	the House of Lords, Parliament, the Elizabethan Age, World War I
Days and months, holidays	Friday, May, Easter, Guy Fawkes Day
Specific cars, boats, trains, planes	MG, Titanic, Orient Express
Proper Adjectives	
Adjectives formed from proper nouns	Socratic method, Irish cooking, Chaucerian age, Atlantic coast
First Words and the Pronoun /	
The first word in a sentence or quote	This is it. He said, "Let's go."
Complete sentence in parentheses	(Consult the previous chapter.)
Salutation and closing of letters	Dear Madam, Very truly yours,
First lines of most poetry	Then am I
The personal pronoun, I	A happy fly If I live Or if I die.
First, last, and all important words in titles	<i>A Tale of Two Cities, "The World Is Too Much with Us"</i>

Little Rules That Make A Big Difference

Sentences

Avoid sentence fragments. Make sure all your sentences express complete thoughts.

A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not express a grammatically complete thought. It may lack a subject, a predicate, or both. Fragments may be corrected by adding the missing element(s) or by changing the punctuation to make the fragment part of another sentence.

FRAGMENT: *We admire George Eliot. A woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time.*

COMPLETE: *We admire George Eliot. She was a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time.* (adding a subject and a predicate)

COMPLETE: *We admire George Eliot, a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time.* (changing the punctuation)

Avoid run-on sentences. Make sure all clauses in a sentence have the proper punctuation and/or conjunctions between them.

A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences written as though they were one or separated only by a comma. Correct run-ons by making two separate sentences, using a semicolon, adding a conjunction, or rewriting the sentence.

RUN-ON: *James Galway is a great musician, he plays the flute.*

CORRECT: *James Galway is a great musician. He plays the flute.*

CORRECT: *James Galway is a great musician; he plays the flute.*

CORRECT: *James Galway, who plays the flute, is a great musician.*

Use end marks correctly. Use a period, not a question mark, at the end of an indirect question.

An indirect question is a question that does not use the exact words of the original speaker. Note the difference between the following sentences, and observe that the second sentence ends in a period, not a question mark.

DIRECT: *Lou asked, "What is that?"*

INDIRECT: *Lou asked what it was.*

Do not use quotation marks with indirect quotations within a sentence.

A direct quotation uses the speaker's exact words. An indirect quotation puts the speaker's words in other words. Compare these sentences:

DIRECT: *Jean said, "I'm going to be up all night writing my essay."* (quotation marks appropriate)

INDIRECT: *Jean said that she was going to be up all night writing her essay.* (no quotation marks)

Phrases

Place participial and prepositional phrases as close as possible to the words they modify.

Participial and prepositional phrases are modifiers; that is, they tell about some other word in a sentence. To avoid confusion, they should be placed as close as possible to the word that they modify.

INCORRECT: *Tiny microphones are planted by agents called bugs.*

CORRECT: *Tiny microphones called bugs are planted by agents.*

Avoid dangling participles. Make sure a participial phrase does modify a word in the sentence.

INCORRECT: *Disappointed in love, a hermit's life seemed attractive.* (Who was disappointed?)

CORRECT: *Disappointed in love, the man became a hermit.*

Clauses**Use commas to set off nonessential adjective clauses.**

Do you need the clause in order to indicate precisely who or what is meant? If not, it is nonessential and should be set off by commas.

USE COMMAS: *Nadine Gordimer, who is a great role model for young writers, received the 1991 Nobel Prize in literature.*

NO COMMAS: *A writer who is a great role model for young writers received the 1991 Nobel Prize in literature.*

Verbs**Don't use past tense forms with an auxiliary verb or past participle forms without an auxiliary verb. (See Auxiliary Verbs, page 1395.)**

INCORRECT: *I have saw her somewhere before.* (saw is past tense and shouldn't be used with have)

CORRECT: *I have seen her somewhere before.*

INCORRECT: *I seen her somewhere before.* (seen is a past participle and shouldn't be used without an auxiliary)

Shift tense only when necessary.

Usually, when you are writing in present tense, stay in present tense; when you are writing in past tense, stay in past tense.

INCORRECT: *When my grandmother tells stories, everybody listened.*

CORRECT: *When my grandmother told stories, everybody listened.*

Sometimes a shift in tense is necessary to show a logical sequence of actions or the relationship of one action to another.

CORRECT: *After he had told his story, everybody went to sleep.*

Subject-Verb Agreement**Make sure subjects and verbs agree in number.**

INCORRECT: *The Brontë sisters of England was great writers.*

CORRECT: *The Brontë sisters of England were great writers.*

INCORRECT: *Charlotte, as well as her sisters, were reserved.*

CORRECT: *Charlotte, as well as her sisters, was reserved.*

INCORRECT: *Emily and Anne was dead before 1850.*

CORRECT: *Emily and Anne were dead before 1850.*

Use a singular verb with nouns that look plural but have singular meaning.

Some nouns that end in -s are singular, even though they look plural. Examples are *measles*, *news*, *Wales*, and the names ending in -ics when they refer to a school subject, science, or general practice.

EXAMPLES: *Measles is a serious disease.*
Politics was the bane of Daniel Defoe.

Use a singular verb with titles.

EXAMPLE: *Scenes of Clerical Life was published in 1858.*
"At the Pitt-Rivers" was written by Penelope Lively.

Rule: Use a singular verb with words of weight, time, and measure.

EXAMPLES: *Seven years is the length of time Joyce took to write Ulysses.*
Fifty pounds was a great deal of money in the 1800s.

Pronouns**Use personal pronouns correctly in compounds.**

Don't be confused about case when *and* joins a noun and a personal pronoun; the case of the pronoun still depends upon its function.

INCORRECT: *Him and his friends went to a Renaissance festival.*

CORRECT: *He and his friends went to a Renaissance festival.*

INCORRECT: *The teacher recommended John Donne's poetry to Lisa and I.*

CORRECT: *The teacher recommended John Donne's poetry to Lisa and me.*

INCORRECT: *Give Mary and they some flowers.*

CORRECT: *Give Mary and them some flowers.*

Usually, if you remove the noun and *and*, the correct pronoun will be obvious.

Use **we** and **us** correctly with nouns.

When a noun directly follows *we* or *us*, the case of the pronoun depends upon its function.

INCORRECT: *Us readers enjoy romantic poetry.*

CORRECT: *We readers enjoy romantic poetry.*
(*we* is the subject)

INCORRECT: *The teacher read Kipling's "If" to we students.*

CORRECT: *The teacher read Kipling's "If" to us students.* (*us* is the object of *to*)

Avoid unclear pronoun reference.

The reference of a pronoun is ambiguous when the reader cannot tell which of two preceding nouns is its antecedent. The reference is indefinite when the idea to which the pronoun refers is only weakly or vaguely expressed.

AMBIGUOUS: *Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and he [who?] wrote the Odyssey too.*

CLEARER: *Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and Homer wrote the Odyssey too.*

INDEFINITE: *The Nobel Prize was won by Seamus Heaney in 1995, which is given to the greatest writers.*

CLEARER: *The Nobel Prize, which is given to the greatest writers, was won by Seamus Heaney in 1995.*

Avoid change of person.

If you are writing in third person—using pronouns such as *she, he, it, they, them, his, her, its*—do not shift to second person—you.

INCORRECT: *The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and you needed to obey the king as well.*

CORRECT: *The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and he needed to obey the king as well.*

Use correct pronouns in elliptical comparisons.

An elliptical comparison is a comparison from which words have been omitted. In order to choose the proper pronoun, fill in the missing words. Note the difference below:

EXAMPLES: *I know my math teacher better than (I know) him. I know my math teacher better than he (knows my math teacher).*

Don't confuse pronouns and contractions.

Personal pronouns are made possessive without the use of an apostrophe, as is the relative pronoun *whose*. Whenever you are unsure whether to write *it's* or *its*, *who's* or *whose*, ask if you mean *it is/has* or *who is/has*. If you do, write the contraction. Do the same for *you're* and *your*, *they're* and *their*, except that the contraction in this case is for the verb *are*.

Modifiers

Avoid double comparisons.

A double comparison is a comparison made twice. In general, if you use *-er* or *-est* on the end of a modifier, you would not also use *more* or *most* in front of it.

INCORRECT: *I like Shakespeare more better since I've read Macbeth.*

CORRECT: *I like Shakespeare better since I've read Macbeth.*

INCORRECT: *He's the most greatest playwright in the world.*

CORRECT: *He's the greatest playwright in the world.*

Avoid illogical comparisons.

Can you tell what is wrong with the following sentence?

Plays are more entertaining than any kind of performance art.

This sentence is difficult to understand. To avoid such illogical comparisons, use *other* when comparing an individual member with the rest of the group.

Plays are more entertaining than any other kind of performance art.

To avoid another kind of illogical comparison, use *than* or *as* after the first member in a compound comparison.

ILLOGICAL: *Josh baked as many tasty pies if not more than Marsha.* (Did he bake as many pies or as many tasty pies?)

CLEARER: *Josh baked as many tasty pies as Marsha, if not more.*

Avoid misplacing modifiers.

Modifiers of all kinds must be placed as close as possible to the words they modify. If you place them elsewhere, you risk being misunderstood.

MISPLACED: *The Parson is "a holy man of good renown" in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.*

CLEARER: *The Parson in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is "a holy man of good renown."*

It is the particular parson in Chaucer's poem who is "a holy man of good renown."

Words Not to Capitalize**Do not capitalize *north*, *south*, *east*, and *west* when they are used to tell direction.**

EXAMPLES: *London is east and south of Oxford.*

Leeds is located in West Yorkshire. (West Yorkshire is the name of a county in the United Kingdom.)

Do not capitalize *sun* and *moon*, and capitalize *earth* only when it is used with the names of other planets.

EXAMPLES: *The sun and the moon are heavenly bodies in a solar system that includes Mars, Jupiter, and the Earth.*

We now live on the earth, not in heaven.

Do not capitalize the names of seasons.

EXAMPLE: *One of Gerard Manley Hopkins's best poems alludes to the seasons of spring and fall.*

Do not capitalize the names of most school subjects.

School subjects are capitalized only when they name a specific course, such as World History I. Otherwise, they are not capitalized.

EXAMPLE: *I'm taking physics, social studies, and a foreign language this year.*

Note: English and the names of other languages are always capitalized.

EXAMPLE: *Everybody takes English and either Spanish or French.*

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Rewrite each sentence correctly.

1. The professor, a renowned authority on Shakespeare.
2. A modern version of *King Lear* is *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley, an award-winning novel.
3. The tragedies of Shakespeare is more popular than his histories.
4. When *Macbeth* was performed, the tickets are impossible to get.
5. Make sure to reserve tickets for *Mark and I.*
6. Several productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are performed on warm Summer nights in Central Park.
7. Having written both plays and sonnets, millions of readers admire the work of Shakespeare.
8. I like *West Side Story* more better than *Romeo and Juliet*.
9. The cast held a workshop for we students.
10. Founded in 1599, people still enjoy performances of Shakespeare's plays in the Globe Theatre.

Commonly Confused Words

accept/except	The verb <i>accept</i> means “to receive or believe”; <i>except</i> is usually a preposition meaning “excluding.”	The ticket office accepted all forms of payment except personal checks.
advice/advise	<i>Advice</i> is a verb; <i>advice</i> is a noun naming that which an <i>adviser</i> gives.	How did the witches advise Macbeth? Did they give him good advice ?
affect/effect	As a verb <i>affect</i> means “to influence.” <i>Effect</i> as a verb means “to cause.” If you want a noun, you will almost always want <i>effect</i> .	Did the passionate shepherd’s plea affect his beloved? It may effect a change in her attitude. Its effect is unknown.
all ready/already	<i>All ready</i> is an adjective meaning “fully ready.” <i>Already</i> is an adverb meaning “before or by this time.”	Two hours later, they were all ready to leave. I had already read Sonnets 116 and 130.
allusion/illusion	An <i>allusion</i> is an indirect reference to something. An <i>illusion</i> is a false picture or idea.	T. S. Eliot makes many allusions to the literary works of others. It’s an illusion to believe you are always right.
among/between	<i>Between</i> is used when you are speaking of only two things. <i>Among</i> is used for three or more.	I had to choose between chocolate and vanilla. The “Rubáiyát” is among my favorite poems.
bring/take	<i>Bring</i> is used to denote motion toward a speaker or place. <i>Take</i> is used to denote motion away from such a person or place.	Bring the books over here, and I will take them to the library.
fewer/less	<i>Fewer</i> refers to the number of separate, countable units. <i>Less</i> refers to bulk quantity.	We have less literature and fewer selections in this year’s curriculum.
leave/let	<i>Leave</i> means “to allow something to remain behind.” <i>Let</i> means “to permit.”	The librarian will leave some books on display but will not let us borrow any.
lie/lay	To <i>lie</i> is “to rest or recline.” It does not take an object. To <i>lay</i> always takes an object.	Dogs love to lie in the sun. We always lay some bones next to him.
loose/lose	<i>Loose</i> (loos) means “free, not restrained”; <i>lose</i> (loož) means “to misplace or fail to find.”	Who turned the horses loose ? I hope we won’t lose any of them.
precede/proceed	<i>Precede</i> means “to go or come before.” Use <i>proceed</i> for other meanings.	The Anglo-Saxon period precedes Middle English. The teacher proceeded to read to the class.
than/then	Use <i>than</i> in making comparisons; use <i>then</i> on all other occasions.	Marlowe is better than Raleigh; We read one, and then the other.
two/too/to	<i>Two</i> is the number. <i>Too</i> is an adverb meaning “also” or “very.” Use <i>to</i> before a verb or as a preposition.	Meg had to go to town, too . We had too much reading to do. Two chapters is too much.

Grammar Glossary

This glossary contains various terms you need to understand when you use the Grammar Handbook. Used as a reference source, this glossary will help you explore grammar concepts and the ways they relate to one another.

A

Abbreviation An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or word group; it is often made up of initials. (B.C., A.M., Maj.)

Active voice. See **Voice**.

Adjective An adjective modifies, or describes, a noun or pronoun. (*happy camper, she is small*)

A **predicate adjective** follows a linking verb and describes the subject. (The day seemed *long*.)

A **proper adjective** is formed from a proper noun. (*Jewish temple, Alaskan husky*)

The **comparative** form of an adjective compares two things. (*more alert, thicker*)

The **superlative** form of an adjective compares more than two things. (*most abundant, weakest*)

The **superlative** form of an adverb compares more than two actions. (*most sharply, closest*)

What Adverbs Tell	Examples
How	climb <i>carefully</i> chuckle <i>merrily</i>
When	arrived <i>late</i> left <i>early</i>
Where	climbed <i>up</i> moved <i>away</i>
To what extent	<i>extremely</i> upset hardly visible

Adverb, conjunctive. See **Conjunctive adverb**.

Adverb phrase. See **Phrase**.

Agreement Sentence parts that correspond with one another are said to be in agreement.

In **pronoun-antecedent agreement**, a pronoun and the word it refers to are the same in number, gender, and person. (*Bill mailed his application. The students ate their lunches.*)

In **subject-verb agreement**, the subject and verb in a sentence are the same in number. (*A child cries for help. They cry aloud.*)

Ambiguous reference An ambiguous reference occurs when a pronoun may refer to more than one word. (Bud asked his brother if he had any mail.)

Antecedent An antecedent is the noun or pronoun to which a pronoun refers. (*If Adam forgets his raincoat, he will be late for school. She learned her lesson.*)

What Adjectives Tell	Examples
How many	<i>some</i> writers <i>much</i> joy
What kind	<i>grand</i> plans <i>wider</i> streets
Which one(s)	<i>these</i> flowers <i>that</i> star

Adjective phrase. See **Phrase**.

Adverb An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. (Clare sang *loudly*.)

The **comparative** form of an adverb compares two actions. (*more generously, faster*)

Appositive An appositive is a noun or phrase that explains one or more words in a sentence. (Cary Grant, an *Englishman*, spent most of his adult life in America.)

An **essential appositive** is needed to make the sense of a sentence complete. (A comic strip inspired the musical *Annie*.)

A **nonessential appositive** is one that adds information to a sentence but is not necessary to its sense. (O. Henry, a *short story writer*, spent time in prison.)

Article Articles are the special adjectives *a*, *an*, and *the*. (*the day, a fly*)

The **definite article** (*the word the*) refers to a particular thing. (*the cabin*)

An **indefinite article** is used with a noun that is not unique but refers to one of many of its kind. (*a dish, an otter*)

Auxiliary verb. See **Verb**.

C

Clause A clause is a group of words that contains a verb and its subject. (*they slept*)

An **adjective clause** is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or pronoun. (*Hugh bought the sweater that he had admired*.)

An **adverb clause** is a subordinate clause used to modify a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. (*Ring the bell when it is time for class to begin*.)

A **noun clause** is a subordinate clause that is used as a noun. (*Whatever you say interests me.*)

An **elliptical clause** is a clause from which a word or words have been omitted. (*We are not as lucky as they.*)

A **main (independent) clause** can stand by itself as a sentence. (*the flashlight flickered*)

A **subordinate (dependent) clause** does not express a complete thought and cannot stand by itself. (*while the nation watched*)

Clause	Example
Main (independent)	The hurricane struck
Subordinate (dependent)	while we were preparing to leave.

Collective noun. See **Noun**.

Comma splice A comma splice is an error caused when two sentences are separated with a comma instead of a correct end mark. (*The band played a medley of show tunes, everyone enjoyed the show.*)

Common noun. See **Noun**.

Comparative. See **Adjective; Adverb**.

Complement A complement is a word or group of words that completes the meaning of a verb. (*The kitten finished the milk.*) See also **Direct object; Indirect object**.

An **objective complement** is a word or a group of words that follows a direct object and renames or describes that object. (*The parents of the rescued child declared Gus a hero.*)

A **subject complement** follows a linking verb and renames or describes the subject. (*The coach seemed anxious.*) See also **Noun (predicate noun); Adjective (predicate adjective)**.

Complete predicate The complete predicate of a sentence consists of the main verb plus any words that modify or complete the verb's meaning. (*The student produces work of high caliber.*)

Complete subject The complete subject of a sentence consists of the simple subject plus any words that modify or describe the simple subject. (*Students of history believe that wars can be avoided.*)

Sentence Part	Example
Complete subject	The man in the ten-gallon hat
Complete predicate	wore a pair of silver spurs.

Compound sentence part A sentence element that consists of two or more subjects, verbs, objects, or other parts is compound. (*Lou and Jay helped. Laura makes and models scarves. Jill sings opera and popular music.*)

Conjunction A conjunction is a word that links other words or groups of words.

A **coordinating conjunction** connects related words, groups of words, or sentences. (*and, but, or*)

A **correlative conjunction** is one of a pair of conjunctions that work together to connect sentence parts. (*either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, whether . . . or, both . . . and*)

A **subordinating conjunction** introduces a subordinate clause. (*after, although, as, as if, as long as, as though, because, before, if, in order that, since, so that, than, though, till, unless, until, whatever, when, where, while*)

Conjunctive adverb A conjunctive adverb joins the clauses of a compound sentence. (*however, therefore, yet*)

Contraction A contraction is formed by joining two words and substituting an apostrophe for a letter or letters left out of one of the words. (*didn't, we've*)

Coordinating conjunction. See **Conjunction**.

Correlative conjunction. See **Conjunction**.

D

Dangling modifier A dangling modifier is one that does not clearly modify any word in the sentence. (*Dashing for the train, the barriers got in the way.*)

Demonstrative pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Dependent clause. See **Clause**.

Direct object A direct object receives the action of a verb. Direct objects follow transitive verbs. (*Jude planned the party.*)

Direct quotation. See **Quotation**.

Divided quotation. See **Quotation**.

Double negative A double negative is the incorrect use of two negative words when only one is needed. (*Nobody didn't care.*)

E

End mark An end mark is one of several punctuation marks that can end a sentence. See the punctuation chart on page 1413.

F

Fragment. See **Sentence fragment.**

Future tense. See **Verb tense.**

G

Gender The gender of a personal pronoun indicates whether the person or thing referred to is male, female, or neuter. (*My cousin plays the tuba; he often performs in school concerts.*)

Gerund A gerund is a verbal that ends in *-ing* and functions as a noun. (*Making pottery takes patience.*)

H

Helping verb. See **Verb (auxiliary verb).**

I

Illogical comparison An illogical comparison is a comparison that does not make sense because words are missing or illogical. (*My computer is newer than Kay.*)

Indefinite pronoun. See **Pronoun.**

Indefinite reference Indefinite reference occurs when a pronoun is used without a clear antecedent. (*My aunt hugged me in front of my friends, and it was embarrassing.*)

Independent clause. See **Clause.**

Indirect object An indirect object tells to whom or for whom (sometimes to what or for what) something is done. (*Arthur wrote *Kerry* a letter.*)

Indirect question An indirect question tells what someone asked without using the person's exact words. (*My friend asked me if I could go with her to the dentist.*)

Indirect quotation. See **Quotation.**

Infinitive An infinitive is a verbal beginning with *to* that functions as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. (*He wanted to go to the play.*)

Intensive pronoun. See **Pronoun.**

Interjection An interjection is a word or phrase used to express strong feeling. (*Wow! Good grief!*)

Interrogative pronoun. See **Pronoun.**

Intransitive verb. See **Verb.**

Inverted sentence An inverted sentence is one in which the subject comes after the verb. (*How was the movie? Here come the clowns.*)

Irregular verb. See **Verb.**

L

Linking verb. See **Verb.**

M

Main clause. See **Clause.**

Main verb. See **Verb.**

Modifier A modifier makes another word more precise. Modifiers most often are adjectives or adverbs; they may also be phrases, verbals, or clauses that function as adjectives or adverbs. (*small box, smiled broadly, house by the sea, dog barking loudly*)

An **essential modifier** is one that is necessary to the meaning of a sentence.

(*Everybody who has a free pass should enter now. None of the passengers got on the train.*)

A **nonessential modifier** is one that merely adds more information to a sentence that is clear without the addition. (*We will use the new dishes, which are stored in the closet.*)

N

Noun A noun names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. (*auditor, shelf, book, goodness*)

An **abstract noun** names an idea, a quality, or a feeling. (*joy*)

A **collective noun** names a group of things. (*bevy*)

A **common noun** is a general name of a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. (*valet, hill, bread, amazement*)

A **compound noun** contains two or more words. (*hometown, pay-as-you-go, screen test*)

A **noun of direct address** is the name of a person being directly spoken to. (*Lee, do you have the package? No, Suki, your letter did not arrive.*)

A **possessive noun** shows who or what owns or is associated with something. (*Lil's ring, a day's pay*)

A **predicate noun** follows a linking verb and renames the subject. (*Karen is a writer.*)

A **proper noun** names a particular person, place, or thing. (*John Smith, Ohio, Sears Tower, Congress*)

Number A word is **singular** in number if it refers to just one person, place, thing, idea, or action, and **plural** in number if it refers to more than one person, place, thing, idea, or action. (The words *he, waiter*, and *is* are singular. The words *they, waiters*, and *are* are plural.)

O

Object of a preposition The object of a preposition is the noun or pronoun that follows a preposition. (*The athletes cycled along the route. Jane baked a cake for her.*)

Object of a verb The object of a verb receives the action of the verb. (*Sid told stories.*)

P

Participle A participle is often used as part of a verb phrase. (*had written*) It can also be used as a verbal that functions as an adjective. (*the leaping deer, the medicine taken for a fever*)

The **present participle** is formed by adding *-ing* to the present form of a verb. (*Walking rapidly, we reached the general store.*)

The **past participle** of a regular verb is formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present form. The past participles of irregular verbs do not follow this pattern. (*Startled, they ran from the house. Spun glass is delicate. A broken cup lay there.*)

Passive voice. See **Voice**.

Past tense. See **Verb tense**.

Perfect tenses. See **Verb tense**.

Person Person is a means of classifying pronouns.

A **first-person** pronoun refers to the person speaking. (*We came.*)

A **second-person** pronoun refers to the person spoken to. (*You ask.*)

A **third-person** pronoun refers to some other person(s) or thing(s) being spoken of. (*They played.*)

Personal pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Phrase A phrase is a group of related words that does not contain a verb and its subject. (*noticing everything, under a chair*)

An **adjective phrase** modifies a noun or a pronoun. (*The label on the bottle has faded.*)

An **adverb phrase** modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. (*Come to the fair.*)

An **appositive phrase** explains one or more words in a sentence. (*Mary, a champion gymnast, won gold medals at the Olympics.*)

A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and its modifiers and complements. (*Fixing the leak will take only a few minutes.*)

An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive, its modifiers, and its complements. (*To prepare for a test, study in a quiet place.*)

A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and its modifiers and complements. (*Straggling to the finish line, the last runners arrived.*)

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition, its object, and the object's modifiers. (*The Saint Bernard does rescue work in the Swiss Alps.*)

A **verb phrase** consists of a main verb and one or more helping verbs. (*might have ordered*)

Possessive A noun or pronoun that is possessive shows ownership or relationship. (*Dan's story, my doctor*)

Possessive noun. See **Noun**.

Possessive pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Predicate The predicate of a sentence tells what the subject is or does. (*The van runs well even in winter. The job seems too complicated.*) See also **Complete predicate; Simple predicate**.

Predicate adjective. See **Adjective**.

Predicate nominative A predicate nominative is a noun or pronoun that follows a linking verb and renames or explains the subject. (*Joan is a computer operator. The winner of the prize was he.*)

Predicate pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Preposition A preposition is a word that relates its object to another part of the sentence or to the sentence as a whole. (*Alfredo leaped onto the stage.*)

Prepositional phrase. See **Phrase**.

Present tense. See **Verb tense**.

Pronoun A pronoun replaces a noun or another pronoun. Some pronouns allow a writer or speaker to avoid repeating a proper noun. Other pronouns let a writer refer to an unknown or unidentified person or thing.

A **demonstrative pronoun** singles out one or more persons or things. (*This is the letter.*)

An **indefinite pronoun** refers to an unidentified person or thing. (*Everyone stayed home. Will you hire anybody?*)

An **intensive pronoun** emphasizes a noun or pronoun. (*The teacher himself sold tickets.*)

An **interrogative pronoun** asks a question. (*What happened to you?*)

An **personal pronoun** shows a distinction of person. (*I came. You see. He knows.*)

An **possessive pronoun** shows ownership. (*My spaghetti is always good. Are your parents coming to the play?*)

A ***predicate pronoun*** follows a linking verb and renames the subject. (The owners of the store were *they*.)

A ***reflexive pronoun*** reflects an action back on the subject of the sentence. (Joe helped *himself*.)

A ***relative pronoun*** relates a subordinate clause to the word it modifies. (The draperies, *which* had been made by hand, were ruined in the fire.)

Pronoun-antecedent agreement. See **Agreement**.

Pronoun forms

The ***subject form*** of a pronoun is used when the pronoun is the subject of a sentence or follows a linking verb as a predicate pronoun. (*She* fell. The star was *she*.)

The ***object form*** of a pronoun is used when the pronoun is the direct or indirect object of a verb or verbal or the object of a

preposition. (We sent *him* the bill. We ordered food for *them*.)

Proper adjective. See **Adjective**.

Proper noun. See **Noun**.

Punctuation Punctuation clarifies the structure of sentences. See the punctuation chart below.

Q

Quotation A quotation consists of words from another speaker or writer.

A ***direct quotation*** is the exact words of a speaker or writer. (Martin said, "The homecoming game has been postponed.")

A ***divided quotation*** is a quotation separated by words that identify the speaker. ("The homecoming game," said Martin, "has been postponed.")

An ***indirect quotation*** reports what a person said without giving the exact words. (Martin

said that the homecoming game had been postponed.)

R

Reflexive pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Regular verb. See **Verb**.

Relative pronoun. See **Pronoun**.

Run-on sentence A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences written incorrectly as one. (*The sunset was beautiful its brilliant colors lasted only a short time*.)

S

Sentence A sentence expresses a complete thought. The chart at the top of the next page shows the four kinds of sentences.

A ***complex sentence*** contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

(*Open the windows before you go to bed. If she falls, I'll help her up*.)

Punctuation	Uses	Examples	
Apostrophe (')	Shows possession Indicates a contraction	Lou's garage I'll help you.	Alva's script The baby's tired.
Colon (:)	Introduces a list or quotation Divides some compound sentences	three colors: red, green, and yellow This was the problem: we had to find our own way home.	
Comma (,)	Separates ideas Separates modifiers Separates items in series	The glass broke, and the juice spilled all over. The lively, talented cheerleaders energized the team. We visited London, Rome, and Paris.	
Exclamation point (!)	Ends an exclamatory sentence	Have a wonderful time!	
Hyphen (-)	Joins parts of some compound words	daughter-in-law, great-grandson	
Period (.)	Ends a declarative sentence Indicates most abbreviations	Swallows return to Capistrano in spring. min. qt. Blvd. Gen. Jan.	
Question mark (?)	Ends an interrogative sentence	Where are you going?	
Semicolon (;)	Divides some compound sentences Separates items in series that contain commas	Marie is an expert dancer; she teaches a class in tap. Jerry visited Syracuse, New York; Athens, Georgia; and Tampa, Florida.	

A **compound sentence** is made up of two or more independent clauses joined by a conjunction, a colon, or a semicolon. (*The ship finally docked, and the passengers quickly left.*)

A **simple sentence** consists of only one main clause. (*My friend volunteers at a nursing home.*)

Kind of Sentence	Example
Declarative (statement)	Our team won.
Exclamatory (strong feeling)	I had a great time!
Imperative (request, command)	Take the next exit.
Interrogative (question)	Who owns the car?

Sentence fragment A sentence fragment is a group of words that is only part of a sentence. (*When he arrived. Merrily yodeling.*)

Simple predicate A simple predicate is the verb in the predicate. (*John collects foreign stamps.*)

Simple subject A simple subject is the key noun or pronoun in the subject. (*The new house* is empty.)

Split infinitive A split infinitive occurs when a modifier is placed between the word *to* and the verb in an infinitive. (*to quickly speak*)

Subject The subject is the part of a sentence that tells whom or what the sentence is about. (*Lou swam.*) See also **Complete subject; Simple subject.**

Subject-verb agreement. See **Agreement.**

Subordinate clause. See **Clause.**

Subordinating conjunction. See **Conjunction.**

Superlative. See **Adjective; Adverb.**

T

Transitive verb. See **Verb.**

U

Unidentified reference An unidentified reference usually occurs when the word *it*, *they*, *this*, *which*, or *that* is used. (*In California they have good weather most of the time.*)

V

Verb A verb expresses an action, a condition, or a state of being.

An **action verb** tells what the subject does, has done, or will do. The action may be physical or mental. (*Susan trains guide dogs.*)

An **auxiliary verb** is added to a main verb to express tense, add emphasis, or otherwise affect the meaning of the verb. Together the auxiliary and main verb make up a verb phrase. (*will intend, could have gone*)

An **linking verb** expresses a state of being or connects the subject with a word or words that describe the subject. (*The ice feels cold.*) Linking verbs include *appear, be (am, are, is, was, were, been, being), become, feel, grow, look, remain, seem, smell, sound, and taste.*

An **main verb** expresses action or state of being; it appears with one or more auxiliary verbs. (*will be staying*)

The **progressive form** of a verb shows continuing action. (*She is knitting.*)

The past tense and past participle of a **regular verb** are formed by adding *-d* or *-ed*. (*open, opened*) An **irregular verb** does not follow this pattern. (*throw, threw, thrown; shrink, shrank, shrunk*)

The action of a **transitive verb** is directed toward someone or something, called the object of a verb. (*Leo washed the windows.*) An **intransitive verb** has no object. (*The leaves scattered.*)

Verb phrase. See **Phrase.**

Verb tense Verb tense shows the time of an action or the time of a state of being.

The **present tense** places an action or condition in the present. (*Jan takes piano lessons.*)

The **past tense** places an action or condition in the past. (*We came to the party.*)

The **future tense** places an action or condition in the future. (*You will understand.*)

The **present perfect tense** describes an action in an indefinite past time or an action that began in the past and continues in the present. (*has called, have known*)

The **past perfect tense** describes one action that happened before another action in the past. (*had scattered, had mentioned*)

The **future perfect tense** describes an event that will be finished before another future action begins. (*will have taught, shall have appeared*)

Verbal A verbal is formed from a verb and acts as another part of speech, such as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Verbal	Example
Gerund (used as a noun)	Lamont enjoys <i>swimming</i> .
Infinitive (used as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun)	Everyone wants <i>to help</i> .
Participle (used as an adjective)	The leaves <i>covering the drive</i> made it slippery.

Voice The voice of a verb depends on whether the subject performs or receives the action of the verb.

In the **active voice** the subject of the sentence performs the verb's action.
(We *knew* the answer.)

In the **passive voice** the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb. (The team *has been eliminated*.)