

essential grammar

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Parts of speech

Noun

A '**noun**' is a word used to name a person, place, thing, feeling or an idea.

For example:

girl, home, ball, fear, plan

There are different types of nouns.

Common noun

A common noun is used to name ordinary things.

For example:

people: *child, doctor, gardener*

places: *shop, school, park*

things: *table, magazine, computer, summer*

Proper noun

A proper noun is used to name a particular person, place or thing. It always begins with a capital letter.

For example:

people: *Anna, Brodie, Robin Hood, Mrs Singh*

places: *Scotland, Dublin, Egypt*

things: *January, Tuesday, RMS Titanic*

Collective noun

A collective noun is one word used to name a group of things or animals.

For example:

anthology of stories

bunch of bananas, flowers

choir of singers

flock of birds, sheep

litter of pups, pigs

troop of monkeys, scouts

vineyard of grapes

Abstract noun

An abstract noun is a word used to name a quality, feeling or condition. It is something that cannot be seen, heard or touched.

For example:

love, happiness, fear, anger, fun, empathy, apathy, safety, excitement

Pronoun

A '**pronoun**' is a word used in place of a noun. A pronoun does the same job as a noun. There are different types of pronouns.

Personal pronoun

A personal pronoun is used to refer to you, me, other people and things.

For example:

<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>you</i>
<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>she</i>
<i>her</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>we</i>
<i>us</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>

Possessive pronoun

A possessive pronoun is used to show possession. A possessive pronoun never uses an apostrophe.

For example:

<i>mine</i>	<i>yours</i>	<i>his</i>
<i>hers</i>	<i>its</i>	<i>ours</i>
<i>yours</i>	<i>theirs</i>	<i>whose</i>

Indefinite pronoun

An indefinite pronoun is an 'unlimited' pronoun.

For example:

<i>somebody</i>	<i>anybody</i>	<i>nobody</i>
<i>everybody</i>	<i>someone</i>	<i>no-one</i>
<i>everyone</i>	<i>anything</i>	<i>nothing</i>
<i>something</i>	<i>everything</i>	<i>anyone</i>

Verb

A '**verb**' is a word used to show action or a state of being. Every sentence should have a verb.

There are different types of verbs.

Action verb

An action verb can be used alone in a sentence.

For example:

*I love **eating** chocolate.*

*My sister always **laughs** at my jokes.*

Some action verbs are things we cannot see.

For example:

*I **thought** about buying a puppy.*

*I **enjoyed** the film.*

Action verbs also show the 'tense', which indicates the time of the action or state of being.

Present tense

The action is happening right now.

For example:

*The baby **is crying**.*

*The puppy **is barking**.*

Past tense

The action has already happened.

For example:

*The baby **cried** all night.*

*The puppy **barked** all day.*

Future tense

The action will happen in the future.

For example:

*The baby **will cry**.*

*The puppy **will bark** all day.*

Helping verb

A helping verb is often used with other verbs. It is also called an 'auxiliary verb'.

There are 23 helping verbs.

They are:

may	might	must
be	being	been
am	are	is
was	were	do
does	did	should
could	would	have
had	has	will
can		shall

For example:

*My brother **has been talking** on the phone for hours.*

*My mum **was smiling** at my dad.*

Not all sentences have or need a helping verb.

One of the most important things to remember is the '**noun-verb agreement**'. This is when we consider the singular or plural nature of the noun in the sentence. If we use a singular noun, then we use a singular verb.

For example:

*The **child** **is** happy.*

*The **farmer** **was planting** seeds.*

If we use a plural noun, then we use a plural verb.

For example:

*The **children** **are** happy.*

*The **farmers** **were planting** seeds.*

Parts of speech

Adjective

An '**adjective**' is a word used to describe or modify a noun or a pronoun. It can tell us ...

More information

Adjectives can tell us more information about the noun or pronoun. They are descriptive.

For example:

The **tall, blue** vase was used to decorate the table.

The **small, light-footed** mouse escaped the trap.

How much or how many

Numbers are adjectives which tell us exactly how many, while others are more general.

For example:

There were **sixteen** boys on the bus.

Each year has **twelve** months.

A **few** children were playing on the swings.

There are **many** DVDs to choose from in the video shop.

Proper adjectives

Some adjectives are called '**proper**' adjectives because they originate from a proper noun.

For example:

American music is very popular.

The **Australian** people are very friendly.

Distinguishing adjectives

The small words '**a**', '**an**' and '**the**' are called '**distinguishing**' adjectives. They help to clarify the noun.

For example:

The book was found outside.

Can you give me **an** answer please?

The children sung **a** song on Friday.

Ownership

Possessive adjectives, such as '**my**', '**your**', '**his**', '**her**', '**its**', '**our**', '**their**', tell us who owns something.

For example:

That is **my** notebook.

You are touching **his** computer.

These are also called pronouns, but are sometimes used as adjectives.

Adjectives can also be used to '**compare**' two or more nouns.

For example:

Elephants are **larger** than lions.

The book was **better** than the film.

Look at the table below for further examples.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
little	less	least
brave	braver	bravest
smooth	smoother	smoothest
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

Adverbs can also be used to 'compare' the way in which actions are done.

For example:

Fiona painted **more carefully** than Tom.

The sunset melted **most beautifully** into the horizon.

Connor ran **faster** than Noah.

Connor ran the **fastest** in the athletics squad.

Preposition

A '**preposition**' is a word that shows the connection between a noun and other words in a sentence. It is a positional word.

For example:

The boy raced quickly **along** the beach.

The pelican gracefully glided **above** the water.

Look at the table below for further examples.

Adverb

An '**adverb**' is a word usually used to describe or modify a verb. It is used to tell 'when', 'how' or 'where' the action takes place. An adverb can come before or after the verb.

When?

Defining the time of the action.

For example:

The train left the station **immediately**.

The class finished **early** on Friday.

How?

Explaining in what way or manner the verb happened, is happening or will happen.

For example:

The boy **quickly** ran through the field.

The girl caressed the cat **gently**.

Where?

Identifying the location of the action.

For example:

The children ran **outside** in the sunshine.

The baby slept peacefully **away** from the noisy children.

in	on	by
for	with	from
to	among	over
of	about	within
above	across	along
around	against	after
before	behind	below
beneath	between	beside
into	onto	at
up	upon	down
through	off	under
over	without	near
far	beyond	towards

Parts of speech

Conjunction

A '**conjunction**' is a connecting word. It is used to join two single words, two phrases or two clauses. The most common conjunction is 'and'.

For example:

*It was a bright, sunny day **because** it was the middle of July.*

*You will find it under your bed **or** in the cupboard.*

Look at the table below for further examples.

and	but
because	so
if	either ... or
neither ... nor	whoever
whichever	when
still	yet
than	whatever
after	until
whenever	although
before	through
unless	while
since	though
for	whether
that	why
as	however

Other types of conjunctions are called 'relative pronouns'.

People

Use '**who**', '**whose**' and '**whom**' when referring to people.

For example:

*Mem is an author **whom** I admire greatly.*

*There's the singer **whose** CD I just bought.*

*Is that the boy **who** joined your football team?*

Animals or things

Use '**which**' or '**that**' when referring to animals or things.

For example:

*The puppy **that** we bought was very small.*

*I chose the clothes **which** Mum bought from the shop.*

Interjection

An '**interjection**' is a word added to a sentence to show emotion. It is usually followed by an **exclamation mark (!)**. It can be used to add interest and excitement to a piece of writing.

Look at the table below for some examples.

bye	ah
congratulations	bravo
farewell	drat
good morning	goodness
good afternoon	oops
good evening	ouch
good day	oh
goodnight	phew
hello	wow
hi	OK
howdy	yeah
pardon	sure thing
please	blast
thank you	yippee
welcome	hush
thanks	oh dear

For example:

***Congratulations** on winning the game!*

***Drat!** I was hoping to surprise you.*

Sentence

A '**sentence**' is a word or sequence of words which begins with a capital letter, ends with a punctuation mark and usually has a '**subject**' (noun or pronoun) and a '**predicate**' (verb and adverb).

A sentence forms a complete thought and should make sense no matter how few or how many words it contains.

There are different types of sentences.

Simple sentences

These have a noun or pronoun and a verb and express only one thought or idea.

For example:

The baby slept peacefully.

Watch out, John!

Compound sentences

These have two or more '**clauses**' and express more than one thought or idea. They use a conjunction and punctuation to join the ideas.

For example:

*Callum knew it was the wrong thing to do, **but** he chose to do it anyway.*

*Brooke loves to pick flowers, **although** they make her sneeze.*

Declarative sentences

These usually make a statement or give us information.

For example:

We are going on holiday tomorrow.

I am excited about getting a new puppy.

Imperative sentences

These generally give a command or instruction.

For example:

Please close the fridge door when you are finished.

Mix the ingredients until they are well combined.

Interrogative sentences

This type of sentence asks a question and ends with a question mark (?).

For example:

Where have you been?

What would you like to eat for dinner?

Exclamatory sentences

These sentences express a strong emotion or feeling and usually end with an exclamation mark (!).

For example:

Watch out!

Be careful!

Punctuation

- full stop
- ! exclamation mark
- ? question mark
- , comma
- ; semicolon
- : colon

- ... ellipsis
- ' apostrophe
- " " quotation marks (single)
- " " quotation marks (double)
- () brackets
- hyphen
- dash

Full stop

A **'full stop'** indicates the end of a sentence. When reading, it means you take a long pause.

For example:

I am going away tomorrow.

She'll be excited to get her new puppy. She has waited a long time.

A full stop is also used in some abbreviations.

For example:

Jan.	January
Feb.	February
Mar.	March
Apr.	April
Aug.	August
Sun.	Sunday
Tues.	Tuesday
Tel.	Telephone
Co.	Company/County
para.	paragraph

Exclamation mark

An **'exclamation mark'** shows a strong feeling or emotion. It is used after:

an exclamation or interjection

For example:

You are amazing!

Wow!

a sentence with strong emotion

For example:

Stop, thief!

Watch out! You nearly fell in.

Question mark

A **'question mark'** is used at the end of a sentence to show that a question is being asked.

For example:

Who is at the door?

What is going on in there?

Question sentences usually begin with:

**Who, What, Why,
When, Where or How.**

Comma

A **'comma'** has many uses. It generally indicates a short pause when reading. It is used to:

mark a short pause

This helps a sentence make sense.

For example:

The team struggled, even though they had won previously.

divide items

Used to separate listed items or a series of adjectives.

For example:

David bought milk, butter, bread and ice-cream from the shop.

The tall, slender, grey tree towered above the forest.

to make statements clearer

A comma can help to remove ambiguity.

For example:

'They left, sadly' has a different meaning from 'They left sadly'.

separate spoken words

In this instance, commas are used as part of direct speech.

For example:

'That is my ball', called the boy.

The girl replied, 'I found it, so it's mine now'.

Insert more information

Used in this way, a writer can include more information for the reader.

For example:

The wall, which was falling down, was roped off from the children.

The sentence would still make sense without the information between the commas, but including it adds interest.

Semicolon

A **'semicolon'** shows a more distinct break than a comma, but less than that shown by a full stop.

For example:

I waited for Jaime; she never came.

Here is your lunch; that is mine.

A semicolon is also used before transition words (such as however, therefore, nevertheless).

For example:

I can't go; however, my sister can.

Sometimes, a full stop can be used instead of a semicolon.

For example:

I can't go. However, my sister can.

Colon

A **'colon'** is used to mark off the main part of the sentence and introduce a list or series of topics or ideas.

For example:

For the football match tomorrow, bring the following: a raincoat, a hat, biscuits, coffee and sandwiches.

The journey was exactly as I expected: exciting, interesting and too short.

Ellipsis

An **'ellipsis'** is used to show that words have been left out or there is a break in thought.

For example:

Colby muttered, 'Well ... um ... er ... you know ... I didn't mean to break the window'.

The boy ... lost in the woods ... I was worried he might get hurt.

'Ellipses' is the plural of ellipsis.

Punctuation

Apostrophe

An 'apostrophe' has two main uses.

Omission

Used in this way, the apostrophe shows that some letters have been missed out.

This happens in contractions.

For example:

was not wasn't
does not doesn't
are not aren't
had not hadn't
can not can't
will not won't
would not wouldn't
should not shouldn't
did not didn't
do not don't
shall not shan't
dare not daren't
is not isn't
have not haven't
were not weren't
could not couldn't

it is/it has it's
there is there's
he is he's
where is where's
who is who's
she is she's

we will we'll
she will she'll
I will I'll
you will you'll
they will they'll
who will who'll

we are we're
you are you're
they are they're
we have we've
you have you've
they have they've

we would we'd
I would I'd
there would there'd
you would you'd
he would he'd

I am I'm

You need to be careful here, because some words sound like contracted words but they are not. For example:

its	as in	belonging to it
your	as in	belonging to you
whose	as in	belonging to who
their	as in	belonging to them
there	as in	a place in space

Sometimes, letters are omitted at the end of words.

For example:

'Are you goin' to town today?'
'What time are you comin' over?'

Ownership

When used to show ownership, the apostrophe is actually saying 'of'.

For example:

the dress of the girl
the girl's dress
the bat of the boy
the boy's bat
the ball of the dog
the dog's ball

You need to consider if there is one owner or many to decide if the apostrophe comes before the 's' or after the 's'.

For example:

The girl's clothes are yellow.
one girl

The girls' clothes are yellow.
more than one girl

The lady's flowers are beautiful.
one lady

The ladies' flowers are beautiful.
more than one lady

An 'apostrophe s' ('s) is added to any personal name ending in 's'.

For example:

Mr Jones's flowerpots are green.
Doris's books are always neat.
Dickens's stories are timeless.

Quotation marks

'Quotation marks' are used to ...

show direct speech

Generally, single quotation marks are used to identify speech in written text.

For example:

'Come over here!' called Jeremy.

Chelsea argued, 'It's gold not yellow'.

Double quotation marks are used to show a quote within a quote.

For example:

Kathy said, 'Jack asked me, "What's for homework tonight?"'.

Tom said to his teacher, 'My mum asked, "What time is assembly on Friday?"'.

indicate special names and titles

Single quotation marks are also used to identify names of books, articles, chapters, magazines, films, TV programmes, poems, radio programmes and songs.

For example:

My favourite song of all time is 'Amazing' by Alex Lloyd.

Did you ever see 'War of the worlds' at the cinema?

Brackets

'Brackets', or parentheses, are used to incorporate additional information into a sentence.

For example:

The two boys (who were brothers) were very polite children.

The cat was stranded on the roof (which was covered in slippery moss).

A writer could use commas or dashes instead of brackets to achieve the same result. It is important not to overuse brackets when writing.

Punctuation

Hyphen

A **'hyphen'** is used to join two words or parts of a word together. It is a short stroke without spaces either side.

A word

Use a hyphen if a word runs over two lines.

For example:

The enormous elephant enclosure was a generous size, but it still was not large enough to house the animal comfortably.

Two or more words

A hyphen is also used when an adjective contains several words.

For example:

*twentieth-century music
old-fashioned furniture
sister-in-law
twenty-seven*

Some words that used to be hyphenated are now written as one word. Check your dictionary.

Dash

A **'dash'**, which is longer than a hyphen, is used to include more information and add interest to the piece of writing.

For example:

The boy—who wore a red T-shirt and blue jeans—was lost in the shops for several hours.

The sentence would read the same if we used commas instead of the dashes.

The boy, who wore a red T-shirt and blue jeans, was lost in the shops for several hours.

The writer could also use brackets to achieve the same result.

The boy (who wore a red T-shirt and blue jeans) was lost in the shops for several hours.

A dash is also used to indicate a sudden change in the text.

For example:

When I was younger I was quite good at sport—but that's not what I want to talk to you about.

It can also be used when explaining an original statement.

For example:

Athletes with a disability can excel at certain sports—for example, some are Olympic archers or shooters.

Capital letters

Use a **'capital letter'** for the pronoun 'I' and to:

distinguish proper nouns and proper names

The first letter of each word in a proper noun or name should be a capital letter.

For example:

People

Sir Tifi Kat
Mrs Rose Bloom
the **Prime Minister** of
Australia

Places

Japan
New York State
Trafalgar Square

Things

Sydney Harbour Bridge
Stars and Stripes
Royal Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals
RMS Titanic

begin a sentence

The first letter of each new sentence must have a capital letter.

For example:

My teacher asked me to write a few things about myself that I would like to share with the class. **A**fter a while, I thought I should probably let them know that I was from another country. **M**y homeland was a place far from here.

form some shortened words and phrases

Some shortened forms use capital letters.

For example:

AD	anno Domini
ASAP	as soon as possible
BBQ	barbecue
BC	Before Christ
BCE	Before common era
BST	British Summer Time
C	Cape, Centigrade, Celsius, century
CD	compact disc
CE	Common era
Co.	company, county
COD	cash on delivery
Cres	Crescent
Dec.	December
DOB	date of birth
Dr	Doctor, Drive
DVD	digital versatile disc
E	east, eastern
ESP	extrasensory perception
EU	European Union
Fri.	Friday
GPO	General Post Office
HM	Her (or His) Majesty
HO	Head Office
ID	identification
IOU	I owe you
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
JP	Justice of the Peace
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
MP	Member of Parliament, Military Police
Mr	Mister
Mrs	Mistress (missus)
Mt	mount, mountain
N	north
NB	note well (nota bene)
No.	number
PO	Post Office
PS	postscript
P.T.O.	please turn over
Pty	proprietary
RSVP	please reply
S	south
St	Saint, street
SW	south-west
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
UV	ultraviolet
W	west
WHO	World Health Organisation