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## Adjectives

Adjectives modify (describe or limit) nouns. Qualifying adjectives describe some quality of the noun in question (**red** book, **magnificent** view). Quantifying adjectives and determiners limit the type or number of noun (**two** oranges, **this** house). Attributive adjectives precede the noun they modify; predicate adjectives are found after a linking verb. In the sentence *The ugly dog was sad*, **ugly** is an attributive adjective and **sad** is a predicate adjective.

## Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and even sentences. Classes of adverbs:

- **Sentence** - *Unfortunately* the stock market crashed.
- **Manner** - John ran *swiftly*.
- **Time** - *Yesterday* I saw a giraffe.
- **Intensifier** - The *very* angry bear roared.
- **Denomial** - These concepts are *philosophically* unsound.

Adverbs formed from adjectives or nouns frequently carry the suffix -ly: intelligent becomes intelligently; anger becomes angrily.

## Articles

There are three articles in English: **a**, **an**, and **the**. A and an are the indefinite articles. They refer to nouns not specifically known to the hearer (I saw *a hummingbird* at the mall). **The** refers to nouns that are specific to both speaker and hearer (*The apple* you ate was rotten).

## Auxiliary verbs

The auxiliary or helping verbs in English are *be, can, could, do, have, may, might, must, shall, should, will,* and *would*. These are the verbs that occur with other verbs (past participles and gerunds) to form compound tenses. They can also be identified by their positioning at the beginning of questions.

- *I am typing* this letter to Uncle Bob. (Compound tense: present progressive)
- *Am I* a good listener? (First word in a question)
- Sean *has read* many books by James Joyce. (Compound tense: present perfect)
- Amy *does understand* the question. (Compound: emphatic)

*Be, do,* and *have* differ from the other auxiliaries in that they can also serve as ordinary verbs in a given sentence.

- The salad *is* good!
- The children *did* their homework rapidly.
- John *has* the flu today.

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect words, phrases, and clauses. Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor) link words or phrases of the same grammatical type: I like hiking *and* skiing.

Subordinating conjunctions (as, while, since, because, that, etc.) are attached to a clause that cannot stand by itself, but is rather part of a whole sentence: We were late *because* *the flight was delayed*.

## **Demonstratives**

Demonstratives are part of a class of words also known as determiners. They serve to point out a noun or noun phrase. In English, the demonstratives are: *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. *This* and *these* refer to things close to the speaker. *That* and *those* refer to things more distant from the speaker.

## Gerunds

The gerund is the verb form in English that ends in *ing* and is used as a noun.

- *Jogging* is a good way to exercise. (From the verb *to jog*)



## **Infinitives**

Infinitives are the verb form introduced by *to* in English: *to go, to see, to accomplish*. They are considered infinite because they have no reference to time.

## **Interjections**

Interjections express surprise or strong feelings and stand apart grammatically from any complete sentence: *Oh! Darn! My Goodness!*

## **Nouns**

Nouns designate persons, places, things, or abstract ideas. They can be **proper nouns** (Russell, France, Lake Michigan) or **common nouns** (dog, spider, truth). Only nouns and noun phrases can serve as the subject, direct object, or indirect object in a sentence.

## Verbs

Verbs indicate action (throw, run) existence (be), or state of being (know, love). **Transitive verbs** take a direct object: (John **hit** *the ball*) while **intransitive verbs** need only a subject (*Jim slept*). Some verbs, like **give**, can take both direct and indirect objects. In the sentence *Mary gave the boy a quarter*, *boy* is the indirect object and *quarter* is the direct object.

## Modals

All the auxiliary verbs except *be*, *do* and *have* are called modals. Modals only exist in their helping form; they cannot act alone as the principle verb in a sentence:

- The astronauts *may return* to the moon. (Modal *may* used in compound)
- The astronauts *may* to the moon. (Ungrammatical: *may* by itself)

## Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are made up of a verb and a particle. Examples of phrasal verbs are: *look up*, *find out*, *beat up*, *come across*. Particles look like prepositions, but they are attached to the verb in a special way to form a single meaning unit. Thus, *look up* (research) as a phrasal verb is different in meaning from a mere combination of the verb *look* and the preposition *up*.

- Ann will *look up* the word in the dictionary.
- John *looked up* the street before crossing it.

The particle *up* is considered separable because a pronoun, if it occurs, must be placed between the verb and the particle: *look it up*, *look them up*, etc. Many such phrasal verbs are separable. Others, such as *come across*, are considered inseparable. That is, one cannot say *I came it across*.

## **Prepositions**

Prepositions are a limited class of words that indicate relationships between nouns, pronouns, and other words in a sentence. Examples of prepositions are: *above, through, with, before, after, until.*

## Pronouns

Pronouns stand for nouns and noun phrases. Types of pronouns:

- **Personal** - I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- **Demonstrative** - this, that, these, those
- **Relative** - who (whom), who(m)ever, which, that, what, whatever
- **Reflexive** - myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves
- **Possessive** - mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its
- **Interrogative** - what, which, who (whom)
- **Indefinite** - any, anyone, all, each, everybody, everyone, one, some, someone, nobody, none, no one, few



## Participles

Participles are verbal forms that are used as adjectives or as part of certain verb tenses. The present participle in English ends in **-ing**. The past participle ends in **-ed** or **-en**.

- **As adjectives:**

The *raging* storm finally subsided.

The workers tore down the *battered* tenement.

- **As verbs:**

Mary is *studying* for her finals today. (Progressive tense)

This valley was *discovered* by Cabrillo in 1507. (Passive voice)

## **Possessive Adjectives**

Possessive adjectives are also part of the class of determiners. The possessive adjectives in English are: *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*.

## Phrase

A phrase is an important grouping of words within a sentence. Phrases can consist of one word or many. The constituents of a phrase center around a major part of speech within it. For example, noun phrases must contain a noun, verb phrases must contain at least a verb, etc.

- **Noun Phrase:**  
We watched *the two astronauts* on the moon.  
*All of the computers* were stolen.
- **Verb Phrase:**  
Nick *ate the two doughnuts*.  
The paint *looked* dull.
- **Adjective Phrase:**  
The *tall* building was on fire.  
Their program was *very complicated*.
- **Prepositional Phrase:**  
The roads *from Paris* were blocked.

Phrases often contain other phrases as smaller constituent syntactical units. Thus, the verb phrase *ate the two doughnuts* contains the verb *ate* and the smaller noun phrase *the two doughnuts*.

## Clause

A clause is a unit within a sentence that contains at least a subject and a verb. The two types of clauses are **independent** and **subordinate**. Independent clauses can stand as simple sentences since they are not introduced by a subordinating conjunction:

- *The shipment will be sent when the payment arrives.*
- *After the game, we went home.*

Subordinate clauses cannot stand alone and are introduced by subordinating conjunctions or relative pronouns.

- *We saw the Eiffel Tower, which is the tallest monument.*
- *Because it was Sunday, the shops were closed.*

## **Sentence**

A sentence is a group of words containing one or more clauses. At a minimum, then, a sentence must contain a subject and a verb.

## Question Words

Question words (interrogatives) are usually placed at the beginning of questions. There are three types of question words:

- **Interrogative Pronouns:** who, what  
*Who* would like to read this story?  
*What* is the answer?
- **Interrogative Adjectives:** whose, which, what  
*Whose* paper is this?  
*Which* candidate will win the election?  
*What* game did you buy?
- **Interrogative Adverbs:** when, where, why, how  
*When* is the party?  
*Where* does this road lead?  
*Why* did the witness leave?  
*How* will you bake the pies?

## Grammatical Terms

Agreement

Case

Comparison

Direct Object

Indirect Object

Mood

Morpheme

Subject

Tense

Voice

## Agreement

In English, pronouns are said to agree when they have the same gender, number, case, or person as the noun or noun phrase to which they refer.

- *The boys* bought the candy that *they* wanted. (*they* agrees in person and number with the noun phrase *the boys*: i.e. *they* is third person plural because the noun *boys* is third person plural.)

Verbs agree in person and number with their subject noun or noun phrase.

- Harold *hates* to study English but *likes* math. (The verbs *hates* and *likes* are singular in number because the subject, Harold, is singular.)



## Case

Case is a series of inflections (changes) undergone by nouns and pronouns to indicate their relationship to other words in the sentence. The English language does not have an elaborate system of case endings; the position of a word normally provides all the necessary information about its role within a sentence. Some languages, like German and Russian, have many different cases, and inflect adjectives (or articles) as well as nouns and pronouns. The English case system:

- **Nominative** (subject and predicate following a linking verb)  
*She* is a good student  
This is *she*.
- **Possessive** (ownership or relationship)  
*Dave's* modem was offline yesterday.  
The cakes belong to the *Women's* Auxiliary.  
They continued to talk despite *our* not hearing a word.
- **Objective**  
(Direct object) The governor will meet *him*.  
(Indirect object) We won't speak to *them*.  
(Object or preposition) The gift is from *us*.  
(Infinitive complement) He was expecting it to be *us*.

## Comparison

Qualifying adjectives and many adverbs can be compared in two ways. One way is to add *-er*, *-est* to the root word, e.g., **black** (positive), **blacker** (comparative), **blackest** (superlative). The second way is to precede the adjective or adverb with *more* or *most*, e.g., **importantly**, **more importantly** (comparative), **most importantly** (superlative).

## Direct Object

The direct object in a sentence is the recipient (noun or noun phrase) of the action performed by a transitive verb. It immediately follows the verb and is not linked to it by a preposition.

- Hancock signed *the Declaration of Independence*.
- The receiver caught *the football* with one hand.

## Indirect Object

Nouns or noun phrases that are the beneficiaries of actions performed by transitive verbs are called indirect objects. The normal position of the indirect object in a sentence is in a prepositional phrase (usually containing *to*) following the direct object:

- Mike sold his old car *to Bob*.

Many transitive verbs, such as *give* and *send*, allow repositioning of the indirect object to a slot immediately after the verb:

- I sent *her* my condolences.
- Alternatively: I sent my condolences *to her*.

## Mood

The mood of a verb indicates something about the speaker's attitude towards what is being asserted in the sentence. There are three kinds of mood:

- Indicative: The speaker assumes a degree of certainty or reality. The indicative mood is marked by tense and number endings of the verb.

Bob *takes* the trolley to work. (factual statement)  
Ellen *was* a nurse during the war. (assertion of truth)

- Subjunctive: There is a sense of conditionality, subjectivity, or unreality to what is being asserted.

I wouldn't feed that lion if I *were* you. (But I am not you!)  
The commission ruled that he *be* censured. (conditionality)

Verbs in the present subjunctive mood lack tense and number endings. Except for the verb to be, verbs in the past subjunctive look identical to their past indicative forms.

If I *took* the test, I could enter college early.

Another verbal mood is the **imperative**, or command form. It is the only type of verb in English that does not require a subject noun or noun phrase:

*Give* me that book!  
Always *tell* the truth!

## **Morpheme**

A morpheme is a minimal linguistic unit that has meaning. A morpheme cannot be broken down into smaller morphemes. Syllables, suffixes, and prefixes can be morphemes. The word *writing* contains two morphemes: *write* and *ing*. The possessive morpheme in English is 's. In the phrase *the teacher's notebook*, *teacher's* is composed of the morpheme *teach*, the suffix morpheme *er* and the possessive morpheme 's.

## Subject

The subject of a sentence is the noun or noun phrase that occurs immediately before the verb and leads or carries out the action or state indicated by the verb.

- *Nature* abhors a vacuum.
- *John and Mary* will get married next month.
- *She* retired last week.

## Tense

Tense is the change that occurs in verb form to express time. Simple tenses are made up of a single word. English has two simple tenses: present and past.

- **Present tense:** *I go, you sing, etc.*
- **Past tense:** *I went, you sang, etc.*

All other tenses in English are compound tenses:

- **Future tense:** *I will speak.*
- **Present perfect:** *I have spoken.*
- **Present emphatic:** *I do speak.*
- **Present progressive:** *I am speaking.*

The progressive tenses express an ongoing action in the present, future, or past.



## Voice

All English verbs are considered to be in a certain **voice**. Voice is the expression of how a subject is related to its verb. Two kinds of voice in English are **active** and **passive**. In **active** voice, the subject causes the action to take place:

- Mark is writing a paper on John Locke.
- The children play soccer every Saturday.

In **passive** voice, the subject is the recipient of the action:

- A paper on John Locke is being written *by Mark*.
- Hockey is played *by the children* every Saturday.

Sometimes the subject (agent) of the action may be omitted by the speaker:

- The plane was landed safely. (Omitted agent: *by the pilot*)

