



# Parts of Speech

## What are parts of speech?

They are eight categories of words defined in terms of their purpose, place, meaning, and use within sentences. The categories are: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

| Part of Speech                       | Definition                                                                                                                                           | Examples                                               |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Nouns</b>                         | Names persons, places, things, ideas, or qualities.                                                                                                  | teacher, Albany, basketball, proposal, pride           |
| <b>Pronouns</b>                      | Words that replace a noun that has already been mentioned.                                                                                           | I, you, him, her, me, this, that, they, which, she, he |
| <b>Verbs</b>                         | Words that convey action, a state of being, or existence.                                                                                            | walk, go, sing, are, seem, sleep                       |
| <b>Adjectives</b>                    | Words that describe nouns and pronouns.                                                                                                              | beautiful, green, angry, necessary                     |
| <b>Adverbs</b>                       | Words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They answer the questions: “When?”, “Where?”, “Why?”, “How?”, “How much?”, and “In what way?” | gracefully, very, too, loudly, finally                 |
| <b>Prepositions</b>                  | Words that link nouns or pronouns to other words within a sentence                                                                                   | on, in, over, under, within                            |
| <b>Conjunctions</b>                  | Words that link other words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.                                                                                      |                                                        |
| <b>a. Coordinating Conjunctions</b>  | Words that link independent clauses.                                                                                                                 | for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so                        |
| <b>b. Subordinating Conjunctions</b> | Words that link dependent clauses with independent clauses.                                                                                          | although, because, whether, while                      |
| <b>Interjections</b>                 | Words that are used as exclamations or to express feeling.                                                                                           | Hey! Oh! Darn! Wow!                                    |

## Parts of Sentences

### What are the parts of sentences?

They are categories of words or groups of words that make up a sentence. These categories are: subjects, predicates, objects, complements, phrases, and clauses.

| Part of Sentence                 | Definition                                                                                                                                       | Examples                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Subject</b>                   | Word or word group in a sentence that performs the action expressed in the predicate.                                                            | The <u>teacher</u> grades fairly.                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Predicate</b>                 | Word or word group that expresses a certain action or state of being.                                                                            | The students <u>worked very hard on their papers</u> .                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Object</b>                    | Nouns or pronouns that receive the action or complete the meaning of a verb.                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>a. Direct Objects</b>         | Receive the action or complete the meaning of a verb and answer the questions: “What?” or “Whom?”                                                | The professor wrote a <u>book</u> about the Civil War.<br><br>(i.e. wrote <i>what</i> ? Wrote a <i>book</i> ).                                                           |
| <b>b. Indirect Objects</b>       | Words that follow transitive verbs and come before direct objects. They answer the questions: “To what?”, “For whom?”, or “To whom?”             | The tutor gave <u>me</u> feedback that was helpful.<br><br>(i.e. gave feedback to <i>whom</i> ? Gave <i>me</i> feedback).                                                |
| <b>c. Object of Prepositions</b> | Nouns or pronouns that follow the preposition.                                                                                                   | The young boy ran in the <u>hall</u> .<br><br>( <i>in</i> is the preposition)                                                                                            |
| <b>Complements</b>               | Word or word group that completes the meaning of a subject, object, or verb.                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>a. Subject Complements</b>    | Subject modifiers that follow linking verbs. As nouns, they are known as predicate nouns. As adjectives, they are known as predicate adjectives. | She is an <u>engineer</u> . (predicate noun)<br><br>He was <u>discouraged</u> . (predicate adjective)                                                                    |
| <b>b. Object Complements</b>     | Modify or refer to the direct object.                                                                                                            | The town pronounced John a <u>hero</u> .                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>c. Verb Complements</b>       | The direct or indirect objects of a verb.                                                                                                        | Tutoring gives <u>students time</u> to reflect on their own work.<br>( <b>Students</b> is the indirect object and <b>time</b> is the direct object of the verb “gives.”) |

|                                           |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Phrases</b>                            | Group of related words without subjects or predicates.                                            |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>a. Prepositional Phrases</b>           | This consists of a preposition and an object, and is usually a modifier.                          | The animals slept <u>in the barn</u> .                                                                                                     |
| <b>b. Verb Phrases</b>                    | Phrases that consist of a verb and other words in the predicate of a sentence.                    | Joan and Ken <u>adopted a baby from Russia</u> .                                                                                           |
| <b>c. Verbal Phrases</b>                  | Phrases formed from a verbal (a word originating from a verb).                                    |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>i. Infinitive phrases</b>              | Phrases consisting of infinitives and objects, plus their modifiers.                              | She seemed <u>to enjoy the movie</u> the teacher played in class.<br><br>( <i>to enjoy</i> is the infinitive)                              |
| <b>ii. Participle phrases</b>             | Phrases consisting of participles, their objects, and modifiers. The phrases act as adjectives.   | I noticed the students <u>pretending to do their homework</u> were all in Mr. Smith's class.<br><br>( <i>pretending</i> is the participle) |
| <b>iii. Gerund phrases</b>                | Phrases consisting of gerunds, their objects, and modifiers. The phrases act as nouns.            | <u>Biking on a busy street</u> can be dangerous.<br><br>( <i>Biking</i> is the gerund)                                                     |
| <b>Clauses</b>                            | Related words containing subjects and predicates that are either sentences or parts of sentences. |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>a. Main (independent) clauses</b>      | Clauses that are able to stand alone in a sentence.                                               | The student completed his paper on time.                                                                                                   |
| <b>b. Subordinate (dependent) clauses</b> | Clauses that can't stand alone in a sentence.                                                     | The student completed his paper on time <u>because he started it early</u> .                                                               |

The following resources were consulted in the design of this handout:

Cogdill, Sharon and Judith Kilborn. "Parts of Speech and Parts of a Sentence." Literacy Education Online. October 5, 1999. The Write Place, St. Cloud State University. 17 October 2000.  
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/grammarcondensed.html> .

Harris, Muriel. *Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

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Designed by Emily Vachula