

PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives

The words you use every day are divided into eight *parts of speech*. *Nouns* and *pronouns* are two parts of speech that name persons or things. You use nouns and pronouns often when you write or speak.

You also use *adjectives* often. Adjectives help describe, or modify, nouns and pronouns.

This chapter presents various kinds of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives you can use. It shows their forms and their uses. It will give you practice in making good use of these three parts of speech.

NOUNS

1a A noun is a word or a group of words used to name someone or something.

Nouns may name living things, such as people, animals, or plants.

EXAMPLES Joe Wilkins, goalie, Lassie, petunias

Nouns may name nonliving things, such as earth, water, air, manufactured items, places, and even ideas.

EXAMPLES rocks, river, gas, locomotive, cities, envy

A word used to name any person or thing you can think of is called a noun.

EXERCISE 1 The following sentences contain nouns. Number a sheet of paper 1-8. Next to each number, write the nouns that appear in each sentence.

EXAMPLE Horses were useful to humans in ancient days.

horses, humans, days

1. Horses have been used by people for many years.
2. Horses were once a favorite food of the tribes of Asia and Europe.
3. Then it was discovered that the strength and speed of the horse could transport people and goods over distances.
4. The Egyptians and the Greeks used horses for work and for sport.
5. Some countries trained horses to carry soldiers into war.
6. The Spaniards first brought horses to America.

7. Until automobiles were invented, the horse was widely used in Europe, North America, and other parts of the world.

8. Horses are still used by farmers, police, and ranchers.

Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

(1) A common noun names a kind of person, place, or thing. A proper noun names a particular person, place, or thing.

Here are some examples.

COMMON NOUNS	PROPER NOUNS
house	White House
country	Egypt
man	Roosevelt
woman	Billie Jean
party	Republicans

Hint: A proper noun always begins with a capital letter.

If a proper noun is made up of more than one word, each important word begins with a capital letter.

EXAMPLES Lucille Jarvis, Griffith Park, Bank of the Midwest, Old Testament

EXERCISE 2 Write two headings at the top of a sheet of paper: *Common, Proper*. List the nouns at the top of the next page under the correct heading. Capitalize all the proper nouns.

twig, susanne walton, balcony, wheel, africa, paris, greed, datsun, television, washington, troy, summer, smoke, buick, michigan, cloud, world, sugar, argentina, people

Singular Nouns and Plural Nouns

1b A noun may be singular or plural.

A noun that names only one person or thing is *singular*. A noun that names more than one is *plural*.

EXAMPLES	SINGULAR NOUNS	PLURAL NOUNS
	home	homes
	pond	ponds
	idea	ideas

Most singular nouns add the letter *s* to form the plural. Other singular nouns that end in *s*, *x*, *ch*, *sh*, or *z* usually form the plural by adding *es*.

EXAMPLES gas/gases, hex/hexes, match/matches, sash/sashes, quiz/quizzes

[Note that some nouns double the *z* before adding *es*.]

Singular nouns that end in *y* with a consonant before it form the plural this way: The *y* changes to *i* and *es* is added.

EXAMPLES city, cities
country, countries

A few irregular nouns form the plural from the singular in different ways or do not change at all.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
goose	geese
ox	oxen
deer	deer
salmon	salmon

EXERCISE 3 Some of the following nouns are singular; others are plural. Number a sheet of paper 1-10 and rewrite each noun. Make the singular nouns plural and the plural nouns singular.

EXAMPLE tray

trays

1. pickle
2. army
3. ponies
4. playground
5. ax
6. branches
7. flies
8. buses
9. blouses
10. lady

Possessive Nouns

1c A noun can show that something else belongs to it or is related to it.

EXAMPLES the cat's paw, Marie's purse, Joe's classmate

When a noun shows this relationship, it is in the *possessive case*. The possessive case of most nouns is formed by adding an apostrophe (') and an *s*.

EXAMPLES girl's shoe, winter's storms, car's exhaust

Most plural nouns already end in s. They do not need another s to show possession. Only the apostrophe is needed.

EXAMPLES rabbits' tails, musicians' union, states' highways

Plural nouns that do not end in s form the possessive by adding the apostrophe and the s.

EXAMPLES women's clothes, children's toys

If two or more people own something together, put the possessive on the last name only.

EXAMPLE Tom and Jack's store

EXERCISE 4 The following sentences need a possessive case of the noun to fill the blanks. After each sentence is a noun in parentheses. Number a sheet of paper 1-10. After each number, write the correct possessive case of the noun to fill the blank.

EXAMPLE _____ science class has been studying the ocean. (Carla and Monte)

Carla and Monte's

1. They learned that the _____ gravity causes tides in the ocean. (moon)
2. Life along the shoreline is affected by the _____ actions. (tides)
3. A _____ food, for example, is brought up by the high tide. (barnacle)

4. Many _____ lives depend upon the tides. (creatures)
5. _____ project was to study life in tide pools. (Monte and Carla)
6. Carla borrowed her _____ car to drive to the shore. (mother)
7. Carla and Monte searched for pools along the _____ edge. (water)
8. While they were jumping along the rocks, _____ feet slipped on some seaweed. (Monte)
9. It was _____ quick help that saved him from falling into the ocean. (Carla)
10. The _____ trip brought them knowledge and adventure. (day)

Compound Nouns

A *compound noun* is two or more words used together as a single noun.

EXAMPLES baseball, footpaths, highway, great-grandmother

Some compound nouns are written as one word.

EXAMPLE footstep

Other compound nouns are written with hyphens.

EXAMPLE trade-ins

Still others are written as separate words.

EXAMPLE Chamber of Commerce

If you are not sure how to write a compound noun, look it up in a dictionary.

PRONOUNS

1d A pronoun is a word used to take the place of a noun or a noun word group.

Here are some common pronouns and the nouns for which they can stand.

PRONOUNS	NOUNS
I	(the person speaking or writing)
you	(the person[s] you are talking or writing to)
he	a man or boy
she	a woman or girl
it	a thing, such as a table, a seashell, a cloud, or an animal
we	a group of people including yourself

EXERCISE 5 Each of the following sentences has one or more pronouns in it. Number a sheet of paper 1-6. After each number, write the pronouns in the sentence.

EXAMPLE In the olden days, pirates buried treasure after they stole it.

they, it

1. I heard that Long Nose Nick buried gold bars on this island.
2. Before Long Nose Nick died, he drew this map.
3. Grandma found it when she was cleaning the attic.
4. You and I are standing near the place where Long Nose Nick buried the treasure.

5. We need to dig under that tree, for the map says that it marks the spot.
6. Since Grandma found the map, we should share the treasure with her.

Personal Pronouns

1e A personal pronoun stands for a noun or noun word group that names a particular person, place, or thing.

EXAMPLE The women at the club gave Jeff a trophy.
They gave *him* a trophy.

The pronoun *they* stands for the noun word group *the women at the club*. The pronoun *him* stands for *Jeff*.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Singular	Plural
I, me, my, mine	we, us, our, ours
you, your, yours	you, your, yours
he, him, his	they, them, their, theirs
she, her, hers	
it, its	

The use of a pronoun in a sentence determines its form. This is called its *case*. Some personal pronouns change case depending on how they are used. For example, the pronoun *I* changes to *me* if it receives the action of a sentence.

EXAMPLES *I* chase Prince around the yard.
[*I* shows who the actor is who chases Prince.]

PRONOUNS

EXAMPLE When people heard Bella's dream story, they did not believe Bella. (she)

When people heard Bella's dream story, they did not believe her.

1. She claimed that she would invade the earth and conquer the earth. (it)
2. Bella said strange soldiers from another planet were backing Bella. (she)
3. Bella had agreed to lead the soldiers. (they)
4. "Where are you going to lead the soldiers?" asked Bella's father. (they)
5. Bella said to her father that after another dream, she would tell her father. (he)

(3) The *possessive case* of the personal pronoun shows that something belongs to someone or something.

EXAMPLES *My* idea is as good as *yours*.

But, *their* plan is better than *ours*.

Some possessive pronouns modify nouns. When they do, they are often thought of as adjectives.

See Adjectives, pp. 16-17.

EXAMPLES *my* idea, *their* house

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Singular	Plural
my, mine	our, ours
your, yours	your, yours
his	their, theirs
her, hers	
it, its	

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Then Prince chases *me*.
[The word *me* shows who receives the action. *Prince* does the chasing.]

(1) The *subjective case* of the personal pronoun shows who is the actor of a sentence.

He eats a full meal each day.
I like to see Prince happy.

(2) The *objective case* of the personal pronoun shows the object or result of the sentence action.

EXAMPLES I feed *him* daily.
He makes *me* happy.

Here are subjective and objective case forms of personal pronouns.

SUBJECTIVE CASE OBJECTIVE CASE

	Singular	
I	me	
you	you	
he	him	
she	her	
it	it	
	Plural	
we	us	
you	you	
they	them	

EXERCISE 6 Each of these sentences is followed by a personal pronoun in parentheses. Rewrite each sentence. Take out the noun or noun word group that is underlined. Put in the personal pronoun in the objective case.

EXERCISE 7 Each of the following sentences has a blank in it and a personal pronoun in parentheses following it. Rewrite each sentence, putting in the possessive case of the pronoun.

EXAMPLE The bank teller saw the gun in _____ coat. (I)

*The bank teller saw the gun
in my coat.*

1. She pressed the alarm button next to _____ chair. (she)
2. Several police officers came out of _____ hiding places. (they)
3. They told me to put _____ hands in the air. (I)
4. A detective showed me _____ I.D. card and said I was under arrest. (he)
5. He told the teller, " _____ quick thinking saved the day." (You)
6. When he saw _____ I.D. card, the detective almost fell down. (I)
7. _____ words and numbers showed that I was a police officer, too. (it)
8. " _____ quick thinking might have ruined the day," I said. (She)
9. " _____ suspects left the bank while you were arresting me," I added. (We)
10. " _____ next robbery will not be at this bank," I said. (They)
11. The detective looked embarrassed as _____ face turned bright red. (he)
12. Then the three of _____ started laughing out loud at the big mix-up. (we)

Relative, Interrogative, and Indefinite Pronouns

Other kinds of pronouns are also used in speech and writing. Three main kinds are *relative pronouns*, *interrogative pronouns*, and *indefinite pronouns*.

Relative pronouns relate back to persons or things referred to earlier. Relative pronouns include *that*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, and *whose*.

EXAMPLES We saw the photo *that* won the prize.

The women *whose* car horn was stuck became angry.

Interrogative pronouns usually begin a question. Interrogative pronouns include *what*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, and *whose*.

EXAMPLES *What* do you want?
Which will fit?

Indefinite pronouns are used to name living or nonliving things. Indefinite pronouns include the following words:

all	more	each
another	most	either
any	nobody	much
anybody	none	neither
anyone	no one	some
anything	one	somebody
everybody	other	someone
everything	others	something
few	several	
many	both	

EXAMPLES *Much* needs to be done.
Nobody can do it.

EXERCISE 8 Each of the following sentences has one or more pronouns. Number a sheet of paper 1-8. Next to each number, write all the pronouns in the sentence.

EXAMPLE What is the most anybody can pay?

what, most, anybody

1. Mavis entered the gate which the others went through.
2. Everyone had something to say.
3. A few wanted to ride the loop-the-loop, which cost fifty cents.
4. "What does Mavis want to ride?" someone asked.
5. Mavis said that everybody should go on the same ride.
6. Some wanted to go on another.
7. No one could agree with what others wanted to do.
8. Who would decide on something for everybody?

ADJECTIVES

1f An adjective is a word used to modify or describe a noun or a pronoun.

An adjective tells *what kind*, *which one*, *how much*, or *how many*.

ADJECTIVES

EXAMPLES

what kind a *wild* dog a *broken* axle
which one a *thin* man the *oldest* tree
how much or
how many *high* water *some* icebergs

The words *a*, *an*, and *the* are special adjectives. They are called *articles*.

EXERCISE 9 Copy the following sentences. Circle the nouns, then underline the adjectives. Draw an arrow from each adjective to the noun it describes. Do not underline the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*.

EXAMPLE I, Reginald, heard the noise of tiny feet in the darkness.

I, Reginald, heard the noise of tiny feet in the darkness.

1. Then there was a small squeak.
2. So the fancy traps had not worked after all!
3. A little thief was still sneaking around the quiet house.
4. Then I saw a small shadow race across the bright hallway.
5. The nasty mouse darted under the large clock and hid there.
6. But my sharp eyes had seen it.
7. The mouse could never make the long run to the kitchen.
8. And I now stood between it and the dark room.

ADJECTIVES

EXAMPLES POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
tough	tougher	toughest
short	shorter	shortest
wild	wilder	wildest

EXERCISE 10 Each of the following sentences is followed by an adjective in parentheses. Number a sheet of paper 1-10. Next to each number, write the positive, comparative, or superlative form of the adjective that belongs in the blank.

EXAMPLE Cecelia has the _____ hair of any girl in school. (long)

longest

1. An alligator has _____ skin. (rough)
2. New York has the _____ buildings I have ever seen. (tall)
3. Wyoming has the _____ skies of any state in this country. (blue)
4. She had the _____ eyes of any girl I have met. (green)
5. Godzilla was a _____ monster than Frankenstein. (large)
6. Her hair was _____ than other hair I had seen. (thin)
7. That game of checkers was the _____ game we ever played. (long)
8. The eclipse in November was a _____ one than the eclipse in December. (dark)
9. This computer is the _____ machine our company has ever designed. (smart)
10. Our computer, made in the shape of a pumpkin, is still a _____ calculator. (fast)

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9. When the mouse moved, I would catch it with my strong paws.
10. The little mouse would take the place of stale, old cat food.

Most adjectives come in front of the nouns they modify. However, some adjectives are placed after the noun. These adjectives complete the description of a noun and are called *adjective completers*.

EXAMPLE Marianne is *honest*.

Comparison of Adjectives

1g An adjective may change form to show how one thing compares with another.

When comparing two things, most adjectives change from the *positive form* to the *comparative form*.

EXAMPLE

POSITIVE FORM This light bulb is *bright*.

COMPARATIVE FORM That bulb is *brighter*.

Most adjectives add *er* to show the comparative.

EXAMPLES	POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE
	bold	bolder
	small	smaller
	young	younger
	soft	softer

To compare three or more things, most adjectives change form again. They add *est*, as in *bold*, *bolder*, *boldest*. The *est* form is called the *superlative form*.

If an adjective is a long word, it usually does not add **er** and **est** in the comparative and superlative forms. Instead, the words *more* and *most* are used in front of the positive form.

EXAMPLES

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
desirable	more desirable	most desirable
dependable	more dependable	most dependable
exciting	more exciting	most exciting

Irregular Adjectives

A few adjectives do not form the comparative and superlative forms in either of the ways shown. These adjectives are called *irregular adjectives*. Here are forms of common irregular adjectives.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
many much	more	most

EXERCISE 11 Each of the following sentences is followed by an adjective in parentheses. Number a sheet of paper 1-10. After each number write the correct form of the adjective in the blank.

EXAMPLE The floorboards in the haunted house made the _____ noise I had ever heard. (frightening)

most frightening

REVIEW EXERCISES

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- Next, the lights went out, leaving it _____ than it had been before. (dark)
- Then the _____ thing of all happened. (unusual)
- A voice spoke to me in the _____ whisper possible. (quiet)
- "It's _____ than you think," the voice seemed to whisper right in my ear. (late)
- "It will get _____ for you every minute." (bad)
- "Certainly you are _____ than this poor fool!" (intelligent)
- Suddenly there was a flash and the _____ crash of thunder I have ever heard. (loud)
- Hanging in the _____ part of the room was a skeleton. (high)
- I have never been _____ than at that moment. (terrified)
- The haunted house at the carnival was the _____ way to spend a quarter that I have ever found. (good)

REVIEW EXERCISE A Common and Proper Nouns

Number a sheet of paper 1-10. After each number write the common nouns in that sentence. Then rewrite the sentence, substituting a proper noun for each common noun.

EXAMPLE When I last saw her, that woman was riding on a motorcycle.

woman, motorcycle
last saw her, Mabel was riding on a Honda.

1. I was surprised to see the woman driving a huge car.
2. She drove right up to my school.
3. She got out of the car and munched on some fruit.
4. When a dog came by, she gave him some food that she had bought in a store.
5. Having fed herself and the dog, she got back in her car and drove off toward the ocean.
6. She stopped at the beach and looked out at a point of land.
7. Then she took out a magazine and began to read an article.
8. She and the author had gone to college together.
9. They had belonged to a club together.
10. As the woman drove down the street, she felt that she had had a busy day.

REVIEW EXERCISE B Singular and Plural Nouns

Number a sheet of paper 1-15. Rewrite each of the following nouns. Make the singular nouns plural and the plural nouns singular. You may want to use a dictionary.

EXAMPLE dictionary

ictionaries

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. herb | 6. soprano | 11. vertebrae |
| 2. physiquies | 7. auras | 12. plateau |
| 3. calves | 8. obituaries | 13. tomato |
| 4. diagnoses | 9. lullaby | 14. alleys |
| 5. knife | 10. octopuses | 15. parodies |

REVIEW EXERCISES

REVIEW EXERCISE C Possessive Case of Nouns

Number a sheet of paper 1-10. After each number write the correct possessive case of the noun to fill in the blank.

EXAMPLE A _____ liver is an important source of oil. shark

shark's

1. Marine specialists at the University of _____ Sea Grant College think people should learn to eat sharks. California
2. In _____ bulletin, one specialist, John Torres, even gave a recipe for oven-fried shark. February
3. A _____ meat, he says, is nutritional and economical. shark
4. Dr. _____ recipe uses salt, milk, and bread-crumbs on shark fillets. Torres
5. He says that what _____ menus sometimes call grayfish is really shark. restaurants
6. He tried an experiment to test _____ prejudices against shark meat. people
7. He invited fifty members of a neighboring _____ 4-H Club to a cookout. town
8. The club members ate the _____ catch of shark meat. day
9. The _____ reactions pleased Dr. Torres. members
10. Not knowing what they were eating, they enjoyed the _____ tender goodness. meat

REVIEW EXERCISE D Pronouns

Number a sheet of paper 1-10. After each number write the pronouns in that sentence.

EXAMPLE Has anyone told you about the curse of King Tut's tomb?

anyone, you

1. King Tutankhamun, who died in Egypt about 3,000 years ago, was buried with great wealth.
2. He became king when he was a child.
3. All of the wealth buried with him was his to use after death.
4. In 1923, an archeologist who had been searching for King Tut's tomb for several years found it.
5. When he looked into the tomb, he saw riches that had been buried for 3,000 years.
6. They included furniture, jewelry, and images of animals that the king had hunted.
7. The goddess Selk stretched her arms toward the dead king to guide him.
8. For 3,000 years she did the job given to her.
9. After the discovery a rumor spread that the tomb had a curse on it.
10. No one with good sense believed it, though.

REVIEW EXERCISE E Adjectives

The adjectives in the following sentences are underlined. Number a sheet of paper 1-10. Copy each adjective. Then write the word or words that it modifies.

REVIEW EXERCISES

EXAMPLE Ramon saw an ugly dog in the empty lot.

empty, lot ugly, dog

1. On a pleasant May morning in 1850, a wagon train from Salt Lake City stopped for a few minutes in the cool shade by the Carson River.
2. A small stream was flowing there from a range of high hills.
3. A young man felt bored in the quiet morning.
4. He took a small pan down to the little stream.
5. When he had washed away the worthless sand and gravel, he found glittering gold in his pan.
6. That young miner never became rich.
7. In later years, though, many miners made huge fortunes by that stream.
8. The rich Nevada soil was mined first by local miners.
9. One miner gave an old blind horse as payment for a small piece of land.
10. In the first day after he had bought the land, he found \$5,000 in valuable gold and silver.

REVIEW EXERCISE F Pronoun or Adjective

Number a sheet of paper 1-5. After each number write the underlined word or words in that sentence. Tell whether each word is used as a pronoun or as an adjective.

EXAMPLE Some miners lost their claims.

*Some, adjective
their, adjective*

1. Both Snowshoe Thompson and James Jinney were early miners in Nevada.
2. Neither became rich, but both enjoyed the satisfaction of finding gold.
3. Snowshoe crossed the Sierra Nevada many times on snowshoes.
4. Using this method he could cross the snow carrying eighty pounds of mail.
5. Few people could stand the cold that he could stand.