

ENGLISH PARTS OF SPEECH

English Parts of Speech

There are eight different English parts of speech, but before we continue any further...

What is a Part of Speech?

A part of speech is a group of words that are used in a certain way. For example, "run," "jump," and "be" are all used to describe actions/states. Therefore they belong to the VERBS group.

In other words, all words in the English language are divided into eight different categories. Each category has a different role/function in the sentence.

The English parts of speech are:

Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections.

Same Word – Several Parts of Speech

In the English language many words are used in more than one way. This means that a word can function as several different parts of speech.

For example, in the sentence "I would like a drink" the word "drink" is a noun. However, in the sentence "They drink too much" the word "drink" is a verb. So it all depends on the word's role in the sentence.

Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, a place or a thing.

Examples: Sarah, lady, cat, New York, Canada, room, school, football, reading.

Example sentences:

People like to go to the **beach**.

Emma passed the **test**.

My **parents** are traveling to **Japan** next **month**.

The word "noun" comes from the Latin word nomen, which means "name," and nouns are indeed how we name people, places and things.

Abstract Nouns

An **Abstract noun** is a noun that names an idea, not a physical thing.

Examples: Hope, interest, love, peace, ability, success, knowledge, trouble.

Concrete Nouns

A **concrete noun** is a noun that names a physical thing.

Examples: Boy, table, floor, coffee, beach, king, rain, children, professor.

Common Nouns

A **common noun** is a noun that names a general thing, not a specific thing.

Examples: Boy, girl, city, country, company, planet, location, war.

Proper Nouns

A **proper noun** is a noun that indicates the specific name of a thing. It begins with a capital letter.

Examples: Robin, Alice, London, Sweden, Google, Earth, Eiffel Tower, Civil War.
(Compare these examples to ones in the "Common nouns" section to see the difference.)

Countable Nouns

A **countable noun** is a noun that indicates something you could actually count.

For example: you could count boys: one boy, two boys, three boys...

However, you couldn't count water: one water, two water – no, it doesn't work...

A countable noun has both a singular and a plural form, and it can be used with the indefinite articles (a/an).

Examples: Window, teacher, tree, lion, eye, cloud, pencil, heart, movie.

Uncountable Nouns

An **uncountable noun** is a noun that indicates something you cannot count.

For example: you could count boys: one boy, two boys, three boys...

However, you couldn't count water: one water, two water – no, it doesn't work...

An uncountable noun has only one form (no plural), and it cannot be used with the indefinite articles (a/an).

Examples: Furniture, advice, mail, news, equipment, luggage, work, coffee, information.

Pronouns

A **pronoun** is a word that is used instead of a noun. For example, you could say, "Lisa is a nice girl."

Then you could replace the noun "Lisa" with the word "She" and get the following sentence: "She is a nice girl."

"She" is a pronoun.

Examples: I, he, it, we, them, us, mine, itself.

Example sentences:

He doesn't want to go with **them**.

Would **they** help **us**?

His house is bigger than **ours**.

Who is **she**?

The word "pronoun" comes from "pro" (in the meaning of "substitute") + "noun."

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns represent people or things. The personal pronouns are: I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, him, her, us, them.

Demonstrative Pronouns

"Demonstrative" means "showing, making something clear."

Demonstrative pronouns point to things. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, that, these, those.

Use "this" and "these" to talk about things that are near in space or in time.

Use "that" and "those" to talk about things that are farther away in space or time.

Example sentences :

This cannot go on.

That was beautiful!

He wanted **those**, but decided to compromise on **these**.

Interrogative Pronouns

"Interrogative" means "used in questions."

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions. The interrogative pronouns are: who, whom, which, what, whoever, whatever, etc.

Use "who" and "whom" to talk about people.

Use "which" and "what" to talk about animals and things.

Example sentences:

Who is your father?

Whom did you speak to?

Which bag did you buy?

What are my choices?

Possessive Pronouns

"Possessive" means "showing ownership."

Possessive pronouns indicate that something belongs to somebody/something. The possessive pronouns are: my, your, his, her, its, our, their, mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs.

Example sentences:

I've lost **my** wallet.

He married **his** girlfriend.

This place is **theirs**.

Is that cat **yours**?

My car is slow. **Hers** is much faster.

Relative Pronouns

"Relative" means "connected with something."

Relative pronouns are pronouns that link different parts of a sentence. The relative pronouns are: who, whom, which, that, whoever, etc.

Examples sentences:

The girl **who** called yesterday came to see you.

The teacher **whom** you wrote has answered your questions.

She lives in Kiev, **which** is the capital city of Ukraine.

I really liked the book **that** you gave me.

Reflexive Pronouns

"Reflexive" means "going back to itself."

Reflexive pronouns show that the action affects the person who performs the action. Reflexive pronouns end in "-self" (singular) or "-selves" (plural). Reflexive pronouns are: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves.

Example sentences:

He cut **himself** while shaving.

I sent **myself** to bed.

He could hurt **himself**!

We must help **ourselves**.

She trusts **herself**.

Intensive Pronouns

"Intensive" means "giving force or emphasis."

An intensive pronoun is a pronoun used for emphasis. In other words, intensive pronouns emphasize the subject of the sentence. They are written exactly the same way as the reflexive pronouns, but their function is different.

I myself baked the cake.

The queen **herself** recommended this restaurant.

Have you **yourself** been there?

The project **itself** wasn't difficult.

We will do it **ourselves**.

Reciprocal Pronouns

Reciprocal means that two people or groups do the same thing to each other. They treat each other in the same way.

For example: Joe loves Kate, and Kate loves Joe. So we can say, "Kate and Joe love each other."

Another example: Mike helps Lucy, and Lucy helps Mike. So we can say, "Mike and Lucy help each other."

There are two reciprocal pronouns in English:

Each other and **one another**.

The cat and the dog like **each other**.

The two politicians hate **each other**.

We must stop fighting **one another**.

They gave **each other** Christmas presents.

They can't hear **one another**.

Indefinite Pronouns

"Indefinite" means "not exact, not limited."

Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that do not refer to any specific person or thing.

Examples:

Anything, everybody, another, each, few, many, none, some.

Example sentences:

Many have died during the war.

Can **anyone** call her?

Everybody wants to see you.

Something can be done to help.

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes a person or thing.

Examples : Big, pretty, expensive, green, round, French, loud, quick, fat.

Example sentences:

He has **big blue** eyes.

The **new** car broke down.

The **old** lady was talking in a **quiet** voice.

The word "adjective" comes from the Latin word jacere, which means "to throw."

Different Types of adjectives

Adjectives can be divided into several types:

Opinion : Nice, pretty, stupid, original, expensive, etc.

Size : Big, small, large, tiny, enormous, little, etc.

Age : Young, old, new, ancient, antique, etc.

Shape : Round, square, flat, straight, etc.

Color : Blue, red, white, black, dark, bright, yellowish, etc.

Origin : Italian, British, Mexican, western, southern, etc.

Material : Metal, wooden, plastic, golden, etc.

Determiners : A determiner is a word that comes before a noun to show which person or thing you are talking about.

Examples : A, an, the, my, your, some, any, several, enough, any.

Example sentences:

I have a red hat.

Please give me **my** bag.

Some people decided to leave.

She doesn't want **any** money.

They watched **several** movies.

Some people consider determiners to be a type of adjective. What's special about determiners is that you usually can use only one determiner at a time.

Incorrect: He has **the my** ticket.

Correct: He has **my** ticket / He has **the** ticket.

Nouns that act like adjectives

Sometimes nouns function as adjectives. In other words, they come before another noun and describe it.

Examples:

Sports car

Orange juice

Television station

Coffee shop

Book cover

The order of adjectives

A noun can have several adjectives describing it.

Examples:

"She bought a new red Italian table."

"He is a great, successful father."

There are certain rules on the correct order of those adjectives.

This is the order you should generally follow:

Determiner -> opinion -> size -> age -> shape -> color
-> origin -> material -> a word describing purpose/function

Examples:

A nice little coffee shop

(Determiner -> opinion -> size -> purpose/function word)

My huge new swimming pool

(Determiner -> size -> age -> purpose/function word)

Several Chinese plastic cups

(Determiner -> origin -> material)

The round yellow ball

(Determiner -> shape -> color)

Adjectives of the same type:

When you have several adjectives of the same type, you should separate them with commas or a conjunction (and, but).

Examples:

A cheap, good meal

A happy, smart man

The beautiful, original painting

My nice and sweet cat

An expensive but important trip

Comparative adjectives

"Comparative" means "comparing something to something else."

Comparative adjective show us which thing is better, worse, stronger, weaker, and so forth.

Examples: Better, worse, bigger, smaller, nicer, fatter, thinner, more dangerous.

Example sentences:

She is a **better** student than her brothers.

The test was **worse** than I'd expected.

You are **stronger** than me.

He seems **healthier**.

You are **more beautiful** than her.

Superlative adjectives

"Superlative" means "of the highest degree."

Superlative adjectives show us which thing is the best, the strongest, and so forth.

Examples: Best, worst, strongest, smallest, cheapest, most expensive.

Example sentences:

You are my **best** friend.

This is the **worst** day of my life.

Even the **smallest** donation helps.

This is the **most expensive** restaurant I've ever heard of.

Verbs

A verb is a word or group of words that express an action or a state.

Examples: Go, jump, sleep, eat, think, be, change, become, drive, complete.

Example sentences:

We **had** a nice lunch.

I **think** that he is right.

He **drove** for hours.

The word "verb" comes for the Latin word verbum, which means "word."

Auxiliary Verbs (also called "helping verbs

Auxiliary verbs are verbs that are used together with the main verb of the sentence to express the action or state.

Main verb + auxiliary verb = complete idea

The main auxiliary verbs are : be, am, is, are, was, were, do, did, have, has, had.

Example sentences (the auxiliary verb is in bold, and the main verb is underlined):

They **are** jogging.

She **was** sitting.

We **were** waiting for hours.

Is she sleeping?

He **didn't** know the answer.

We **have** gone a long way.

Has she received any of my letters?

Do you smoke?

Will she help?

Compound Verbs

A compound verb = auxiliary verb + main verb.

Examples: was playing, has eaten, doesn't want.

They **were discussing** their future.

He **didn't tell** us the truth.

I **have finished** my homework.

She **will meet** us there.

Stative Verbs

[Click here for the complete illustrated page on stative verbs and dynamic verbs.](#)

Stative verbs are verbs that express a state rather than an action.

Examples : be, seem, love, own, want, sound, have, know, understand.

Examples sentences:

She **is** a great wife.

He **seems** rather strange.

He **wanted** to see you.

That **sounds** awesome!

We **have** enough things to do.

Stative verbs are usually not used in the progressive tenses.

Examples:

Incorrect: He is wanting to see you.

Correct: He wants to see you.

Incorrect: I am knowing what to do.

Correct: I know what to do.

Incorrect: They are seeming nice.

Correct: They seem nice.

However, if the same verb is used to describe an actual action (not a state), then it can be used in the progressive tenses.

Example: When the verb "have" means "own" – it is a state. So we do not use it in the progressive tenses.

Incorrect: I am having a laptop.

Correct: I have a laptop.

When the verb "have" means "eat" – it is an actual action. So we can use it in the progressive tenses.

Correct: I am having lunch with Kate.

Correct: I have lunch with Kate.

Dynamic Verbs

Dynamic verbs are the opposite of stative verbs. They express a real action.

Examples: Jump, swim, catch, write, call, sleep, hit, open, speak.

Example sentences:

They **swam** to the other side.

She **hit** me on the head!

Open the window, please.

The dynamic verbs can be used in the progressive tenses.

Correct: He is drinking water.

Correct: He drinks water.

Regular Verbs

Regular verbs are verbs that follow this rule:

Past form of the verb = present form of the verb + ed / d.

Examples:

Past form of "check" = check + ed = checked.

Past form of "open" = open + ed = opened.

Past form of "bake" = bake + d = baked.

There are certain rules to adding "d" or "ed" to a verb. Read about them in the Regular Verbs and Irregular Verbs section.

Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb that is combined with an adverb or a preposition. The combination creates a new meaning.

Examples:

Run = to move very quickly with your legs. ("She can run fast!")

Into = in the direction of something. ("He looked into my eyes.")

Run into = to meet someone by accident. ("I ran into Joe yesterday.")

Make = to create or do something. ("He made a lot of noise.")

Up = to a higher point. ("Look up!")

Make up = invent (a story, an excuse). ("It never happened. He made the whole thing up!")

Put = to place something somewhere. ("Could you put this upstairs?")

Up = to a higher point. ("Look up!")

With = concerning ("She is happy with her workplace.")

Put up with = to tolerate. ("I cannot put up with his behavior any more!")

An adverb is a word that describes or gives more information about a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or even the entire sentence.

Adverbs usually answer the following questions:

Where? **Home**. ("I went home.")

When? **Yesterday**. ("We met yesterday.")

How? **Slowly**. ("The turtle moves slowly.")

How often? **Sometimes**. ("Sometimes it stops responding.")

How long? **Temporarily**. ("She is staying with us temporarily.")

How likely? **Surely**. ("Our team will surely win!")

To what degree? **Very**. ("She was very pleased.")

An adverb can describe a verb:

She runs quickly.

An adverb can describe an adjective:

She is so beautiful.

An adverb can describe another adverb:

She smokes very rarely.

An adverb can describe an entire sentence:

Naturally, you don't have to come.

The word "adverb" comes from the Latin ad- (in addition) and verbum (word).

In many cases (but not always!) adverbs have the following form: Adjective + "-ly"

Examples:

- Quick + ly = **quickly**
- Strange + ly = **strangely**
- Dead + ly = **deadly**
- Sudden + ly = **suddenly**
- Clever + ly = **cleverly**
- Brave + ly = **bravely**
- Real + ly = **really**

When an adjective ends with "y" replace the "y" with an "i":

- Heavy + ly = heav*i* + ly = **heavily**
- Happy + ly = happ*i* + ly = **happily**

When the adjective ends with an "e" drop the "e":

- True + ly = tru + ly = **truly**

However, there are many adverbs that do not end in "-ly":

Fast, very, hard, home, just, too, well, never, sometimes, and so forth.

We can divide English adverbs into several categories:

- Adverbs of degree, adverbs of manner, adverbs of place,
- adverbs of time, adverbs of frequency, adverbs of duration,
- adverbs of probability, comparative adverbs and superlative adverbs.

Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree show us the strength or degree of the action or state. They answer the following questions:

How much? To what degree?

Examples: Very, highly, totally, perfectly, partially, almost.

Example sentences:

He is **very** concerned with you.

You are **totally** right.

We **almost** made it to the train.

Adverbs of manner

Adverbs of manner show us the way the action is done. They answer the following question:

How?

Examples : Well, badly, nicely, slowly, loudly, quietly, happily, sadly, secretly, weakly.

Example sentences:

He handled the situation **well**.

She listened **secretly** to their conversation.

The children ran **happily** to their father.

Adverbs of place

Adverbs of place show us the location of the action or state. They answer the following question:

Where?

Examples:

Home, here, there, outside, inside, away, around, anywhere, abroad, up, down, out.

Example sentences:

We are **here**.

He went **home**.

We found him **outside**.

She looked **up**.

Adverbs of time

Adverbs of time show us the time of the action or state. They answer the following question:

When?

Examples: Now, soon, later, yesterday, tomorrow, early, before, lately, recently.

Example sentences:

Let's talk **now**.

I will do it **later**.

He promised to write back **soon**.

What are you doing **tomorrow**?

We haven't met **before**.

Adverbs of frequency

Adverbs of frequency show us the frequency of the action or state. They answer the following question:

How often?

Examples: Always, never, sometimes, often, rarely, usually, occasionally.

Example sentences:

I **always** brush my teeth after a meal.

We **often** meet and chat.

He is **usually** here on time.

Adverbs of duration

Adverbs of duration show us the length of the action or state. They answer the following question:

For how long?

Examples: Forever, constantly, temporarily, briefly.

Example sentences:

He is working there **temporarily**.

We spoke **briefly**.

I will be **forever** grateful.

Adverbs of probability

Adverbs of probability show us the chances for the action or state to happen. They answer the following question:

How likely?

Examples: Certainly, maybe, probably, possibly, surely.

Example sentences:

She will **certainly** forget about it.

Maybe we'll come after all.

It will **probably** not work.

Surely you are not serious!

Comparative adverbs

"Comparative" means "comparing something to something else." Comparative adverbs show us which action or state is better, worse, stronger, weaker, and so forth.

Examples: more, less, better, worse, faster, slower, farther, closer.

Example sentences:

Maggie works out **more** seriously than Donna.

She eats **less** than her friends.

You are **better** than this.

We couldn't go **slower** even if we wanted to.

Let's get **closer**.

Superlative adverbs

"Superlative" means "of the highest degree."

Superlative adverbs show us which action or state is the best, the strongest, and so forth.

Examples: Best, most, least, worst, strongest, fastest, slowest.

Example sentences:

He knows **best**.

It was the **most** boring experience.

He shouted the **loudest** so he won.

He ran the **slowest** so he lost.

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that is used before a noun or a pronoun to connect it to another word in the sentence. It is usually used to show location, direction, time, and so forth.

Examples: On, in, at, by, under, above, beside, to, out, from, for.

Example sentences:

I sat **on** the floor.

Let's go **into** the house.

We will meet **at** four o'clock.

Have a look **under** the couch.

He went **to** school.

This letter is **for** you.

The word "preposition" comes from the Latin word *praeponere* (put before). So prepositions usually come before the noun/pronoun.

Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that joins parts of a sentence together.

Examples: And, but, or, because, so.

Example sentences:

I want to come, **but** I can't.

She is smart **and** beautiful.

Would you like a cat **or** a dog?

He didn't pass the test **because** he didn't understand the subject.

We were hungry, **so** we ordered pizza.

The word "conjunction" comes from the Latin word *conjungere* (join together).

Interjections

An interjection is a short sound, word or phrase used to express the speaker's emotion.

Examples: Oh! Look out! Ow! Hey! Wow! Ah! Um...

Example sentences:

Wow, that's amazing!

Ah, that was a good meal.

Um... I'm not sure what to say.

Oh dear! What happened?

Hello! How are you doing?

Well, that's an option too.

The word "interjection" comes from the Latin word *interjicere* (throw between).

Summary Table

| Part of Speech | Explanation | Examples |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| Nouns | A word that names a person, a place or a thing | Boy, Sam, cat, Paris |
| Pronouns | A word that is used instead of a noun | He, my, yourself |
| Adjectives | A word that describes a person or thing | pretty, easy, fat |
| Verbs | A word or group of words that express an action or a state | go, jump, be, think |
| Adverbs | A word that describes or gives more information about a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or even the entire sentence | quickly, tomorrow, outside |
| Prepositions | A word that is used before a noun or a pronoun to connect it to another word in the sentence. It is usually used to show location, direction, time, and so forth. | on, in, to, from, of |
| Conjunctions | A word that joins parts of a sentence together | and, or, but |
| Interjections | A short sound, word or phrase used to express the speaker's emotion. | Wow, hmm, well, oh dear |

So that was the explanation on the English parts of speech. Now let's practice!