



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
Nouns	Names persons, places, things, ideas, or qualities.	teacher, Albany, basketball, proposal, pride
Pronouns	Words that replace a noun that has already been mentioned.	I, you, him, her, me, this, that, they, which, she, he
Verbs	Words that convey action, a state of being, or existence.	walk, go, sing, are, seem, sleep
Adjectives	Words that describe nouns and pronouns.	beautiful, green, angry, necessary
Adverbs	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
Prepositions	Words that link nouns or pronouns to other words within a sentence	on, in, over, under, within
Conjunctions	Words that link other words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.	
a. Coordinating Conjunctions	Words that link independent clauses.	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
b. Subordinating Conjunctions	Words that link dependent clauses with independent clauses.	although, because, whether, while
Interjections	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
Subject	Word or word group in a sentence that performs the action expressed in the predicate.	The <u>teacher</u> grades fairly.
Predicate	Word or word group that expresses a certain action or state of being.	The students <u>worked very hard on their papers</u> .
Object	Nouns or pronouns that receive the action or complete the meaning of a verb.	
a. Direct Objects	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. (i.e. wrote <i>what</i> ? Wrote a <i>book</i>).
b. Indirect Objects	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. (i.e. gave feedback to <i>whom</i> ? Gave <i>me</i> feedback).
c. Object of Prepositions	Nouns or pronouns that follow the preposition.	The young boy ran in the <u>hall</u> . (<i>in</i> is the preposition)
Complements	Word or word group that completes the meaning of a subject, object, or verb.	
a. Subject Complements	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) He was <u>discouraged</u> . (predicate adjective)
b. Object Complements	Modify or refer to the direct object.	The town pronounced John a <u>hero</u> .
c. Verb Complements	The direct or indirect objects of a verb.	Tutoring gives <u>students time</u> to reflect on their own work. (Students is the indirect object and time is the direct object of the verb "gives.")

Phrases	Group of related words without subjects or predicates.	
a. Prepositional Phrases	This consists of a preposition and an object, and is usually a modifier.	The animals slept <u>in the barn</u> .
b. Verb Phrases	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> .
c. Verbal Phrases	Phrases formed from a verbal (a word originating from a verb).	
i. Infinitive phrases	Phrases consisting of infinitives and objects, plus their modifiers.	She seemed <u>to enjoy the movie</u> the teacher played in class. (<i>to enjoy</i> is the infinitive)
ii. Participle phrases	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. (<i>pretending</i> is the participle)
iii. Gerund phrases	Phrases consisting of gerunds, their objects, and modifiers. The phrases act as nouns.	<u>Biking on a busy street</u> can be dangerous. (<i>Biking</i> is the gerund)
Clauses	Related words containing subjects and predicates that are either sentences or parts of sentences.	
a. Main (independent) clauses	Clauses that are able to stand alone in a sentence.	The student completed his paper on time.
b. Subordinate (dependent) clauses	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*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

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