Glossary of Grammatical Terms



absolute construction: a word or phrase which modifies the sentence as a whole, not any single element

The cattle having been branded, the cowboys saddled up and rode off.

abstract nouns: nouns that refer to ideas, qualities, generalized concepts, and conditions and that do not have plural forms

happiness, pride, furniture, trouble, sincerity

active voice: see voice

adjective: a word which modifies a noun or a pronoun *The old man walked across the narrow street.*

There are three forms of adjectives:

- positive adjectives: red, clean, beautiful, offensive
- comparative adjectives (for comparing two things): redder, cleaner, more beautiful, less offensive
- superlative adjectives (for comparing more than two things): reddest, cleanest, most beautiful, least beautiful

adjectival clause: a dependent clause serving an adjective function (we can learn more about a noun or pronoun in the sentence). Adjective clauses start with the following words: who, which, that, those, whom

The woman, who performed at the opera, lives next door to me.

adjectival phrase: a word or group of words that functions as an adjective dull, exceedingly dull, so very dull, the men who are dull

adverb: a word which modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb *The car moved slowly in very heavy traffic.*

There are three forms of adverbs:

- positive adverbs: fast, graceful, awkward
- comparative adverbs (for comparing two things): faster, more graceful, less awkward

 superlative adverbs (for comparing more than two things): fastest, most graceful, least awkward

adverbial clause: a dependent clause serving an adverbial function (we can learn more about other verbs, adjectives, or adverbs in a sentence or another clause)

Common adverbial clauses include:

- comparison as...as; as...than I can't run as fast as I used to.
- concession though, although, even if

 Although I had a good time, I was happy to leave.
- condition see conditional sentences
- **purpose** so as to, in order to, so that, in order that We are going to France to learn French.
- reason because, since

They turned on the lights because it was too dark.

• result so...that, such...that

He spoke so fast that no one understood a thing.

• time - when, as, while, until, as soon as

As soon as he lit his cigar, people began to leave the room

adverbs of frequency (frequency adverbs): adverbs used to express approximately how often a customary or habitual action or condition is repeated

These include (in declining frequency):

- affirmatives: always, usually, frequently, often, sometimes, occasionally
- negatives: seldom, rarely, hardly ever, never
- interrogative: ever

adverbs of manner (manner adverbs): adverbs usually formed by adding —ly to related adjectives. Irregular manner adverbs do not end in —ly and are the same as their adjective equivalents

regular: quick \rightarrow quickly irregular: hard \rightarrow hard

adverbial: a word (an adverb) or a group of words (an adverbial phrase or clause) which modifies or tells us something about the sentence or the verb

He works in a large university.

It rained very hard.

He was happy when his friend arrived.

Note: the word *adverbial* is also used as an adjective, meaning 'having the same function as an adverb'

adverbial clause: see adverb clause

adverbial phrase: see adverb clause

affix: is a morpheme (smallest lingual unit that carries meaning) that is attached to a base morpheme such as a root or to a stem to form a word

Affixes are divided into several types, depending on their position with reference to the root:

- prefixes: attached before another morpheme undo (prefix + root)
- suffixes: inserted after another morpheme looking (root + suffix)
- **infixes:** inserted within another morpheme fanfreakingtastic (ro- + infix + -ot)
- circumfixes: attached before and after another morpheme or set of morphemes I'm a-going (a- + root + -ing)
- interfixes: semantically empty liking elements in compounds speedometer (root + o + root)
- **suprafixes** (**superfix**): attached suprasegmentally to another morpheme

produce (noun) vs. **produce** (verb) (changing stress)

agreement: correspondence between grammatically related elements (number, person or gender)

Agreement in number and person between a subject and its verb *The children play.* vs. The child plays.

Agreement in gender, number, and person between a pronoun and its antecedent.

The girl washed her face.

antecedent: the word to which a pronoun refers **Aunt Mary** fainted when **she** heard the news.

antonyms: words with opposite meanings

hot cold fast slow noisy quiet

appositive: a word, phrase, or clause used as a noun and placed next to another noun to modify it

George Washington, the president, slept here.

article: see noun determiner

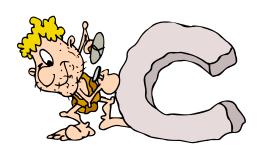
auxiliary verbs: verbs that help other verbs and indicate tense, mood, or voice be, do, have, go, can, should

Note: see also: modal auxiliaries



be verb: an irregular verb which changes depending on person and number

- singular: 1st = I am, 2nd = you are, 3rd = he, she, it is
 plural: 1st = we are, 2nd = you are, 3rd = they are



cardinal numbers: see noun determiners

case: the form or position of a noun or pronoun that shows its use or relationship to other words in a sentence

The three cases in English are:

• subject (subjective or nominative) case – refers to pronouns used as subjects:

I, he, she, we, they, who

- **object (objective) case** refers to pronouns used as objects: me, him, her, us, them, whom
- possessive (genitive) case refers to pronouns used as possessives: my (mine), your (yours), his, her (hers), its, our (ours), their (theirs), whose

clause: a group of related words that (unlike a phrase) contain both subjects and predicates and that function either as sentences or as parts of sentences.

Most children (subject) like (verb) to eat ice-cream.

Clauses are either independent (main) or dependent (subordinate):

• independent (main) clause: can stand alone as a complete sentence

 dependent (subordinate) clause: cannot stand alone as a complete sentence

collective noun: a noun, singular in appearance, which indicates a class or group of persons or things

a committee of citizens, an army

When the group includes a number of members acting as a unit and is the subject of the sentence, the verb is singular

The jury has made the decision.

common nouns: nouns that refer to general rather than specific categories of people, places, and things and are not capitalized

basket, person, history, tractor

comparative: the form of adjectives and adverbs, which is used to indicate relative superiority

tall, *taller*, *less tall* important, *more important*, *less important*

comparative adjective: see adjective

comparative adverb: see adverb

comparisons: see adverb clauses

complement: when linking verbs link subjects to adjectives or nouns, the adjectives or nouns are complements

Phyllis was **tired**. (complement)

She became a **musician**. (complement)

complex sentence: see sentence

compound complex sentence: see sentence

compound nouns: words such as swimming pool, dropout, roommate, and

stepmother, in which more than one word is needed

compound verb: see phrasal verb

compound sentence: see sentence

concession: see adverbial clauses

condition: see adverbial clauses

conditional sentences: sentences discussing factual implications or hypothetical situations and their consequences. Languages use a variety of conditional constructions and verb forms (such as the conditional mood) to form these kinds of sentences. Full conditional sentences contain two clauses: the protasis or condition, and the apodosis or result. The apodosis is syntactically the main clause and the protasis is a subordinate clause

If it rains (protasis), the picnic will be cancelled (apodosis).

Conditional sentences have two parts, the conditional clause and the main clause. There are three types:

- 1. first conditional: If I have enough money, I will go to Japan.
- 2. second conditional: If I had enough money, I would go to Japan.
- 3. third conditional: If I had had enough money, I would have gone to Japan.

conjunction: a word used to connect other words, phrases, and clauses in sentences. There are two kinds: coordinating and subordinate conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions connect independent clauses; subordinating conjunctions connect dependent clauses or subordinating clauses with independent or main clauses

- coordinating conjunctions: and, but, for, or, not, so, yet
- some subordinating conjunctions: after, although, because, if, since, until, while, etc.

connective: see conjunction

conjunctive adverb: adverbs used to relate two independent clauses separated by a semicolon

then, consequently, however, moreover, therefore, etc.

connotation: the attitudes and emotional overtones beyond the direct definition of a word

plump and fat both mean overweight, but plump has a more positive connotation than fat

continuous (progressive) tense: see tense

coordinating conjunction: see conjunction

correlative conjunction: pairs of conjunctions, which join sentence parts *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *not only...but also*, *but...and*

count (countable) noun: noun which can be modified by a numeral and occur in both singular and plural form (usually by adding **–s** *I* **–es**), as well as co-occurring with quantificational determiners like *every*, *each*, *several*, *most*, etc.



dangling modifiers: phrases or clauses in which the doer of the action is not clearly indicated

Missing an opportunity to study, (clause with no doer of the action), Tim thought the exam seemed especially difficult.

declarative (indicative) mood: see mood

declarative sentence: see sentence

demonstrative adjectives and pronouns: words used to point out someone or something

Note: also called demonstrative determiners

demonstrative determiners: see noun determiners

demonstrative pronoun: see pronoun

demonstratives: see noun determiners

denotation: the explicit dictionary definition of a word

dependent (subordinate) clause: see clause

determiners: see noun determiners

diphthong: two vowel sounds joined in one syllable to form one speed sound

[a] *kite* [a] *out* [

direct discourse: see mode of discourse

direct object: a noun, pronoun, or other substantive which receives the action of the verb

Jack climbed the *beanstalk* into the sky.

direct speech: repeats a speaker's exact words, enclosing them in quotation marks

He said, "I've lost my umbrella."



elliptical clause: a clause in which one or more words necessary for the full subject-predicate structure are omitted but "understood"

The manager admired no one else as much as [he admired] her.

essential and non-essential clauses and phrases:

- essential (also called restrictive) clauses and phrases appear after nouns and are necessary or essential to complete the meaning of the sentence.
- non-essential (also called non-restrictive) clauses and phrases appear after nouns and add extra information, but that information can be removed from the sentence without altering the meaning.
- see also **clause** and/or **phrase**

exclamatory sentence: see sentence



finite verb: a verb in the present or past form

• the finite forms of the verb 'be' are: is, am, are, was, and were

• non-finite forms are: be, being, and been

first person: see person

frequency adverbs: see adverbs of frequency

function words: words which establish grammatical relationships within a sentence, i.e., articles, auxiliaries, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, determiners, intensifiers, and interjections

fused sentence: fused sentences contain punctuation errors (also called runons); there is no punctuation between independent clauses in the sentence Jennifer never learned how to ask politely she just took what she wanted.



gender: the quality of nouns and pronouns that determines the choice between masculine, female, or neuter

he, she, it

genitive case: see case

gerund: see verbal



homophony: a situation in which a single form has the same sound but two or more entirely distinct meanings; words may but do not have to be spelled differently

hear/here passed/past light/light

homonyms: words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings

hear/here by/buy/bye

homographs: words that have the same spelling but different meaning

to cleave – to adhere to cleave – to divide

homophones: words that have the same pronunciation but different meaning and/or spelling

too/to/two there/their/they're

heteronyms (also **heterophones**): words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciation and meaning

desert – abandon desert – arid region

Note: heteronyms are homographs which differ in pronunciation or homographs which are not homophones



idiom: an expression that does not conform to general grammatical patterns, but is established through usage as the way of conveying a given meaning

kick the bucket money talks feeling under the weather

imperative mood: see mood

imperative sentence: see sentence

indefinite pronouns: see pronoun

independent (main) clause: see clause indicative (declarative) mood: see mood

indirect discourse: see mode of discourse

indirect object: a word that follows a transitive verb and comes before a direct object. It indicates the one to whom or for whom something is given, said, or done and answers the questions *to what?* or *to whom?*

The witch gave the pretty girl a poisoned apple.

indirect speech: paraphrasing the speaker's words

He said he had lost his umbrella.

infinitive: see verbals

infinitive phrases: phrases made up of the present form of the verb preceded by to. Infinitives can have subjects, objects, complements, or modifiers Everyone wanted to swim in the new pool.

infix: see affix

inflection: changes in the form of words to reflect changes in grammatical relationships

the cabins, he walks, she's talking, quickest

intensifier: a word that modifies adjectives or adverbs and expresses degree very beautiful, quite young, rather old

intensive pronoun: see pronoun

interjection: a word used to exclaim or to express emotion

ah, oh, ouch

interrogative pronoun: see pronoun

interrogative sentence: see sentence

intonation: the rising and falling of the pitch of the voice in speech

intransitive verbs: see verbs

irony: figure of speech in which what is stated is opposite of what is meant

irregular verb: verbs in which the past tense forms and /or past participles are not formed by adding –ed or –d

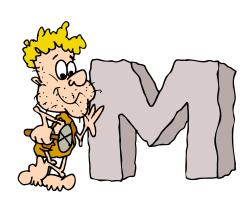


jargon: words and phrases that are either the specialized language of various fields or, in a negative sense, unnecessarily technical or inflated terms





linking verb: see verb



main (independent) clause: see clause manner adverb: see adverbs of manner

mass noun: see uncountable noun

misplaced modifiers: modifiers not placed next to or close to the word(s) being modified

We saw an advertisement for an excellent new stereo system with dual headphones **on television**.

modal auxiliaries (modals): serve as structural signals and have a meaning of their own (ability, obligation, possibility)

can, may, might, must, should, etc.

mode of discourse: describes variety and conventions of writing

- **direct discourse** repeats the exact words that someone says Everett said, "I want to become a physicist."
- **indirect discourse** reports the words but changes some of the words Everett said that he wants to become a physicist.

Note: discourse = an expression, either in speech or writing

modifier: a word, phrase, or clause which limits or describes other sentence elements or the sentence as a whole. The most common modifiers are adjectives and adverbs

mood: the classification of verb forms as:

 indicating whether a sentence expresses a fact – the declarative (indicative) mood

I am ready.

 expressing some doubt or something contrary to fact or stating a recommendation – the subjunctive mood

I wish you were ready.

• issuing a command – the **imperative mood**Be ready at six.

multi-word verb: see phrasal verb



nominal: any structure that functions as a noun

nominative case: see case

non-essential clauses and phrases: see essential and non-essential clauses and phrases

non-restrictive relative clause: see essential and non-essential clauses and phrases

noun: a word that names people, places, things, and ideas, and have plural and/or possessive endings. Nouns function as subjects, direct objects, predicate nominatives, objects of prepositions, and indirect objects **noun clause:** a dependent clause serving a nominal function.

Everyone agreed that the play was a success.

noun determiners: words that signal that a noun is about to follow. They stand next to their nouns or can be separated by adjectives. Some noun determiners can also function as nouns.

There are five types of noun determiners:

• articles: definite – the, and indefinite – a, an

- demonstratives: this, that, these, those
- possessives: my, our, your, his, her, its, their
- cardinal numbers: one, two, three, etc.
- miscellaneous: all, another, each, every, much, etc.

noun phrase: see phrases

number: the quantity expressed by a noun or pronoun, either singular (one) or plural (more than one)



objects: see direct objects and object complements

object case: see case

object complement: the adjective in predicates modifying the object of the verb

(not the subject)

The enlargement makes the picture clear.

object of a preposition: noun following the preposition. The preposition, its object, and any modifiers make up the prepositional phrase For **Daniel**

objective case: see case

objective complement: a complement after the direct object that provides another name for the object or otherwise amplifies it

They elected him **president**.
The war made many women **widows**.
Everyone believed him **crazy**.

onomatopoeia: words formed to imitate the sounds they describe *meow*, *buzz*



parallel construction: when two or more items are listed or compared, they must be in the same grammatical form as equal elements. When items are not in the same grammatical form, they lack parallel structure

participle: see verbals

parts of speech: classes into which words are grouped according to their function, place, meaning, and use in a sentence, for example:

- nouns
- pronouns
- verbs
- adjectives
- adverbs
- prepositions
- conjunctions
- interjections

passive voice: see voice

past participle: see participles

perfect verb tense: see tenses

person: choice of the appropriate forms to express the person speaking.

There are three "persons" in English:

- first person the person or persons speaking
 l. we
- second person the person or persons spoken to you
- *third person* the person or persons spoken about *he, she, it, they, anyone, everybody, etc.*

personal pronoun: refers to people or things

Note: also see pronoun

personification: a figure of speech that gives human traits to non-human things

phoneme: a basic unit of sound in a language /i/, /p/

phrase: group of related words that does not have its own subject and complete verb. In phrases, the words can work together as the subject or verb in a sentence, or they can add information to other parts of the sentence.

- verb phrases function as verbs
 She has been eating too much sugar.
- **noun phrases** function as nouns

A major winter storm hit the eastern coast of Maine.

- **prepositional phrases** function as modifiers

 That book **of hers** is overdue at the library.
- participial phrases, gerund phrases, infinitive phrases, appositive phrases, and absolute phrases – function as adjectives, adverbs, or nouns
 - participial phrase a non-finite verb form (-ing)
 I saw people staring at my peculiar looking haircut.
 - gerund phrase a kind of verbal noun (-ing); identical to the present participle in form, but behaves differently in syntax
 Making copies of videotapes can be illegal.
 - infinitive phrase basic verb form with or without the particle to He likes to give expensive presents
 - appositive phrase renames or describes another noun phrase, with no word interposed between the two phrases You ought to see Dr. Elman, a dermatologist.
 - absolute phrase see absolute construction
 The test done, he sighed with relief.

phrasal verbs: a verb combined with an uninflected preposition, an adverb, or an adverbial particle

stand up sit down

Note: a phrasal verb is also called **verb-particle construction**, **verb phrase**, **multi-word verb**, or **compound verb**; American English expressions are **two-part verb** or in some cases **three-part verb**

positive adjective: see adjective

positive adverbs: see adverbs

possessive case: see case

possessive pronouns: see pronoun

predicate adjectives: see subject complement

predicate nominative: see subject complement

predication: words or a group of words that express action or a state of being in a sentence and consists of one or more verbs, plus any complements or modifiers

prefix: see affix

preposition: a connective that joins a noun or a pronoun to the rest of the sentence. A prepositional phrase may serve either an adverb or an adjective function:

The guide led us **into the forest**. (adverb)

Jack is a master **of many trades**. (adjective)

prepositional phrase: see object of a preposition

progressive (continuous) verb tenses: see tense

pronoun: a word which stands for or substitutes a noun

Forms of pronouns:

- personal pronouns refer to people or things
 I. you. he
- possessive pronouns see possessive noun determiners my, his, mine, yours
- reflexive or intensive pronouns show someone or something in the sentence is acting for itself or on itself. Because a reflexive pronoun must refer to a word in a sentence, it is not the subject or direct object. If used to show emphasis, reflexive pronouns are called *intensive* pronouns

myself, himself, ourselves

• **demonstrative** – refer to things

this, that, those

 relative – show the relationship of a dependent clause to a noun in the sentence. Relative pronouns substitute for nouns already mentioned in sentences and introduce adjective or noun clauses

who, which, what, that, whose

- **interrogative** pronouns used in questions who, which, what
- **indefinite** pronouns that make indefinite references to nouns one, anyone, everyone

pronoun case: refers to the form of the pronoun that is needed in a sentence

proper noun: refers to specific people, places, and things. Proper nouns are always capitalized

Copenhagen, Honda, House of Representatives, Spanish

purpose: see adverb clauses



quantifiers: words denoting how much some, any, most, few, one, two, three

question: see sentence



reason: see adverbial clauses

reciprocal pronouns: see pronoun each other, one another

reflexive pronouns: see pronoun

relative pronouns: see pronoun

relative clause: see essential and non-essential clauses and phrases

restrictive relative clause: see essential and non-essential clauses and phrases

result: see adverbial clauses

run-on sentences: see fused sentences



second person: see person

sentence: group of words that have at least one independent clause.

Classified by their structure as:

- **simple sentences** contain one independent clause
- compound sentences contain two or more independent clauses
- **complex sentences** contain one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses
- **compound-complex sentences** contain two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses

Classified by their function as:

- **declarative sentences** make a statement
- interrogative sentences ask a question
- imperative sentences issue a command
- exclamatory sentences make an exclamation

simple sentence: see sentence

slang: use of highly informal words and expressions that are not considered standard in the speaker's dialect or language. It is very often specific to a particular context or group

stress: pronouncing a syllable or a word in such a way that makes it more prominent in a word or sentence respectively

condúctor Let's gó

substantive: see nominal

subject: a word or group of words about which the sentence or clause makes a statement

The **dog** jumped into the car

subject case: see case

subject complement: the noun or adjective in the predicate that refers to the same entity as the subject in sentences with linking verbs, such as *is/are, feel, look, smell, sound, taste and seem*

She feels happy.

subject case of pronouns: see personal pronouns

subjective case: see case

subjunctive mood: see mood

subordinate (dependent) clause: see clause

subordinating conjunction: see conjunction

suffix: see affix

superlative: the form of adjectives and adverbs used to express absolute

superiority

the *tallest* the *least tall*

the most important the least important the slowest the least slowly

superlative adjective: see adjective

superlative adverb: see adverb

suprafix (superfix): see affix

synonyms: words with similar meaning

damp – moist pretty – attractive

syntax: the rules of sentence formation



tag question: a grammatical structure in which a declarative statement or an imperative is turned into a question by adding an interrogative fragment (the "tag")

It's a beautiful day, isn't it?
You haven't seen the film, have you?

tense: see verb

third person: see person

three-part verb: see phrasal verb

time: see adverb clauses

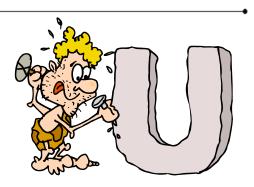
tone: the attitude or level of formality reflected in the word choices of a piece of

writing

transitive verb: see verbs

two-part verb: see phrasal verb

two-word verb: see phrasal verb



uncountable (non-count) noun: a noun that refers to a quantity and cannot be preceded by a cardinal number sugar, milk, hunger



verb: a word or group of words (verb phrases) in predicates that expresses action, show a state of being, or acts as a link between the subject and the rest of the predicate. Verbs change to show time (tense), mood, and voice

They are classified as:

- **transitive verbs** require objects to complete the predicate He **cut** the cardboard box with his knife.
- intransitive verbs do not require objects
 My ancient cat often lies on the porch
- **linking verbs** link the subject to the following noun or adjective *The trees are bare.*

verbal: a word or phrase derived from a verb and used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb

Verbals consist of infinitives, gerunds, or participles

- **infinitive**: begins with *to* and is used as a:
 - o noun

To do such a thing would be disastrous.

adverb

Many people jog to keep physically fit.

adjective

I'm ready to testify, your Honor.

- **gerund:** ends in *-ing* and is used as a **noun**.
 - **Playing with matches** is dangerous for kids.
- participle: ends in -ing or -ed and is used as an adjective.

I can't live without running water.

Accompanied by his faithful dog, Daniel roamed the woods.

verb conjugations: the forms of verbs in various tenses

verb-particle construction: see phrasal verb

verb phrase: a verb that has more than one part

-also see phrasal verb

verb tense: the system of verb forms expressing primarily different relationships in time. The times indicated by the verb forms in the past, present, or future.

There are four kinds of tenses for past, present, and future:

- simple tense
- progressive (continuous) tense
- perfect tense
- perfect progressive (continuous) tense

voice: verbs are either in the active or passive voice

- active voice the subject performs the action of the verb The dog bit the boy.
- **passive voice** the subject receives the action *The boy was bitten by the dog.*

voice (voicing): phonetic concept; of the three major parameters used to describe a sound, along with place of articulation and manner of articulation

voiced sound: a sound in which the vocal cords vibrate [b] [d] [g]

voiceless sounds: a sound in which the vocal cord does not vibrate [p] [t] [k]

