

GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND MECHANICS

PARTS OF SPEECH

Every word in the English language can be defined as one or more of the following eight parts of speech:

Adjective: A word that modifies a noun or pronoun

Ex: small, big, pretty, ugly, white

Adverb: A word that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb

Ex: quickly, easily, very, well

Conjunction: A word that connects words, phrases, clauses, or sentences

Ex: and, but, as, because

Interjection: A word that shows emotion and is connected to a sentence with a comma or exclamation point

Ex: Wow!, Yes, . . .

Noun: A word that names a person, place, thing or idea

Ex: student, school, pencil, knowledge

Preposition: A word that connects a noun or pronoun to another word, phrase, or clause

Ex: under, above, of, with

Pronoun: A word that takes the place of a noun

Ex: I, me, she, we, it

Verb: A word that either shows a state of being or an action

Ex: State of being: is, are, be

Action: jump, give, run

OTHER COMMONLY USED GRAMMATICAL TERMS OF INTEREST

Agreement: Nouns and pronouns should *agree* with the verb in a sentence.

Ex: The boy walks. You walk.

Appositive: A noun or phrase placed next to another noun, set off by commas, that explains it

Ex: The student, Johnny, read the book.

Articles: *the, a, and an.* *The* is a definite article identifying a particular noun, *a* and *an* are indefinite, referring to no specific noun.

Clause: A clause is a part of a sentence that contains a subject and a verb. An independent clause can stand on its own as a sentence, a dependent clause cannot.

Ex: The girl smiles. (Independent clause)

If the girl smiles (Dependent clause)

Coordinating Conjunctions: A conjunction that joins together two independent clauses in a sentence, accompanied by a comma. The coordinating conjunctions are as follows: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* (F.A.N.B.O.Y.S.)

Ex: The cat meowed, and the dog barked.

Dangling Modifiers: A modifier that is misplaced in a sentence, thereby making it difficult to determine what element is being modified

Ex: Having difficulty with homework, the radio helped me concentrate.

Is the phrase "having difficulty with my homework" referring to "the radio" or "me"?

Direct Object: A noun or pronoun that receives or is affected by the action of a verb.

Ex: Billy threw the ball.

Ellipsis: Three dots representing missing text.

Ex: "Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth... a new nation..."

Gerund: A verb that acts like a noun and ends in -ing

Ex: Running is good exercise.

Homonyms: Words that have the same pronunciation but have different meanings and may have different spellings.

Ex: "Mail" is what you get from the post office.

"Male" is a boy.

Ex: "tie" is a verb meaning to fasten two things together

"tie" is a noun referring to a man's formal neck accessory

Imperatives: Verbs used to give orders

Ex: Hand me that pen, please.

Indirect Objects: Words that do not directly receive the action of a verb, but receive the direct object.

Ex: The girl threw Billy the ball.

Infinitives: Verbs preceded by the word "to" that have no specific person or tense. The "to" should never be separated from the verb in a sentence.

Ex: I want to sing.

Intransitive Verb: A verb that does not receive an object.

Ex: He walked.

Linking Verb: A verb that connects the subject of a sentence to a complement; shows state of being.

Ex: She is tall.

The rose smells good.

Numbers: Numbers zero through one hundred and any round numbers above that should be written out in words. All other numbers should be written as numerals.

Ex: I have thirty-three dollars.

She has 125 stamps.

Participle: A word formed from a verb and used as an adjective or a noun.

Ex: The sleeping man (present participle)

Ex: battered toast (past participle)

Phrase: A group of words that goes together but is not a complete sentence

Ex: in the dark

Possessives: Words that show ownership

Ex: his, mine, hers, John's

Predicate: the verb/verb phrase that tells something about the subject the subject.

Ex: The teacher checked the student's work.

Punctuation: See below

Sentence: A group of words, beginning with a capital letter, that contains a subject and verb, expresses a complete thought, and ends with a period, exclamation point, or question mark.

Ex: The teacher checked the student's work.

Subject: The key noun or pronoun that tells what a sentence is about.

Ex: The teacher checked the student's work.

Transitive Verb: A verb that takes an object.

Ex: The woman opened the door.

PUNCTUATION MARKS

Period: Use to end a statement

Ex: The teacher gave homework.

Use in an abbreviation

Ex: Mr. Smith gave us homework.

Question Mark: Ends a direct question

Ex: Where is your pencil?

Exclamation Point: Use to express a strong emotion

Ex: Wow! I won the lottery!

Comma: Use to separate elements of a list

Ex: I am studying English, math, and science.

Use to separate two sentences along with a coordinating conjunction

Ex: John went to the movies, and Steve went to the game.

Use in letter salutations

Ex: Dear Uncle Steve,

Use after a dependent clause when it comes first in a sentence

Ex: When I turn sixteen, I will have a party.

South Brunswick School District's Writing Guide, Grades 6-12

Use before or after quotes

Ex: "I love peaches," Sarah said.

Use in addresses and dates

Ex: Philadelphia, PA

Ex: 400 Race St., Philadelphia, PA

Ex: July 4, 1776

Semicolon: Use in a list when commas are included in the list itself

Ex: I've lived in South Brunswick, NJ; Albany, NY; and Cleveland, OH.

Use in place of a comma and coordinating conjunction to join sentences

Ex: John went to the movies; Steve went to the game.

Colon: Use after an introductory remark

Ex: The quote was this: "Four score and seven years ago. . ."

Use to introduce a list

Ex: My favorite fruits are the following:

Apples

Oranges

Watermelon

Quotes: Use in citing another's work

Ex: "Four score and seven years ago ..."

Use in dialogue

Ex: John said, "I went to the movies."