

Parts of Speech in English

A COMPLETE SELF-STUDY GUIDE

Learn how words function in English sentences and improve your grammar step by step.





Why Parts of Speech Matter

Parts of speech are the building blocks of every English sentence. Every word you use belongs to a category — and that category tells you how the word *functions* in a sentence. Understanding these categories gives you a powerful tool for improving your grammar, writing, and speaking.

Write Correctly

Knowing word roles helps you build sentences that are grammatically accurate and clear.

Understand Rules

Grammar rules are easier to learn when you understand the function of each word in a sentence.

Speak Clearly

Recognising parts of speech helps you choose the right words and express ideas accurately.

Overview: The 8 Parts of Speech

English grammar organises all words into eight main categories. Each one plays a unique role in building sentences. Here is a quick introduction to all eight:

Part of Speech	Function	Quick Example
Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	<i>London, teacher, happiness</i>
Pronoun	Replaces a noun	<i>he, she, they, it</i>
Verb	Shows action, state, or occurrence	<i>run, is, believe</i>
Adjective	Describes a noun	<i>beautiful, small, three</i>
Adverb	Modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb	<i>quickly, very, often</i>
Preposition	Shows relationship between words	<i>in, on, at, between</i>
Conjunction	Connects words, phrases, or clauses	<i>and, but, because</i>
Interjection	Expresses emotion or reaction	<i>Wow! Oh! Ouch!</i>

How to Use This Self-Study Presentation

This guide is designed so you can learn completely on your own. Follow these five steps for every section to get the best results:

01

Read the Definition

Understand the core meaning of each part of speech before moving on.

02

Study the Examples

Read every example carefully. Notice how the word functions inside the sentence.

03

Compare Sentence Roles

Look at how the same idea can be expressed with different parts of speech.

04

Complete the Practice

Attempt the mini exercises at the end of each section independently first.

05

Review the Summary

Return to the overview table and check your understanding regularly.



Study tip: Do not rush. One section per study session is ideal for deep learning.

Nouns: Definition & Types

What Is a Noun?

A **noun** is a word that names a **person, place, thing, or idea**. Nouns are the most common words in English. They answer the questions: *Who? What? Where?*

Every sentence needs at least one noun to make sense.

Examples by Category

Person

teacher, Maria, student,
doctor

Place

London, park, school, kitchen

Thing

book, telephone, chair,
window

Idea

freedom, love, courage,
knowledge

Common vs Proper Nouns & Countable vs Uncountable

Common & Proper Nouns

A **common noun** is a general name. A **proper noun** is a specific name and always begins with a capital letter.

Common Noun	Proper Noun
city	London
teacher	Mr James
country	France
river	the Thames

Countable & Uncountable Nouns

A **countable noun** can be counted and has a plural form. An **uncountable noun** cannot be counted individually.

Countable	Uncountable
one book / two books	water (not waters)
a chair / three chairs	information
an apple / five apples	advice, music



Use **much** with uncountable nouns and **many** with countable nouns.

Noun Practice – Identify the noun in each sentence:

1. The **dog** ran across the garden.

2. She studies at a **university** in Edinburgh.

3. **Patience** is an important quality.

4. They visited **Paris** last summer.

5. He drinks **coffee** every morning.

Pronouns: Definition & Types

A **pronoun** is a word that replaces a noun to avoid repetition. Instead of saying "Maria is a teacher. Maria is kind," we say "Maria is a teacher. **She** is kind."



Personal Pronouns

Replace the names of people or things:
I, you, he, she, it, we, they



Possessive Pronouns

Show ownership: *mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs*



Demonstrative Pronouns

Point to specific things: *this, that, these, those*



Reflexive Pronouns

Refer back to the subject: *myself, yourself, himself, herself, themselves*



Relative Pronouns

Connect clauses to nouns: *who, which, that, whose, whom*

Pronoun Examples & Common Errors

Nouns Replaced by Pronouns

Original Sentence	With Pronoun
Maria is a teacher.	She is a teacher.
The books are on the desk.	They are on the desk.
The bag belongs to me.	The books are mine .
Tom hurt Tom's hand.	Tom hurt himself .

⚠ Common Pronoun Errors

~~Me and John went to the shop.~~

✓ **John and I went to the shop.**

Use *I* as the subject, *me* as the object.

~~Her and I are friends.~~

✓ **She and I are friends.**

Note: "Everyone must bring *their* book" is now widely accepted in modern English as a gender-neutral option.

Pronoun Practice – Correct the error or choose the right pronoun:

1. ~~Me and Sarah~~ went to class. → **Sarah and I** went to class.

2. The red coat is _____. (her / hers) → **hers**

3. ____ finished the homework. (Him / He) → **He**

Verbs: Definition, Types & Tense

A **verb** is a word that expresses an **action, state, or occurrence**. Every sentence must contain a verb — it is the engine of the sentence. Without a verb, a sentence is incomplete.

Action Verbs vs State Verbs

Action Verbs	State Verbs
run, write, speak	know, like, believe
eat, swim, build	want, understand, seem

Action verbs describe *what someone does*. State verbs describe a *condition or mental state* — they are not usually used in continuous tenses.

Main Verbs & Helping Verbs

A **main verb** carries the core meaning. A **helping (auxiliary) verb** supports the main verb to show tense, possibility, or obligation.

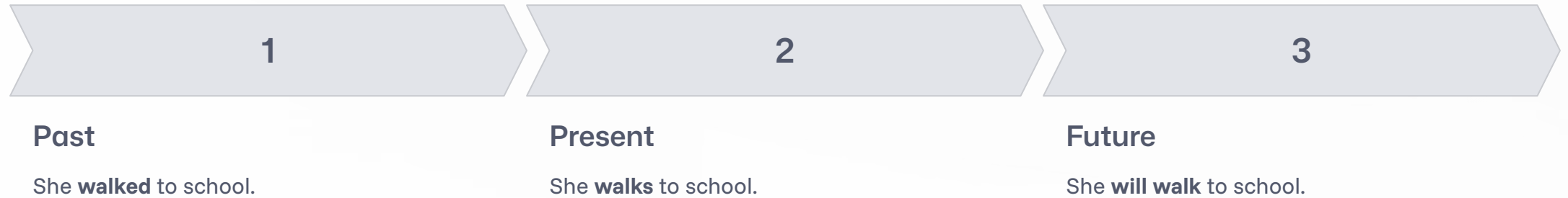
She is reading. (is = helper, reading = main)

They have finished. (have = helper, finished = main)

He can swim. (can = modal helper, swim = main)

Verb Tense & Practice

Verbs are essential for expressing **time**. By changing the verb form, you show whether something happened in the past, is happening now, or will happen in the future. This is what makes verb knowledge so critical.



Verb Practice – Identify the verb and choose the correct form:

Sentence	Verb / Answer
1. She ___ (study/studies) every evening.	studies
2. They ___ (have finished / has finished) the report.	have finished
3. He ___ (run/runs) five kilometres every morning.	runs
4. I ___ (am knowing / know) the answer.	know (state verb)

Adjectives: Definition, Function & Order

What Is an Adjective?

An **adjective** is a word that describes or modifies a noun. It tells us *what kind, which one, how many, or what quality* the noun has.

Adjectives make your language richer and more precise.

What Adjectives Describe:

- **Size:** big, tiny, enormous
- **Colour:** red, golden, pale
- **Shape:** round, flat, square
- **Quality:** soft, rough, brilliant
- **Opinion:** beautiful, terrible, lovely
- **Number:** three, several, many

Adjectives in Sentences

A **beautiful** house stood on the hill.

Three students passed the exam.

It was a **difficult** question.

Adjective Order (Introduction)

In English, adjectives follow a natural order when more than one is used before a noun:

Opinion → **Size** → **Colour** → **Noun**

- ✓ *a beautiful small red bag* (correct)
- ✗ *a red small beautiful bag* (unnatural)

Practice – Underline the adjective:

1. She wore a **long** dress.
2. It was a **cold** morning.
3. He is a **clever** student.

Adverbs: Definition, Types & Usage

An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs add detail by telling us *how, when, how often, or to what degree* something happens.

Manner

How something is done

quickly, carefully, loudly

Time

When something happens

yesterday, soon, now

Frequency

How often something happens

always, often, never

Degree

To what extent

very, quite, extremely

Adjective vs Adverb – A Key Distinction

Type	Sentence	Function
Adjective	She is quick .	Describes the noun (she)
Adverb	She runs quickly .	Describes the verb (runs)




Practice: Complete with the correct form: He is a **careful** driver. / He drives **carefully**.


Prepositions: Definition & Use


A **preposition** is a word that shows the **relationship** between a noun (or pronoun) and another word in the sentence. Prepositions tell us about *place*, *time*, *direction*, or other connections.


Common Prepositions


 **in**


 **on**

 **at**

 **under**

 **behind**

 **between**

 **during**

 **with**

Time & Place Prepositions

Preposition	Time Use	Place Use
at	at 5 pm, at noon	at the door
on	on Monday	on the table
in	in December, in 2024	in the room

Practice – Fill in the blank:

1. The keys are ___ the drawer.
→ **in**

2. The meeting is ___ Monday.
→ **on**

3. She arrives ___ 9 o'clock. → **at**

Conjunctions: Definition & Types

A **conjunction** is a word that **connects** words, phrases, or clauses. Conjunctions allow you to build more complex, flowing sentences and express relationships such as contrast, reason, and choice.

Coordinating

Connect two equal ideas or clauses:
for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS)

Example: I was tired, **but** I finished my work.

Subordinating

Connect a main clause to a dependent clause:
because, although, if, when, since, unless

Example: She stayed home **because** she was ill.

Correlative

Pairs that work together:
either...or, neither...nor, both...and, not only...but also

Example: **Neither** Tom **nor** Anna passed.

Practice – Combine the sentences:

Two Sentences	Combined
I like tea. I like coffee.	I like tea and coffee.
She studied hard. She failed.	She studied hard but failed.
He was late. He missed the bus.	He was late because he missed the bus.

Interjections: Definition & Examples

An **interjection** is a word or phrase that **expresses a sudden emotion or reaction**. Interjections are unique because they have no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence — they stand alone to show feeling.

Wow!

Surprise or admiration

Wow! That painting is stunning!

Ouch!

Physical pain

Ouch! I burnt my finger.

Hey!

Attention or greeting

Hey! Come and look at this.

Hooray!

Joy or celebration

Hooray! We won the match!

Oh!

Realisation or mild surprise

Oh! I didn't see you there.



Practice: What emotion does each express? 1. "Ouch!" → **pain** 2. "Hooray!" → **joy** 3. "Oh!" → **surprise / realisation**

One Sentence, Many Parts of Speech

Let's analyse a complete sentence word by word. This is one of the most powerful ways to understand how grammar really works in practice.

"The young student quickly finished her homework after class."

Word	Part of Speech	Why?
The	Article (Adjective)	Identifies a specific noun
young	Adjective	Describes "student"
student	Noun	Names the person performing the action
quickly	Adverb	Tells us how she finished (manner)
finished	Verb	The main action in the sentence
her	Pronoun	Refers back to the student (possessive)
homework	Noun	Names the thing that was finished
after	Preposition	Shows a time relationship
class	Noun	Object of the preposition "after"

Common Confusions & Word Function in Context

⚠️ Commonly Confused Pairs

Adjective vs Adverb

She is **quick**. (adj — describes her)

She runs **quickly**. (adv — describes how she runs)

Noun vs Pronoun

Maria is kind. (noun)

She is kind. (pronoun — replaces Maria)

Verb vs Adjective

The lesson was **bored**. ❌

The lesson was **boring**. ✅ (adjective from verb)

One Word, Two Roles

The same word can function as *different parts of speech* depending on how it is used in a sentence.

"run" as a Verb

I **run** every day. → action word

"run" as a Noun

I went for a **run**. → names an activity

"fast" as Adjective

He is a **fast** learner. → describes noun

"fast" as Adverb

He learns **fast**. → describes verb

📄 💡 Always look at how the word is **used**, not just what it looks like.

Full Review Table

Use this table as a revision tool. Return to it regularly to check your understanding of all eight parts of speech.

Part of Speech	Function	Example Word	Example Sentence
Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	teacher	The teacher explained.
Pronoun	Replaces a noun	she	She explained clearly.
Verb	Shows action, state, or occurrence	explain	She explained the rule.
Adjective	Describes a noun	clear	A clear explanation.
Adverb	Modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb	clearly	She spoke clearly .
Preposition	Shows relationship (place, time, etc.)	in	The book is in the bag.
Conjunction	Connects words, phrases, or clauses	but	Hard but rewarding.
Interjection	Expresses emotion or reaction	Wow!	Wow! That is impressive.

Mixed Practice Quiz

Test your knowledge with these eight short questions. Try each one before checking the answers below.

Questions

- 1 Identify the **noun**: "The children played in the garden."
- 2 Choose the correct **adverb**: She sings (beautiful / beautifully).
- 3 Find the **preposition**: "He sat between his friends."
- 4 Select the **conjunction**: "I was tired ___ I kept working." (but / because)
- 5 Is "fast" an adjective or adverb? "She is a fast reader."
- 6 Correct the error: "Me and Tom finished first."
- 7 Identify the **verb**: "They have been studying for hours."
- 8 What part of speech is "**Ouch!**"?

Answers & Explanations

- **children, garden** — both name things/people
- **beautifully** — adverbs modify verbs; add -ly to adjectives
- **between** — shows the spatial relationship
- **but** — coordinating; shows contrast between two clauses
- **Adjective** — it describes the noun "reader"
- **Tom and I** — use "I" as the subject of a sentence
- **have been studying** — a verb phrase (auxiliary + main verb)
- **Interjection** — expresses a reaction (pain)

Self-Study Tips & Final Summary

Practical Study Tips



Notice Word Roles

When reading English, pause and identify the function of key words.



Analyse Daily

Label the parts of speech in one short sentence every day. Start simple.



Keep a Grammar Notebook

Write examples of each part of speech from your own reading and writing.



Review Regularly

Return to the full review table weekly to reinforce your understanding.

Final Summary

Every word in an English sentence has a **job to do**. Understanding these jobs is the foundation of strong grammar. You have now studied all eight parts of speech:

Noun

Pronoun

Verb

Adjective

Adverb

Preposition

Conjunction

Interjection

"Words have different jobs in sentences — and understanding these jobs improves your grammar, your writing, and your communication."

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