

Grammar and Mechanics Handbook



Grammar

Adjectives

An adjective points out or describes a noun.

Adjectives That Compare

Adjectives can be used to make comparisons. To compare two people, places, or things, *-er* is often added to an adjective. To compare three or more people, places, or things, *-est* is often added to an adjective.

A moose is **bigger** than a horse.

An elephant is the **largest** land animal.

Some adjectives that compare have special forms.

These grapes are **good**.

These blueberries are **better** than those grapes.

These raspberries are the **best** fruit in the salad.

The girl had a **bad** cold on Sunday.

The cold was **worse** on Monday.

It was the **worst** cold she'd ever had.

Some adjectives that compare use *more* and *most*. *More* and *most* are used with adjectives of three or more syllables and with some adjectives of two syllables.

Carla is a **more careful** worker than Luis.

Marta is the **most intelligent** student in class.

The comparative adjectives *fewer* and *fewest* are used with plural nouns that you can see, touch, and count. The comparative adjectives *less* and *least* are used with nouns that cannot be seen, touched, or counted.

I have **fewer** pencils than Hannah does.

Mark has the **fewest** pens.

I have **less** experience.

Bo has the **least** curiosity.

Adjectives That Tell How Many

Some adjectives tell how many or about how many.

Only **six** members came to the meeting.

A **few** members were sick.

Some adjectives tell numerical order.

I finished reading the **sixth** chapter.

Articles

Articles point out nouns. *The*, *a*, and *an* are articles. *The* is the definite article. It points out a specific person, place, or thing. *A* and *an* are indefinite articles. They point out any one of a group of people, places, or things. Use *a* before a consonant sound and *an* before a vowel sound.

The man ate **a** peach and **an** apple.

Demonstrative Adjectives

Demonstrative adjectives point out or tell about a specific person, place, or thing. The demonstrative adjectives are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*.

Singular	Plural
this flower	these bushes
that flower	those bushes

This and *these* point out things or people that are near. *That* and *those* point out things or people that are farther away.

This flower is red. (singular and near)

Those bushes are tall. (plural and far)

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Descriptive Adjectives

A descriptive adjective tells more about a noun. It can tell how something looks, tastes, sounds, feels, or smells. It can tell about size, number, color, shape, or weight.

A descriptive adjective often comes before the noun it describes.

A **tall** tree stood near the **red** barn.

A descriptive adjective can follow a linking verb as a subject complement. It describes the subject of the sentence.

The tree near the red barn was **tall**.

Possessive Adjectives

A possessive adjective shows who or what owns something. A possessive adjective is used before a noun. The possessive adjectives are *my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *our*, and *their*.

I have **my** camera, and Lucy has **her** cell phone.

Proper Adjectives

Proper adjectives are formed from proper nouns. A proper adjective always begins with a capital letter.

When we went to China, I ate **Chinese** food.

Adverbs

An adverb tells more about a verb. Many adverbs end in *ly*.

An adverb of time tells when or how often an action takes place.

I went to the mall **yesterday**.

I **sometimes** go to the toy store.

An adverb of place tells where an action takes place.

I went **outside** after dinner.

I played **there** until it was dark.

An adverb of manner tells how an action takes place.

My new skateboard goes **fast**.

I ride it **gracefully**.

Adverbs That Compare

An adverb can compare the actions of two or more people or things. To compare the actions of two people or things, *-er* is often added to an adverb. To compare the actions of three or more people or things, *-est* is often added to an adverb.

Sam went to bed **later** than Henry.

Luke went to bed **latest** of us all.

Some adverbs that compare use *more* and *most*. Use *more* and *most* with adverbs ending in *ly* and with adverbs of three or more syllables.

Sam answered *more* **sleepily** than Henry.

Luke answered *most* **sleepily** of us all.

Negative Words

Some adverbs form negative ideas. Use *not*, *n't* for *not* in a contraction, or *never* to express a negative idea. Do not use more than one negative word in a sentence.

He will **not** be ready on time.

He **can't** find his sneakers.

He **never** remembers where he left them.

Relative Adverbs

The relative adverbs are *where*, *when*, and *why*. *When* and *where* are used at the beginning of an adjective clause to modify a time or a place.

The house **where** my father grew up is being torn down.

Why is used with the understood antecedent the reason.

Tell me [the reason] **why** your project will be late.

Antecedents

The noun to which a pronoun refers is its antecedent. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person and number. The pronouns *he*, *him*, and *his* refer to male antecedents. The pronouns *she*, *her*, and *hers* refer to female antecedents. The pronouns *it* and *its* refer to animals or things.

Conjunctions

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction joins two words or groups of words that are similar. The words *and*, *but*, and *or* are coordinating conjunctions.

My dad **and** I went to the pool.

I can swim **but** not dive.

The pool is never too hot **or** crowded.

Subordinate Conjunctions

A subordinate conjunction is used to join a dependent clause to an independent clause in a complex sentence.

Until I hear from you, I won't choose a date for the party.

Contractions

A contraction is a short way to write some words. An apostrophe (') is used to show where one or more letters have been left out of a word.

Many contractions are formed with the word *not*.

do not = don't

cannot = can't

was not = wasn't

will not = won't

Many contractions are formed with personal pronouns.

I am = I'm

you are = you're

he is = he's

we have = we've

Direct Objects

The direct object in a sentence is the noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. To find the direct object, ask *whom* or *what* after the verb. Two or more direct objects joined by *and* or *or* form a compound direct object.

My mom made **pasta** and **salad**.

I helped **her**.

Nouns

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

Abstract Nouns

An abstract noun names something that cannot be experienced with the five senses. It expresses a quality or a condition: *love, justice, peace*.

Collective Nouns

A collective noun names a group of people or things.

My **class** saw a **herd** of buffalo.

Common Nouns

A common noun names any one member of a group of people, places, or things.

My **cousin** saw a **dog** run down the **street**.

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Concrete Nouns

A concrete noun names something that can be experienced through the five senses: *music, apple, book*.

Plural Nouns

A plural noun names more than one person, place, or thing. Most plurals are formed by adding *-s* or *-es* to the singular form. Some nouns have irregular plural forms. Some nouns have the same form in the singular and plural.

The **children** have some **turtles** and some **fish**.

Possessive Nouns

The possessive form of a noun shows possession or ownership.

A singular possessive noun shows that one person owns something. To form the singular possessive, add an apostrophe (') and the letter *s* to a singular noun.

friend	friend's book report
baby	baby's bottle
Tess	Tess's soccer ball
woman	woman's purse

A plural possessive noun shows that more than one person owns something. To form the regular plural possessive, add an apostrophe (') after the plural form of the noun.

friends	friends' book reports
babies	babies' bottles
the Smiths	the Smiths' house

To form the plural possessive of an irregular noun, add an apostrophe and *s* ('s) after the plural form.

women	women's purses
mice	mice's cheese

Proper Nouns

A proper noun begins with a capital letter and names a particular person, place, or thing.

Mia saw *Shadow* run down *Pine Street*.

Singular Nouns

A singular noun names one person, place, or thing.

The *girl* has a *kite* and a *skateboard*.

Number

The number of a noun or pronoun indicates whether it refers to one person, place, or thing (singular) or more than one person, place, or thing (plural).

Person

Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives change form according to person—whether they refer to the person speaking (first person), the person spoken to (second person), or the person, place, or thing spoken about (third person).

Predicates

The predicate of a sentence tells what the subject is or does.

Complete Predicates

The complete predicate of a sentence is the simple predicate and any words that go with it.

Tom *rode his new bike*.

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Compound Predicates

Two predicates joined by *and*, *but*, or *or* form a compound predicate.

Jenna **got a glass** and **poured some milk**.

Simple Predicates

The simple predicate of a sentence is a verb, a word or words that express an action or a state of being.

The boys **ran** noisily down the street.

They **were** happy.

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word in a sentence.

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase is made up of a preposition, the object of the preposition, and any modifiers of the object.

A prepositional phrase may be used as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun.

The cat **with the black markings** is named Inky. (adjective)

The cat burrowed **under the warm blanket**. (adverb)

Below the stairs is where the cat likes to hide. (noun)

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. The noun to which a pronoun refers is its antecedent. A pronoun must agree with the noun that is its antecedent in person and in number. See NUMBER, PERSON.

Object Pronouns

An object pronoun can be the direct object of a sentence. The object pronouns are *me*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *it*, *us*, and *them*. Two or more object pronouns can be joined by *and* or *or* to form a compound direct object.

Natalie will help **them**.

Chris will help **her** and **me**.

Personal Pronouns

A personal pronoun refers to the person speaking or to the person or thing that is spoken to or about. In this sentence, *I* is the person speaking, *you* is the person spoken to, and *them* are the people spoken about.

I heard **you** calling **them**.

Plural Pronouns

A plural pronoun refers to more than one person, place, or thing.

They are helping **us**.

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun shows ownership or possession. A possessive pronoun takes the place of a noun. It takes the place of the owner and the thing that is owned. The possessive pronouns are *mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *its*, *ours*, and *theirs*.

My cap is here, and your cap is over there.

Mine is here, and **yours** is over there.

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Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun connects an adjective clause to the noun it modifies. Relative pronouns can serve as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, or objects of prepositions. The relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that*.

Who and *whom* refer to people. *Who* is used as the subject of an adjective clause. *Whom* is used as the object of an adjective clause.

My grandfather, **who** served in World War II, was selected to be the grand marshal of the Memorial Day parade.

My grandfather, **whom** the mayor awarded the key to the city, was proud to receive this honor.

Which refers to animals, places, or things. *That* refers to people, animals, places, or things. *Whose* often refers to people but can also refer to animals, places, or things.

The movie, **which** is based on a true story, is a big hit.

This is the movie **that** everyone is talking about.

I saw the movie with my friend, **whose** knowledge of movies is amazing.

Singular Pronouns

A singular pronoun refers to one person, place, or thing.

I gave **it** to **her**.

Subject Pronouns

A subject pronoun can be used as the subject of a sentence.

The subject pronouns are *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, and *they*. Two or more subject pronouns can be joined by *and* or *or* to form a compound subject.

She is a great tennis player.

She and **I** play tennis often.

She and Tom like to play video games.

Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. Every sentence has a subject and a predicate. Every sentence begins with a capital letter. An independent clause has a subject and a predicate and can stand on its own as a sentence. A dependent clause also has a subject and a predicate, but it does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

Because Jenny sold the most cookies, she won an award.

Compound Sentences

Two sentences joined by a comma and *and*, *but*, or *or* form a compound sentence.

Ming is eating, but Lili is sleeping.

Declarative Sentences

A declarative sentence makes a statement. It tells something. A declarative sentence ends with a period (.).

Your jacket is in the closet.

Exclamatory Sentences

An exclamatory sentence expresses strong or sudden emotion. An exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation point (!).

It is so cold today!

Imperative Sentences

An imperative sentence gives a command or makes a request. The subject of an imperative sentence is generally *you*, which is often not stated. An imperative sentence ends with a period (.).

Please wear your jacket.

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Interrogative Sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a question. An interrogative sentence ends with a question mark (?).

Are you ready?

Where is your jacket?

Subject Complements

A subject complement follows a linking verb in a sentence. A subject complement is a noun or a pronoun that renames the subject or an adjective that describes the subject. Two or more subject complements joined by *and*, *but*, or *or* form a compound subject complement.

That police officer is a **hero**.

His actions were **brave** and **skillful**.

The officer with the medal for bravery was **he**.

Subjects

The subject of a sentence is who or what the sentence is about. The subject can be a noun or a pronoun.

Complete Subjects

The complete subject is the simple subject and the words that describe it or give more information about it.

The little gray kitten is playing.

Compound Subjects

Two or more subjects joined by *and* or *or* form a compound subject.

Gerald and **Cathy** went to the movies.

Henry or **I** will sweep the floor.

Simple Subjects

The simple subject is the noun or pronoun that a sentence tells about.

His little **dog** likes to chase balls.

It runs very fast.

Subject-Verb Agreement

A subject and verb must agree, whether the verb is a main verb or a helping verb.

I **like** chicken soup.

My brother **likes** split pea soup.

Our parents **like** lentil soup.

I **am building** a birdhouse.

He **is building** a shed.

They **are building** a garage.

A collective noun is generally considered a singular noun though it means more than one person or thing; therefore, the verb agrees with the singular form.

Our **class is entering** the contest.

When a sentence starts with *there is*, *there are*, *there was*, or *there were*, the subject follows the verb. The verb must agree with the subject.

There **is** a **book** on the desk.

There **were** some **pencils** in the drawer.

Tense

The tense of a verb shows when the action takes place.

Future Tense

The future tense tells about something that will happen in the future.

One way to form the future tense is with a form of the helping verb *be* plus *going to* plus the present form of a verb.

I **am going to make** toast.

Dad **is going to butter** it.

They **are going to eat** it.

Another way to form the future tense is with the helping verb *will* and the present form of a verb.

Our class **will go** to the museum.

The guide **will explain** the exhibits.

Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense tells about an action that will have been completed by some time in the future. The future perfect tense is formed with *will* plus *have* plus the past participle of a verb.

I **will have finished** my homework by dinnertime.

I **will have made** a salad by that time too.

Future Progressive Tense

The future progressive tense tells about something that will be happening over a period of time in the future. The future progressive tense is formed with *will* plus *be* and the present participle or with a form of *be* plus *going to be* and the present participle.

Laura **will be taking** a photography class in the summer.

I **am going to be finishing** my essay over the weekend.

Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect tense tells about an action that was finished before another action in the past. The past perfect tense is formed with *had* and the past participle of a verb.

She **had come** straight home after school.

She **had finished** her homework before dinner.

Past Progressive Tense

The past progressive tense tells what was happening over a period of time in the past. The past progressive tense is formed with *was* or *were* and the present participle of a verb.

I **was feeding** the cat.

My parents **were reading**.

Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense tells about an action that happened at some indefinite time in the past or about an action that started in the past and continues into the present. The present perfect tense is formed with a form of *have* and the past participle of a verb.

He **has finished** his homework.

They **have lived** in that house for three years.

Present Progressive Tense

The present progressive tense tells an ongoing action in the present. The present progressive tense is formed with *am*, *is*, or *are* and the present participle of a verb.

We **are watching** TV.

I **am eating** popcorn.

My sister **is drinking** juice.

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Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense tells about something that happened in the past. The simple past tense of regular verbs is formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present form of a verb.

We **cooked** breakfast this morning.
Mom **fried** the eggs.

Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense tells about something that is always true or something that happens again and again. The present part of a verb is used for the present tense. If the subject is a singular noun or *he, she, or it*, *-s* or *-es* must be added to the verb.

Prairie dogs **live** where it's dry.
A prairie dog **digs** a burrow to live in.

Verbs

A verb shows action or state of being. See TENSE.

Action Verbs

An action verb tells what someone or something does.

The girl **sings**.
Dogs **bark**.

Being Verbs

A being verb shows what someone or something is. Being verbs do not express action.

The girl **is** happy.
The dog **was** hungry.

Helping Verbs

A verb can have more than one word. A helping verb is a verb added before the main verb that helps make the meaning clear.

We **will** go to the movie.
We **might** buy some popcorn.

Irregular Verbs

The past and the past participle of irregular verbs are not formed by adding *-d* or *-ed*.

<u>Present</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
sing	sang	sung
send	sent	sent
write	wrote	written

Linking Verbs

A linking verb joins the subject of a sentence to a subject complement. Being verbs can be linking verbs.

My aunt **is** a professional writer.

Her stories **are** excellent.

The winner of the writing award **was** she.

Principal Parts

A verb has four principal parts: present, present participle, past, and past participle. The present participle is formed by adding *-ing* to the present. The past and the past participle of regular verbs are formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present.

<u>Present</u>	<u>Present Participle</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
walk	walking	walked	walked
wave	waving	waved	waved

The past and the past participle of irregular verbs are not formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present.

<u>Present</u>	<u>Present Participle</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
do	doing	did	done
fly	flying	flew	flown
put	putting	put	put

The present participle is often used with forms of the helping verb *be*.

We **are walking** to school.

I **was doing** my homework.

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The past participle is often used with forms of the helping verb *have*.

We **have walked** this way before.

He **has done** his homework.

Regular Verbs

The past and the past participle of regular verbs are formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present.

<u>Present</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
jump	jumped	jumped
listen	listened	listened

Verb Phrases

A verb phrase is made up of one or more helping verbs and a main verb.

I **should have shown** you my drawings.

I **am entering** them in the art contest.

You **can see** them there.

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Capitalization

Use a capital letter to begin the first word in a sentence.

Tomorrow is my birthday.

Use a capital letter to begin the names of people and pets.

Aunt Peg let me play with her ferret, **Nibbles**.

Use a capital letter to begin the names of streets, cities, states, and countries.

I live on **Roscoe Street**.

My cousin lives in **Guadalajara, Mexico**.

Use a capital letter to begin the names of days, months, and holidays.

This year **Thanksgiving** is on **Thursday, November 25**.

Use a capital letter to begin a proper adjective.

I like to eat **Chinese** food.

Use a capital letter to begin people's titles.

Mrs. Novak

Dr. Ramirez

Governor Ferdinand Marcic

Use a capital letter to begin the important words in the title of a book or poem. The first and last words of a title are always capitalized. Short words such as *of*, *to*, *for*, *a*, *an*, and *the* are not capitalized unless they are the first or last word of the title.

The Secret Garden

"Sing a Song of Cities"

The personal pronoun *I* is always a capital letter.

Punctuation

Apostrophes

Use an apostrophe to form possessive nouns.

Keisha's skateboard
the children's lunches
the horses' stalls

Use an apostrophe to replace the letters left out in a contraction.

didn't can't wasn't

Commas

Use a comma to separate the words in a series.

Mark, Anton, and Cara made the scenery.
They hammered, sawed, and nailed.

Use a comma or commas to separate a name in direct address.

Carl, will you help me?
Do you think, Keshawn, that we will finish today?

Use a comma before the coordinating conjunction when two short sentences are combined in a compound sentence.

Dad will heat the soup, and I will make the salad.
Dad likes noodle soup, but I like bean soup.

Use a comma to separate the names of a city and state.

She comes from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Use a comma or commas to separate a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence.

"Hey," called Anthony, "where are you going?"
"I'm going to the movies," Helen answered.

Use a comma after the word *yes* or *no* that introduces a sentence.

No, I can't go to the movies tonight.

Exclamation Points

Use an exclamation point after an exclamatory sentence.

We won the game!

Italics

Titles of books and magazines are italicized when they are typed and underlined when they are handwritten.

Charlotte's Web

Mr. Popper's Penguins

Periods

Use a period after a declarative or an imperative sentence.

The cat is hungry.

Please feed it.

Use a period after most abbreviations.

Sun.	Sept.	ft.	yd.
Ave.	St.	gal.	oz.

Periods are not used after abbreviations for metric measures.

km cm

Use a period after a personal title.

Mr. Frank Cummings

Mrs. Joanna Clark

Dr. Hilda Doolittle

Sgt. Barry Lindon

Use a period after an initial.

John F. Kennedy U.S.A.

J. K. Rowling B.S.A.

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Question Marks

Use a question mark after an interrogative sentence.

Where are you going?

Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to show the exact words a person says in a direct quotation.

Carly said, "I can't find my markers."

"Where," asked her mother, "did you leave them?"

Use quotation marks around the title of a poem, story, or magazine article.

"Paul Revere's Ride"

"Kids to the Rescue"