Grammar and Mechanics Handbook
Adjectives
An adjective points out or describes a noun.

*That* building is *tall*.

Adjective Phrases
An adjective phrase is a prepositional phrase that describes a noun or pronoun. See PHRASES.

Articles
An article points out a noun. See ARTICLES.

Common Adjectives
A common adjective expresses an ordinary quality of a noun or pronoun: *fast* car, *delicious* hamburger.

Comparison of Adjectives
Most adjectives have three degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative.

The positive degree of an adjective shows a quality of a noun or pronoun.

- Elephants are *large* animals.
- The actor is *famous*.
- Those rings are *valuable*.

The comparative degree is used to compare two items or two sets of items. This form is often followed by *than*.

- Whales are *larger* than elephants.
- The dancer is *more famous* than the actor.
- The bracelets are *less valuable* than the rings.

The superlative degree is used to compare three or more items or sets of items.

- Whales are the *largest* mammals.
- The singer is the *most famous* performer in the show.
- The necklaces are the *least valuable* of all the jewelry.
The adjectives *few, fewer*, and *fewest* are used to compare nouns that can be counted. Note that these nouns are plural in form.

- Kara made a *few* cookies for the bake sale.
- Joel made *fewer* cookies than Kara did.
- Keesha made the *fewest* cookies of anyone in class.

The adjectives *little, less*, and *least* are used to compare nouns that cannot be counted. Note that these nouns are singular in form.

- Kara has *little* time to bake cookies.
- Joel has *less* time than Kara.
- Keesha has the *least* time of us all.

### Demonstrative Adjectives
A demonstrative adjective points out a definite person, place, thing, or idea. Demonstrative adjectives always precede the nouns they modify and agree with them in number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this plant</td>
<td>these plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>that plant</td>
<td>those plants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- *This* plant is healthy. (singular and near)
- *Those* plants need water. (plural and far)

### Descriptive Adjectives
A descriptive adjective gives information about a noun or pronoun. It tells about age, size, shape, color, origin, or another quality.

- This *African* violet has *small, pink, pointy* petals.

### Indefinite Adjectives
An indefinite adjective refers to all or any of a group of people, places, or things. Some of the most common indefinite adjectives are *all, another, any, both, each, either, every, few, many, most, neither, no, other, several, and some*. Note that *another, each, every, either, and neither* are always singular and the others are plural.

- *Every* student has a pencil.
- *Several* students have rulers.
Interrogative Adjectives
An interrogative adjective is used in asking a question. The interrogative adjectives are *which*, *what*, and *whose*.

*Which* is used to ask about one or more of a specific set of people or things. *What* is used to ask about people or things but is not limited to a specific group or set. *Whose* asks about possession.

- Which backpack is yours?
- What supplies do you carry in your backpack?
- Whose backpack is under the chair?

Numerical Adjectives
A numerical adjective indicates an exact number. Numerical adjectives may refer to a number of people or things, or they may refer to the arrangement of things in numerical order.

- My family has **two** cats.
- The **first** day of the week is Sunday.

Position of Adjectives
Most adjectives go before the words they describe.

- Many dedicated gardeners live on **my** block.

Adjectives may also directly follow nouns.

- Their flowers, **tall** and **colorful**, brighten every yard.

An adjective can follow a linking verb as a subject complement.

- The results of their work are **spectacular**.

Possessive Adjectives
A possessive adjective shows possession or ownership. Possessive adjectives have antecedents. A possessive adjective must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.

- John has a skateboard. **His** skateboard is silver.
- Jo and Luis have bikes. **Their** bikes are new.

Possessive adjectives change form depending on person and number. Third person singular possessive adjectives change form depending on gender—whether they are masculine (*his*), feminine (*her*), or neuter (*its*).
Proper Adjectives
A proper adjective is formed from a proper noun: Roman ruins, Mexican food.

Subject Complements
An adjective may be used as a subject complement. See SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS.

Adverbs
An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs indicate time, place, manner, degree, affirmation, or negation.

Adverbs of time answer the question when or how often.
The chorus frequently sings for us.

Adverbs of place answer the question where.
The tenors walked forward.

Adverbs of manner answer the question how.
They begin to sing loudly.

Adverbs of degree answer the question how much or how little.
The sopranos had very clear voices.

Adverbs of affirmation tell whether a statement is positive or expresses consent or approval. Adverbs of negation express something negative or a refusal.
Yes, we enjoyed the concert.
We never miss hearing them sing.

Adverb Clauses
An adverb clause is a dependent clause used as an adverb. See CLAUSES.
Adverb Phrases
An adverb phrase is a prepositional phrase used as an adverb. See PHRASES.

Adverbial Nouns
An adverbial noun is a noun that acts as an adverb. An adverbial noun expresses *time, distance, measure, weight, value, or direction*.

- The trip will take only a few **minutes**. (time)
- The post office is just five **blocks** away. (distance)
- The box is a **foot** long. (measure)
- The package weighs six **pounds**. (weight)
- It’s worth 20 **dollars**. (value)
- Look this **way**. (direction)

Comparison of Adverbs
Most adverbs have three degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative.

- Tom **works carefully**.
- Eddie works **more carefully** than Tom.
- Luz works **most carefully** of anyone in class.
- Wiley ate **rapidly**.
- Frank ate **less rapidly** than Wiley.
- Allison ate **least rapidly** of anyone.
- Carla walks **fast**.
- Lisa walks **faster** than Carla.
- Ping walks **fastest** of us all.

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 at the beginning of an adjective clause to explain the reason for something.

- Tell me **why** your project will be late.
Antecedents

The noun to which a pronoun or a possessive adjective refers is its antecedent. A pronoun or possessive adjective must agree with its antecedent in person and number. Third-person singular personal, possessive, intensive, and reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives must also agree in gender. See GENDER, NUMBER, PERSON.

Appositives

An appositive is a word (or words) that follows a noun and helps identify it or adds more information about it. An appositive names the same person, place, thing, or idea as the noun it explains. An appositive phrase is an appositive and its modifiers.

An appositive is restrictive if it is necessary to understand the sentence. It is nonrestrictive if it is not necessary. A nonrestrictive appositive is set off by commas.

The poet Langston Hughes also wrote stories and plays.
Toni Morrison, the American writer, won the Nobel Prize.

Articles

An article points out a noun. The is the definite article. It refers to a specific item or specific items in a group. The may be used with either singular or plural concrete nouns and with abstract nouns.

We went to the beach yesterday.
The beaches in California are beautiful.
The sand is very white.

A and an are the indefinite articles. Each is used to refer to a single member of a general group. A and an are used only with singular concrete nouns. The article an is used before a vowel sound. The article a is used before a consonant sound.

We sat on a blanket under an umbrella.
Clauses

A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a predicate.

**Adverb Clauses**
An adverb clause is a dependent clause used as an adverb. An adverb clause can tell *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *to what extent*.

We locked all the doors **before we left**.

We went **where we could see the beach**.

We didn’t tell anyone **because it was a secret**.

**Dependent Clauses**
A dependent clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence.

**While we were loading the car**, my cell phone rang.

**Independent Clauses**
An independent clause can stand on its own as a sentence.

**We drove off** after I answered the phone.

Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word used to connect words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.

**Coordinating Conjunctions**
A coordinating conjunction is used to connect similar words or groups of words. The coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, and *yet*.

My cousin is a swimmer **and** a sailor. (nouns)

She is quick **but** methodical. (adjectives)

She doesn’t go hiking **or** camping. (verbs)

She owns neither hiking boots **nor** a sleeping bag. (nouns)

She is known for her kindness **and** for her sense of humor. (prepositional phrases)
Coordinating conjunctions can connect independent or dependent clauses.

She spends a lot of time alone, yet she has many friends. (independent clauses)
She is popular because she is kind and because she has a good sense of humor. (dependent clauses)

**Correlative Conjunctions**

Correlative conjunctions travel in pairs and emphasize the relationship between words or groups of words of equal importance. The pairs both, and; either, or; neither, nor; and not only, but also are correlative conjunctions.

Tara used both an encyclopedia and an online article in her report.
The award will go to either the fourth-grade or fifth-grade class.
I have neither the time nor the interest in seeing that movie.
Martin was not only honored but also humbled by the citizenship award.

**Subordinate Conjunctions**

A subordinate conjunction is used to join a dependent clause and an independent clause. Some common subordinate conjunctions are although, after, as, because, before, if, in order that, provided that, since, so that, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, whether, and while.

She is popular because she has a good sense of humor. After she moved away, I e-mailed her every week.

**Direct Objects**

The direct object of a sentence answers the question whom or what after the verb. A noun or an object pronoun can be used as a direct object.

My mom made lemonade.
I helped her.
Gender

Third-person singular personal, possessive, intensive, and reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives change form depending on gender—whether the antecedent is masculine (he, him, his, himself), feminine (she, her, hers, herself), or neuter (it, its, itself).

Indirect Objects

An indirect object tells to whom or for whom, or to what or for what, an action is done. A noun or an object pronoun can be used as an indirect object.

I gave my dad a birthday present.
I made him a birthday card.

Interjections

An interjection is a word or phrase that expresses a strong or sudden emotion, such as happiness, disgust, pain, agreement, impatience, surprise, sadness, and amazement.

Ouch! I stubbed my toe.
Oh, no! I lost my keys.
Hurray! I won the contest.
Wow! Your new bike is awesome.

Mood

Mood shows the manner in which the action or state of being of a verb is expressed.

Emphatic Mood

The emphatic mood gives special force to a simple present- or past-tense verb. To make a verb emphatic, use do, does, or did before the base form of the verb.

I do like to play baseball.
He did hit a home run last night.
**Imperative Mood**
The imperative mood is used to express a command or a request. The imperative mood uses the base form of a verb. The subject of an imperative sentence is usually understood to be the second-person pronoun, *you*.

- *Catch* the ball!
- Please *hand* me that bat.

A command can be given in the first person by using *let's* before the base form of a verb.

- *Let's play* another game tomorrow.

**Indicative Mood**
The indicative mood is used to make a statement or ask a question. Most sentences are in the indicative mood.

- *Do you like* to play baseball?
- *I learned* to play last year.
- Baseball *is* my favorite game.

**Subjunctive Mood**
The subjunctive mood is used to express a wish or desire; to express a command, request, or suggestion following the word *that*; or to express something that is contrary to fact (not true). The subjunctive mood refers to what is hoped or wished rather than what actually is.

For the verb *be*, the subjunctive forms are *be* and *were*. *Be* is commonly used with verbs of command, request, or suggestion. Otherwise, *were* is typically used. The auxiliary *would* is used in place of *will*.

- I wish I *were* a better player. (a wish)
- The coach requested that *we be* here on time. (a request after *that*)
- If I *were* you, I would arrive at noon. (something that is contrary to fact)

**Nouns**
A noun is a name word. A singular noun names one person, place, thing or idea: *boy, city, book, time*. A plural noun names more than one person, place, or thing: *boys, cities, books, times*.
Abstract Nouns
An abstract noun names something that you cannot observe with your senses. It refers to an emotion, a state of being, or a belief. Love, freedom, and compassion are examples of abstract nouns.

Appositives
An appositive is a word (or words) that follows a noun and helps identify it or adds more information about it. See APPOSITIVES.

Collective Nouns
A collective noun names a group of people, animals, or things considered as one: team, herd, bunch.

Common Nouns
A common noun names any one member of a class of people, places, or things: sailor, town, telephone.

Concrete Nouns
A concrete noun names something that you can observe with your senses. Book, cat, and couch are examples of concrete nouns.

Count Nouns
A count noun names something that can be counted: bench, cactus, ball, idea, wish. Count nouns can be made plural because they can be counted.

Noncount Nouns
A noncount noun names something that generally cannot be counted and does not have a plural form: money, milk, rain, time, happiness.

Nouns in Direct Address
A noun in direct address names the person spoken to. A noun used in direct address is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas.

Peter, are you coming with us?
Bring your skateboard, Carly, and wear your helmet.
**Possessive Nouns**

A possessive noun expresses possession or ownership.

To form the singular possessive, add -'s to the singular form of the noun.

- friend → friend's report
- scientist → scientist's excavation

To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in s, add an apostrophe only.

- kings → kings' treasure
- archaeologists → archaeologists' work

To form the possessive of a plural noun that does not end in s, add -'s.

- women → women's influence

The possessive of a proper noun ending in s is usually formed by adding -'s.

- James → James's research

The possessive of a compound noun is formed by adding -'s to the end of the word.

- brother-in-law's vacation
- brothers-in-law's vacations

Separate possession occurs when two or more people own things independently of one another. To show separate possession, use -'s after each noun.

- Ann and Peter each own a boat.
- Ann's and Peter's boats are in the marina.

Joint possession occurs when two or more people own something together. To show joint possession, use -'s after the last noun only.

- Tom and Gloria are the owners of three boats.
- Tom and Gloria's boats are all painted bright blue.

**Proper Nouns**

A proper noun names a particular person, place, or thing: *George Washington, White House, Continental Congress.*
Number

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

Person

Personal, possessive, intensive, and reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives change form according to person—whether the antecedent is the person speaking (first person), being spoken to (second person), or being spoken about (third person).

Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that is used as a single part of speech.

Adjective Phrases
An adjective phrase is a phrase used as an adjective.

The clown with the red hair was twisting balloons.

Adverb Phrases
An adverb phrase is a prepositional phrase used as an adverb.

She threw the balloons into the air.

Verb Phrases
A verb phrase is a group of words that does the work of a single verb. A verb phrase contains a main verb and one or more helping verbs such as is, are, have, can, and do.

They are studying.
They will be studying until dinnertime.

In some questions and statements, the parts of a verb phrase may be separated.

Did they finish their projects?
Dolores has not finished hers.
Predicates

The predicate of a sentence names an action or a state of being.

**Complete Predicates**
The complete predicate of a sentence is the verb or verb phrase along with its modifiers and complements or objects.

The boy *carried his books slowly down the street*.

**Compound Predicates**
Two or more predicates joined by a coordinating conjunction form a compound predicate.

He *stopped* and *waited for his friends*.

**Simple Predicates**
The simple predicate of a sentence is the verb or verb phrase.

His friends *were racing* their bikes on Main Street.

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence.

**Adjective Phrases**
A prepositional phrase can be used as an adjective.

The woman *in the red dress* is my mother.

**Adverb Phrases**
A prepositional phrase can be used as an adverb.

She is walking *across the street*.

**Objects of Prepositions**
The noun or pronoun that follows a preposition is the object of that preposition.

Did you jump over the *log* or walk around *it*?
Prepositional Phrases
A prepositional phrase is a preposition, its object, and any words that describe the object.

We walked through the dark, silent woods.

Pronouns
A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. The noun to which a pronoun refers is its antecedent. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person and number. Third-person personal, possessive, intensive, and reflexive pronouns must also agree in gender. See GENDER, NUMBER, PERSON.

Demonstrative Pronouns
A demonstrative pronoun points out a particular person, place, or thing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>these</td>
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<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>those</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

This is my favorite sweater. (singular and near)
Those are my old ski boots. (plural and far)

Indefinite Pronouns
An indefinite pronoun refers to any or all of a group of people, places, or things. Some indefinite pronouns are anybody, many, both, none, few, and everyone.

Most indefinite pronouns are singular. The indefinite pronouns both, few, many, and several are always plural.

Everyone in the class is invited to the party.
Few of the students are going to miss it.

The indefinite pronouns all, some, and none may be singular or plural, depending on whether the noun they refer to is singular or plural.

All of the children are here. All of the class is here.
Indefinite pronouns such as *no one, nobody, none,* and *nothing* are negative words. In a sentence they should never be used with other negative words, such as *no, not,* and *never.*

**Intensive Pronouns**

Intensive pronouns end in *self* or *selves.* An intensive pronoun emphasizes a preceding noun or pronoun. It must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.

She made the whole dinner *herself.*

I *myself* have never cooked an entire meal.

Intensive pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third-person singular intensive pronouns change form depending on gender—whether the antecedent is masculine (*himself*), feminine (*herself*), or neuter (*itself*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>myself</td>
<td>ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>yourself</td>
<td>yourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Person</td>
<td>himself</td>
<td>themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>herself</td>
<td>itself</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Interrogative Pronouns**

An interrogative pronoun is used to ask a question. The interrogative pronouns are *who, whom, whose, what,* and *which.*

*Who* refers to people. It is often the subject of a question. *Whom* also refers to people. It is the object of a verb or a preposition.

*Who* is starring in the play?

*Whom* did you see at rehearsal?

To whom did they sell the tickets?

*Whose* is used to ask about possession. *Which* is used when asking about a group or class. *What* is used for asking about things or for seeking information.

*Whose* is the script on the chair?

*Which* of the actors missed his entrance?

*What* did he leave on stage?

*What* did the director tell him?
Object Pronouns

An object pronoun can be used as the direct object or the indirect object of a verb or as the object of a preposition. The object pronouns are me, you, him, her, it, us, and them.

Carla met him at the party. (direct object)
Tom gave her a present. (indirect object)
The house was decorated by them. (object of a preposition)

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third-person singular pronouns change form to reflect gender—whether the antecedent is feminine (she, her), masculine (he, him), or neuter (it).

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Person</td>
<td>I, me</td>
<td>we, us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Person</td>
<td>he, she, it, him, her</td>
<td>they, them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal pronouns also change form depending on whether they are used as subjects (I, you, he, she, it, we, they) or objects (me, you, him, her, it, us, them).

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun shows possession or ownership. It takes the place of a possessive noun. Possessive pronouns must agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender.

Maria and Tom have pets.
Hers is a cat, and his is a hamster.

Possessive pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third-person singular possessive pronouns change form to reflect gender—whether the antecedent is masculine (his), feminine (hers), or neuter (its).

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<td>ours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Person</td>
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<td>theirs</td>
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</table>
**Reflexive Pronouns**

Reflexive pronouns end in *self* or *selves*. A reflexive pronoun can be the direct or indirect object of a verb or the object of a preposition. It generally refers to the subject of the sentence. Reflexive pronouns must agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender.

- I consider *myself* a good reader. (direct object)
- He bought *himself* a new book. (indirect object)
- They read it by *themselves*. (object of a preposition)

Reflexive pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third-person singular reflexive pronouns change form depending on gender—whether the antecedent is masculine (*himself*), feminine (*herself*), or neuter (*itself*).

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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.
Subject Pronouns
A subject pronoun can be used as the subject of a sentence or as a subject complement. The subject pronouns are I, you, he, she, it, we, and they.

She painted that picture. (subject)
The subject of the portrait is he. (subject complement)

Sentences
A sentence expresses a complete thought. The essential parts of a sentence are a subject and a predicate.

Complex Sentences
A complex sentence contains an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

As soon as Marta arrives, we will leave for the movie.

Compound Sentences
A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses. Independent clauses in a compound sentence are usually connected by a coordinating conjunction. A semicolon may be used instead of a coordinating conjunction.

Marta will be here soon, and then we’ll leave.
Tom is going to drive; he has the biggest car.

Declarative Sentences
A declarative sentence makes a statement. It ends with a period.

Elephants are the largest land mammals.

Exclamatory Sentences
An exclamatory sentence expresses a strong emotion. It ends with an exclamation point.

That elephant is huge!

Imperative Sentences
An imperative sentence gives a command. It ends with a period.

Find out how much that elephant weighs.
**Interrogative Sentences**
An interrogative sentence asks a question. It ends with a question mark.

Did you ask the keeper what the elephant weighs?

**Inverted Order in Sentences**
A sentence is in inverted order when the main verb or an auxiliary verb comes before the subject.

Across the exhibit walked the baby elephant.
Have you seen the new elephant at the zoo?
There are now three elephants in our zoo.
Here is my DVD of *Dumbo*.

**Natural Order in Sentences**
A sentence is in natural order when the verb follows the subject.

The baby elephant walked toward its mother.

**Simple Sentences**
A simple sentence contains a subject and a predicate and expresses a complete thought. Either or both may be compound.

The baby and its mother watched the keeper.

**Subject Complements**
A subject complement follows a linking verb such as the forms of *be*. A noun or pronoun used as a subject complement renames the subject of the sentence; it refers to the same person, place, thing, or idea. An adjective used as a subject complement describes the subject of the sentence.

My sister is a *doctor*.
The winner of that award was *she*.
Her job can be very *rewarding*.
Subjects

The subject of a sentence names the person, place, or thing the sentence is about. To determine the subject of a sentence, ask who or what before the verb.

Complete Subjects
The complete subject of a sentence is the simple subject and all the words that describe it.

The small, shaggy dog barked loudly.

Compound Subjects
Two or more subjects joined by a coordinating conjunction form a compound subject.

The dog and its owner walked through the park.

Simple Subjects
The simple subject of a sentence is the noun or pronoun that names the person, place, or thing the sentence is about.

The small dog with the red collar is mine.

Tenses

The tense of a verb expresses the time of the action or state of being.

Perfect Tenses
The present perfect tense tells about an action that happened at some indefinite time in the past or an action that started in the past and continues into the present. It uses have or has and the past participle.

I have finished all my homework.
She has lived in that house for a year.

The past perfect tense tells about a past action that was completed before another past action started. It uses had and the past participle.

I had finished my homework before my dad got home.
Progressive Tenses
The present progressive tense tells about something that is happening right now. It uses the present tense of the verb be (am, is, are) and the present participle.

- The students are working on a science project.

The past progressive tense tells about something that was happening in the past. It uses the past tense of the verb be (was, were) and the present participle.

- They were doing math an hour ago.

The future progressive tense tells about something that will be happening in the future. It uses will or is/are going to with be and the present participle.

- They will be rehearsing their presentation tomorrow night.
- They are going to be presenting their project at the science fair.

Simple Tenses
The simple present tense tells about an action that happens again and again or about things that are general truths. The simple present tense uses the present, or base, form of a verb. If the subject is a third-person singular noun or pronoun, -s is added to the base form.

- I like frozen yogurt.  He eats frozen yogurt every day.

The simple past tense tells about an action that happened in the past. The past tense uses the past form.

- We walked to the frozen-yogurt shop.

The simple future tense tells about an action that will happen in the future. The simple future tense uses the auxiliary verb will or be going to followed by the base form of a verb.

- I am going to buy a quart of frozen yogurt.
- We will eat it for dessert tonight.

Verbs
A verb shows action or state of being. See MOOD, TENSES, VOICE.

- Carlo opened the present. (action)
- He was very excited. (state of being)
Auxiliary Verbs
An auxiliary verb combines with a main verb to form a verb phrase. Auxiliary verbs help to show voice, mood, and tense. Some common auxiliaries are the forms of be (am, is, are, was, were), the forms of have (have, has, had), and the forms of do (do, did). Other auxiliary verbs are can, could, may, might, should, and will.

Intransitive Verbs
An intransitive verb has no receiver of its action—no direct object. An intransitive verb may be followed by an adverb or adverb phrase.

She writes well. She comes from Cleveland.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
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Linking Verbs
A linking verb links the subject of a sentence with a subject complement (a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective). The most common linking verbs are be and its forms (am, is, are, been, be, was, were). Other verbs that can be used as linking verbs include appear, become, continue, feel, grow, look, remain, seem, smell, sound, and taste.

My cousin is a poet.
The poet who won the prize was she.
She looks very happy.

Modal Auxiliaries
Modal auxiliaries are used to express possibility, permission, ability, necessity, intention, and willingness. They are followed by main verbs in the base form. The common modal auxiliaries are may, might, can, could, must, should, will, and would.

You might find that information on the Internet. (possibility)
The librarian could help you find it. (possibility)
Anyone **may use** the computer in the library. (permission)
June **can help** you set up your website. (ability)
We **must finish** this project by tomorrow. (necessity)
You **should help** June with her report. (obligation)
I **will help** you after lunch. (willingness)
Tom **would help** if you asked him. (willingness)

**Phrasal Verbs**
A phrasal verb is a combination of a main verb followed by a preposition or an adverb.

Teresa **filled out** the application for the job at the pet store.
Please **hand in** your paper by Friday afternoon.
Did you **call in** the prescription to be refilled?

**Principal Forms (Parts)**
The four basic forms (parts) of all verbs are the present, or base form; the past; the past participle; and the present participle. The past and past participle of regular verbs are formed by adding -\textit{d} or -\textit{ed} to the base form. The present participle is formed by adding -\textit{ing}.

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<td>sail</td>
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**Regular Verbs**
The past and past participle of regular verbs are formed by adding -\textit{d} or -\textit{ed} to the present, or base form. If a verb ends in \textit{y} preceded by a consonant, the past and past participle are formed by changing the \textit{y} to \textit{i} and adding -\textit{ed}. If a single-syllable verb ends in a consonant preceded by a vowel, the past and past participle are formed by doubling the consonant and adding -\textit{ed}.

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<td>smile</td>
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Transitive Verbs
A transitive verb expresses an action that passes from a doer to a receiver. Every transitive verb has a receiver of its action. That receiver is the direct object.

George passed the test.

Verb Phrases
A verb phrase is two or more verbs that work together as a unit. A verb phrase may have one or more auxiliary verbs and a main verb. The verbs in a verb phrase are usually written together. In negative sentences and in questions, the verbs may be separated.

He has finished cleaning the garage.
He did not mow the lawn.
Will he rake the leaves?

Voice
Voice shows whether the subject of a sentence is the doer or the receiver.

Active Voice
When a verb is in the active voice, the subject is the doer of the action.

Marietta wrote this poem.

Passive Voice
When a verb is in the passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action. A verb in the passive voice is formed by combining a form of be with the past participle.

This poem was written by Marietta.


**Mechanics**

**Capitalization and Punctuation**

**Apostrophes**

Use an apostrophe to show possession.

John’s  the Joneses'  the boys’

Use an apostrophe to indicate the omission of a letter, letters, or numbers.

aren’t  we’ve  the class of ’19

Use an apostrophe to show the plural of a lowercase letter.

i’s  m’s  u’s

**Capitalization**

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

The boy is lost.

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

A woman said, “The boy is lost.”

Use a capital letter to begin a proper noun or proper adjective.

America  American

Use a capital letter to begin a title before a name.

General Ulysses S. Grant

Use a capital letter to begin North, South, East, and West when they refer to sections of the country.

She was born in the South.

Use a capital letter to begin the first and last word and each principal word in a title.

“*The Battle Hymn of the Republic*”

*Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad*
Use a capital letter to begin the first word of every line of most poems and songs.

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
To talk of many things.
Oh beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain.

**Colons**

Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.

Dear Mr. Monroe:

Use a colon before a list of items.

I bought three things for my vacation: a backpack, a tent, and a lantern.

**Commas**

Use a comma to separate words in a series of three or more.

We had roast beef, carrots, potatoes, and salad.

Use a comma to set off parts of dates, addresses, and geographic names.

He was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on February 3, 2006.

Use a comma to set off a nonrestrictive appositive.

Thomas Jefferson, our third president, was an inventor.

Use a comma to separate the clauses of a compound sentence connected by a coordinating conjunction.

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and he was elected our third president.

Use a comma to set off a direct quotation.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, “All men are created equal.”
“I admire Thomas Jefferson,” Allison remarked, “because he was so inventive.”

Use a comma with tag questions. A tag question asks a question at the end of a sentence.

Hiccups are annoying, aren’t they?
The sunset is gorgeous, isn’t it?
Dashes
Use dashes to draw attention to a nonrestrictive element.

My grandfather—who is 99 years old—bonds every Sunday.

Dashes can also be used to signal a break in thought.

The bakery on the corner—I can't remember its name—has amazing challah bread.

Dashes can also mean “in other words” or “namely.”

The three teams in our division—the Bears, the Owls, and the Knights—are equally fierce.

Exclamation Points
Use an exclamation point at the end of an exclamatory sentence and after interjections and exclamatory words.

Wow, we won the game!
Quick! Let’s congratulate the coach.

Hyphens
Use a hyphen to divide a word at the end of a line when one or more syllables are carried to the next line.

When the game was over, everyone congratulated the coach.

Use a hyphen in compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

Use a hyphen to separate parts of some compound terms.

brother-in-law       drive-in       six-year-old

Italics
Use italics to set off the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, movies, plays, television series, operas, ships, and works of art. If you are writing by hand, underline these titles.

I saw a picture of the Titanic in the Atlantic Monthly.
Parentheses
Use parentheses to set off nonrestrictive elements in a sentence. Parentheses can be used to add information to make a comment or to clarify other information in the sentence.

The art museum has a wonderful portrait collection (although its café needs help).

Marcia (who is absent today) is responsible for the weekly newsletter.

Periods
Use a period at the end of a declarative or an imperative sentence.

The birdhouse is almost finished.
Please hand me that hammer.

Use a period after many abbreviations.

Dr. a.m. Oct.
Fri. ft. min.
Gov. gal. Co.

Question Marks
Use a question mark at the end of a question.

What are you going to do next?

Quotation Marks
Use quotation marks to set off quotations. Quotation marks are placed before and after every complete quotation and every part of a divided quotation. Commas set off direct quotations from the rest of the sentence. The comma goes inside the quotation marks. Periods also go inside quotation marks.

“I’m going to the movies,” said Marilee.
“Call me when you’re ready to leave,” Carol responded, “and I’ll meet you there.”

A question mark or an exclamation point that is part of the quotation replaces the comma that sets off the quotation and goes inside the quotation marks. A question mark or an exclamation point that is part of the entire sentence goes outside the quotation marks.

“What time are you planning to leave?” Janet asked.
Who said, “Meet me at five o’clock”?

Use quotation marks to set off titles of songs, short stories, poems, magazine articles, newspaper articles, and television shows. Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, movies, plays, television series, operas, and works of art are usually printed in italics. When these titles are handwritten, they are underlined.

The article “My Favorite Cookie Recipes” appeared in the magazine *Cooking for Today*.

The lyrics to “America the Beautiful” were reprinted in the *Charleston Tribune*.

**Semicolons**

Use a semicolon to separate the clauses of a compound sentence that are not connected by a coordinating conjunction.

George Washington was our first president; he is called the Father of Our Country.

Use a semicolon to separate the items in a series when the items themselves contain commas.

I have lived in Baltimore, Maryland; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Fargo, North Dakota.