

Grammar and Mechanics Handbook

Grammar

Adjectives

An adjective points out or describes a noun.

That dog is **hungry**.

Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause is a dependent clause used as an adjective.

See CLAUSES.

Adjective Phrases

An infinitive phrase can be used as an adjective. See INFINITIVES.

A participial phrase can be used as an adjective. See PARTICIPLES.

A prepositional phrase can be used as an adjective. See PREPOSITIONS.

Articles

An article points out a noun. See ARTICLES.

Common Adjectives

A common adjective expresses an ordinary quality of a noun or a pronoun: *tall* ship, *majestic* mountains.

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 a pronoun.

My grandmother is a **tall** woman.

The dancer is **famous**.

LaTonya is a **careful** worker.

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

My grandfather is **taller** than my grandmother.

The singer is **more famous** than the actor.

James is a **less careful** worker than LaTonya.

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

My uncle Jack is the **tallest** member of the family.

The singer is the **most famous** person here.

Gloria is the **least careful** worker of them all.

The adjectives *few*, *fewer*, and *fewest* are used to compare nouns that can be counted. Note that the nouns are plural in form.

Lorna made **few** free throws.

Gail made **fewer** free throws than Lorna.

Mary Pat made the **fewest** free throws of all.

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

I have **little** time to practice free throws.

My brother has **less** time to practice than I do.

Of us all, my sister has the **least** time to practice.

Demonstrative Adjectives

A demonstrative adjective points out a definite person, place, thing, or idea. The demonstrative adjectives are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. *This* and *that* are singular; *these* and *those* are plural. *This* and *these* refer to things or people that are near; *that* and *those* refer to things or people that are farther away.

This dog is very friendly. (singular and near)

Those cats are more skittish. (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.

I have a **sweet, little, gray Persian** kitten.

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*, *more*, *most*, *neither*, *no*, *one*, *other*, *several*, and *some*. Note that *another*, *each*, *every*, *either*, *neither*, *no*, *one*, and *other* are always singular, and the others are plural.

Each player has a glove.

Several players have bats.

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Interrogative Adjectives

An interrogative adjective is used to ask a question. The interrogative adjectives are *what*, *which*, and *whose*.

Which is usually 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 position do you play?

What time is the game?

Whose equipment will you borrow?

Numerical Adjectives

A numerical adjective tells an exact number: *twenty-five children*, *eighth grade*.

Participial Adjectives

A participle is a verb form that is used as an adjective. A participial adjective stands alone before or after the word it modifies. See PARTICIPLES.

Position of Adjectives

Most adjectives go before the words they describe.

Mexican pottery comes in many shapes.

Adjectives may also directly follow nouns.

The vase, **ancient** and **cracked**, was found nearby.

An adjective can follow a linking verb (as a subject complement), or it can follow a direct object (as an object complement).

The archaeologist was **excited**.

She considered the vase **extraordinary**.

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.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	my	our
Second Person	your	your
Third Person	his, her, its	their

Proper Adjectives

A proper adjective is formed from a proper noun: *Brazilian* rain forest, *Chinese* emperors.

Subject Complements

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

Adverbs

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

Sometimes my family goes to the zoo. (time)

We like to watch the animals **there**. (place)

We stroll **slowly** along the paths. (manner)

Watching the animals can be **quite** entertaining. (degree)

We'll **undoubtedly** go to the zoo next week. (affirmation)

We **never** miss an opportunity to see the animals. (negation)

Adverb Clauses

A dependent clause can be used as an adverb. See CLAUSES.

Adverb Phrases

A prepositional phrase can be used as an adverb. See PREPOSITIONS.

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Adverbial Nouns

An adverbial noun is a noun that acts as an adverb. Adverbial nouns usually express time, distance, measure, value, or direction.

- The trip took a few **hours**. (time)
- We traveled about a hundred **miles**. (distance)
- The temperature was about 70 **degrees**. (measure)
- The bus fare was 30 **dollars**. (value)
- It was the farthest **north** I've ever been. (direction)

Comparison of Adverbs

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

- Grace works **carefully**.
- Zach works **less carefully** than Grace.
- Meagen works **most carefully** of anyone in class.
- Wiley ate **rapidly**.
- David ate **less rapidly** than Wiley.
- Matt ate **least rapidly** of all.
- Carly walks **fast**.
- Maggie walks **faster** than Carly.
- Ryoko walks **fastest** of us all.

Conjunctive Adverbs

A conjunctive adverb connects independent clauses. A semicolon is used before a conjunctive adverb, and a comma is used after it. Common conjunctive adverbs include *also, besides, consequently, finally, furthermore, hence, however, indeed, instead, later, likewise, moreover, nevertheless, nonetheless, otherwise, still, therefore, and thus*.

- Ryoko walked fastest; **therefore**, he arrived first.

Interrogative Adverbs

An interrogative adverb is used to ask a question. The interrogative adverbs are *how, when, where, and why*.

- When** did Ryoko arrive?

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 or a possessive adjective refers is its antecedent. A pronoun or a 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 Italian sailor **John Cabot** explored Canada.

Magellan, **a Spanish navigator**, sailed around the world.

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** park yesterday.

The parks in our area are very well kept.

The grass is always mowed.

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.

I ate **a** sandwich and **an** apple.

Clauses

A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a predicate. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. A dependent clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Adjective Clauses

A dependent clause can describe a noun or a pronoun. An adjective clause usually begins with a relative pronoun (*who, whom, whose, which, that*) or a subordinate conjunction (*when, where*). These words connect the dependent clause to the noun it modifies.

I read a book **that was fascinating.**

I'll never forget the place **where we met.**

A restrictive adjective clause is necessary to the meaning of the sentence. A nonrestrictive adjective clause is not necessary to the meaning. Nonrestrictive clauses are set off by commas. As a general rule, the relative pronoun *that* is used in restrictive clauses and *which* in nonrestrictive clauses.

Chicago, **which has many tourist attractions,** is located on Lake Michigan.

The attraction **that we liked most** was Navy Pier.

Adverb Clauses

A dependent clause can describe or give information about a verb, an adjective, or other adverb. An adverb clause can tell where, when, why, in what way, to what extent (degree), or under what condition. An adverb clause begins with a subordinate conjunction.

We'll go **wherever you'd like.**

We can leave **after you finish your homework.**

Because it's late, we'll take a taxi.

Noun Clauses

Dependent clauses can be used as nouns. These clauses can function as subjects, complements, appositives, direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions. Most noun clauses begin with one of these introductory words: *how, that, what, whatever, when, where, whether, who, whoever, whom, whomever,* and *why.*

That rabbits make good pets was a surprise to me. (subject)
 The fact is **that chinchillas make good pets too**. (subject complement)
 The idea **that I could like a ferret** seems strange. (appositive)
 My parents will buy me **whatever I choose**. (direct object)
 I am interested in **how guinea pigs are raised**. (object of preposition)

Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word used to join two words or groups of words in a sentence.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction joins words or groups of words that are similar. The coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, and *yet*.

The boys **and** girls ran into the park. (nouns)
 They played on the swings **or** in the sandbox. (prepositional phrases)
 They sailed boats, **but** they didn't go swimming. (independent clauses)

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are used in pairs to connect words or groups of words that have equal importance in a sentence. The most common correlative conjunctions are *both . . . and*, *either . . . or*, *neither . . . nor*, *not only . . . but also*, and *whether . . . or*.

Each correlative conjunction appears immediately in front of one of the words or groups of words that are connected. In sentences with *neither . . . nor*, the verb agrees with the subject closest to it.

Both my mother **and** my father like dogs.
Neither my brothers **nor** my sister likes cats.

Subordinate Conjunctions

A subordinate conjunction is used to join a dependent and an independent clause. Common subordinate conjunctions include *after*, *although*, *as*, *as if*, *as long as*, *because*, *before*, *even though*, *if*, *in order that*, *since*, *so that*, *than*, *though*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *whenever*, *where*, *wherever*, and *while*.

Unless you help me, I won't finish this today.
 I can't help you **until** I've completed my own project.

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.

Consuela made **cookies**.

The children ate **them**.

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*).

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb form ending in *ing* that is used as a noun. A gerund can be used in a sentence as a subject, an object, a subject complement, or an appositive.

Reading is his favorite pastime. (subject)

People from many cultures enjoy **dancing**. (direct object)

My dad likes to relax by **cooking**. (object of a preposition)

My favorite hobby is **skateboarding**. (subject complement)

Her hobby, **hiking**, requires little equipment. (appositive)

A gerund phrase consists of a gerund, its object or complement, and any descriptive words or phrases. The entire phrase acts as a noun.

Reading mysteries is a relaxing form of recreation. (subject)

Linda's hobby is **riding her bike**. (subject complement)

People around the world enjoy **watching fireworks**. (direct object)

Americans celebrate the Fourth of July by **attending firework shows**.
(object of a preposition)

His job, **creating fireworks displays**, can be very dangerous.
(appositive)

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 **Sven** a present.
- I gave **him** a birthday card too.

Infinitives

An infinitive is a verb form, usually preceded by *to*, that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

- To study** is your present job. (noun)
- I have a history report **to do**. (adjective)
- I went **to study** in the library. (adverb)

An infinitive phrase consists of an infinitive, its object or complement, and any descriptive words or phrases.

- To finish the science report** was my goal. (noun)
- I made a decision **to write about bears**. (adjective)
- I arrived too late **to finish it today**. (adverb)

Hidden Infinitives

A hidden infinitive is an infinitive without *to*. Hidden infinitives occur after verbs of perception such as *hear*, *see*, *know*, and *feel* and after verbs such as *let*, *make*, *dare*, *need*, and *help*.

- I heard the birds **sing** this morning.
- I'll help **build** a birdhouse.

The word *to* is also omitted after the prepositions *but* and *except* and the conjunction *than*.

- I'll do anything but **mow** the lawn.
- I'd rather help out than **do** nothing.

Split Infinitives

An adverb placed between *to* and the verb results in a split infinitive. Good writers try to avoid split infinitives.

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Subjects of Infinitives

An infinitive used as a direct object can have a subject. The subject tells the doer of the infinitive. If the subject is a pronoun, it is always in the object form.

We wanted **her** to clean the garage.

Interjections

An interjection is a word or phrase that expresses a strong or sudden emotion, such as happiness, delight, anger, disgust, surprise, impatience, pain, or wonder.

Ouch! I stubbed my toe.

Wow, that's amazing!

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 the emphatic mood, use *do*, *does*, or *did* before the base form of the verb.

I **do like** to use cell phones.

I **did use** my cell phone 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*.

Follow the directions carefully.

Watch out!

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

Let's go.

Indicative Mood

The indicative mood is used to state a fact or ask a question. The simple tenses, the progressive tenses, and the perfect tenses are all part of the indicative mood.

I **bought** a new cell phone.

Have you ever **sent** pictures with a cell phone?

The pictures **are** amazing!

Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood is used to express a wish or a desire; to express a command, a recommendation, or a necessity after *that*; or to express something that is contrary to fact.

The past tense of a verb is used to state present wishes or desires or contrary-to-fact conditions. *Were* is used instead of *was*, and *would* is used instead of *will*.

I wish you **were** here. (a wish or desire)

If we **had** enough money, we **would** go to the movies. (a contrary-to-fact condition)

The base form of a verb is used in a clause after *that*.

The coach insisted that Laura **be** on time. (command after *that*)

It's imperative that she **call** him tonight. (necessity after *that*)

Nouns

A noun is a name word. A singular noun names one person, place, thing, or idea: *girl, park, basketball, memory*. A plural noun names more than one person, place, thing, or idea: *girls, parks, basketballs, memories*.

Abstract Nouns

An abstract noun names something that cannot be seen or touched. It expresses a quality or a condition: *morality, sadness, idea, duration*.

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*.

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Common Nouns

A common noun names any one of a class of people, places, or things: *reader, province, star*.

Concrete Nouns

A concrete noun names something that can be seen or touched: *table, hammer, artist, Ohio River*.

Count Nouns

A count noun names something that can be seen or touched: *table, hammer, artist, Ohio River*.

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb form ending in *ing* that is used as a noun. A gerund or a gerund phrase can be a subject, an object, a subject complement, or an appositive. See GERUNDS.

Infinitives Used as Nouns

An infinitive is a verb form, usually preceded by *to*. An infinitive or infinitive phrase used as a noun can be a subject, a subject complement, an object, or an appositive. See INFINITIVES.

Noncount Nouns

A noncount noun names something that cannot be seen or touched. It expresses a quality or a condition: *morality, sadness, idea, duration*.

Noun Clauses

A dependent clause can be used as a noun. See CLAUSES.

Noun Phrases

A gerund phrase can be used as a noun. See GERUNDS.

Nouns in Direct Address

A prepositional phrase can be used as a noun. See PREPOSITIONS.

Possessive Nouns

A possessive noun expresses possession or ownership.

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

student student's Heather Heather's

To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in -s, add the apostrophe only. If the plural form of a noun does not end in -s, add -'s.

cowboys cowboys' children children's

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

James James's Mrs. Williams Mrs. Williams's

The plural possessive of a proper name is formed by adding an apostrophe to the plural of the name.

Mr. and Mrs. Adams the Adamses' children

The possessive of compound nouns is formed by adding -'s to the end of the term.

commander in chief commander in chief's
brothers-in-law brothers-in-law's

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

Diane's and Peter's murals are colorful.

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

Marta and Ryan's mural is colorful.

Proper Nouns

A proper noun names a particular person, place, or thing: *Meryl Streep, Hollywood, Academy Award.*

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).

Object Complements

An object complement follows the direct object of a sentence. A noun used as an object complement follows the direct object and renames it. An adjective used as an object complement follows the direct object and describes it.

We elected Yoko **president**.

We found her leadership **inspiring**.

Participles

A participle is a verb form that is used as an adjective. A present participle always ends in *ing*. A past participle generally ends in *ed*.

Participial Adjectives

A participial adjective stands alone before or after the word it modifies.

The **sobbing** child clung to her mother.

The child, **sobbing**, clung to her mother.

A participle has voice and tense. The present participle shows a relationship between the time of the action of the participle and of the main verb. Past and perfect forms show action that was completed at some time before the action indicated by the main verb.

The project **being started** now is supposed to end today.

(present passive)

The project **started** yesterday is important. (past passive)

Their group, **having started** late, rushed to finish. (present perfect active)

Having been delayed twice, the project is behind schedule.

(present perfect passive)

A participle that is essential to the meaning of a sentence is restrictive and is not set off by commas. A participle that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence is nonrestrictive and is set off by commas.

The project **started** on Monday ran into terrible snags.

The other project, **started** a day later, finished first.

Dangling Participles

A dangling participle is a participial phrase that does not modify a noun or pronoun. Dangling participles should be corrected.

Working hard, the doghouse was soon finished. (incorrect)

Working hard, the girls soon finished the doghouse. (correct)

Participial Phrases

A participial phrase consists of the participle and an object or a complement and any descriptive words or phrases. A participial phrase can come before or after the word it modifies.

Kissing the child gently, the mother tried to soothe him.

The child, **sobbing loudly**, refused to quiet down.

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.

Gerund Phrases

A gerund phrase consists of a gerund, its object or complement, and any descriptive words or phrases. See GERUNDS.

Infinitive Phrases

An infinitive phrase consists of an infinitive, its object or complement, and any descriptive words or phrases. See INFINITIVES.

Participial Phrases

A participial phrase consists of the participle, its object or complement, and any descriptive words or phrases. See PARTICIPLES.

Prepositional Phrases

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

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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 boy **is studying**.

He **has been studying** for an hour.

Predicates

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

The horses **jumped**.

They **were** beautiful.

Complete Predicates

The complete predicate is the verb with all its modifiers and objects or complements.

The horses **jumped all the hurdles well**.

Compound Predicates

A compound predicate contains more than one verb joined by a coordinating conjunction.

The horses **ran swiftly and jumped** over the fence.

Simple Predicates

The simple predicate is the verb or verb phrase.

The horses **have been running** for a long time.

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun (the object of the preposition) 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.

She was the winner **of the game**. (adjective)

She threw her hat **into the air**. (adverb)

On the podium is where she stood. (noun)

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. The demonstrative pronouns are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*.

This and *that* are singular; *these* and *those* are plural. *This* and *these* point out things that are near; *that* and *those* point out things that are farther away.

This is my bike. (singular and near)

Those are my skates. (plural and far)

Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun refers to any or all of a group of people, places, or things. Indefinite pronouns can be used as subjects or objects.

Many had heard about the strange old house.

The loud noises were heard by **everyone**.

Most indefinite pronouns are singular, but some are plural. Singular indefinite pronouns include *another*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *anything*, *each*, *either*, *everybody*, *everyone*, *everything*, *much*, *neither*, *nobody*, *no one*, *nothing*, *one*, *other*, *somebody*, *someone*, and *something*. Plural indefinite pronouns include *both*, *few*, *many*, *others*, and *several*.

Everyone is busy.

Nobody wants to make a mistake.

Several are drawing posters.

Others want to use the computer.

The indefinite pronouns *all*, *any*, *more*, *most*, *none*, and *some* can be singular or plural, depending on how each is used in a sentence. These pronouns are singular and take a singular verb when they are followed by a phrase with a singular noun or an abstract noun. They are plural and take a plural verb when they are followed by a phrase with a plural noun.

Most of the work was completed.

Most of the projects were completed.

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The indefinite pronouns *no one*, *nobody*, *none*, and *nothing* are negative words. They should never be used in sentences with other negative words such as *no*, *not*, or *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.

My sister paid for the car **herself**.

I **myself** can't afford to buy a car.

Intensive pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third person singular intensive pronouns change form depending on gender.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	myself	ourselves
Second Person	yourself	yourselves
Third Person	himself herself itself	themselves

Interrogative Pronouns

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

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 the captain of the hockey team?

Whom did he meet at the rink?

To **whom** will they sell their old skates?

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 seeking information.

Whose are those skates?

Which of the teams will be the toughest opponent?

What did you buy at the refreshment counter?

What is the date of the first game?

Object Pronouns

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

Tom met **her** at the video store. (direct object)

Gina wrote **him** an e-mail. (indirect object)

Martha received messages from **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.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I, me	we, us
Second Person	you	you
Third Person	he, she, it, him, her	they, them

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.

The green bike is **mine**.

Jill left **hers** near the fence.

Joe, where is **yours**?

Possessive pronouns change form depending on person and number. Third person singular possessive pronouns change form to reflect gender.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	mine	ours
Second Person	yours	yours
Third Person	his, hers, its	theirs

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. A reflexive pronoun generally refers to the subject of the sentence. Reflexive pronouns must agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender.

I consider **myself** lucky to have won. (direct object)

He gave **himself** a pat on the back. (indirect object)

They did 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.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	myself	ourselves
Second Person	yourself	yourselves
Third Person	himself herself itself	themselves

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun connects an adjective clause to the noun it modifies. 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.

George Washington, **who** was a famous general, was the first president of the United States.

George Washington, **whom** we call the father of our country, started out as a surveyor.

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.

Mount Vernon, **which** was Washington's home, is in Virginia.

It's a place **that** many tourists visit.

They learn about Washington, **whose** possessions are displayed in the house.

Subject Pronouns

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

We went to the mall on Saturday. (subject)

The clerk we talked to was **she**. (subject complement)

Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause, which may function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

He claimed that he was the fastest runner.

The race that would decide the championship began at noon.

Because he tripped and fell, he lost the race.

Compound Sentences

A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses.

The boys ran a race, and Hassan won.

Chris was leading at the halfway mark, but he tripped and fell.

Will they run the race again, or will Hassan get the prize?

Declarative Sentences

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

I have a new cell phone.

Exclamatory Sentences

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

It's so cool!

Imperative Sentences

An imperative sentence gives a command. It usually ends with a period but may end with an exclamation point. In imperative sentences, the subject *you* is understood.

Call me tomorrow.

Grammar

Interrogative Sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a question. It ends with a question mark.

Will you take my picture?

Inverted Order in Sentences

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

Around the chimney curled the wispy smoke.

When did you light the fireplace?

There were many birds atop the chimney.

Natural Order in Sentences

A sentence is in natural order when the verb follows the subject.

The wispy smoke curled around the chimney.

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is one independent clause. It has a subject and a predicate, either or both of which may be compound.

Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin.

Milwaukee and Green Bay have professional sports teams.

Many people in Wisconsin fish and boat in the summer.

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 uncle is a **police officer**.

The officer who won the medal was **he**.

His job can be **dangerous**.

Subjects

The subject names the person, place, or thing a sentence is about.

Complete Subjects

The complete subject is the simple subject plus all the words that describe it.

The tiny lamb with the black face trotted across the field.

Compound Subjects

A compound subject contains more than one noun or pronoun joined by a coordinating conjunction.

The **lamb** and its **mother** trotted across the field.

Simple Subjects

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

The **lamb** trotted across the field.

Tenses

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

Perfect Tenses

Perfect tenses consist of a form of the auxiliary verb *have* and the past participle of the main verb. The present perfect tense tells about an action that took place at an indefinite time in the past or that started in the past and continued into the present. The past perfect tense tells about an action that was completed before another action was begun or completed. The future perfect tense tells about an action that will be completed before a specific time in the future.

Present Perfect Active	He has finished his homework.
Past Perfect Active	He had finished it before dinner.
Future Perfect Active	He will have finished dinner by six o'clock.

The passive voice of perfect tenses is formed by inserting *been* between the auxiliary of a form of *have* and the main verb.

Present Perfect Passive	The car has been washed .
Past Perfect Passive	The car had been washed before it started to rain.
Future Perfect Passive	The car will have been washed by the time Dad gets home.

Grammar

Progressive Tenses

Progressive tense consist of a form of the auxiliary verb *be* and the present participle of the main verb. These tenses show ongoing action.

Present Progressive	I am reading my math book now.
Past Progressive	I was reading my math book when the phone rang.
Future Progressive	I will be reading my math book until dinnertime.

Simple Tenses

The simple present tense indicates an action that is repeated or always true. The simple past and future tenses indicate action in the past or in the future.

Simple Present	I eat a lot of fruit.
Simple Past	I ate some melon for lunch today.
Simple Future	I am going to eat some cherries as a snack. I will eat them after school.

Verbals

Verbals are words made from verbs. There are three kinds of verbals: participles, gerunds, and infinitives.

A participle is a verb form that is used as an adjective. A gerund is a verb form ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun. An infinitive is a verb phrase, usually preceded by *to*, that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. See GERUNDS, INFINITIVES, PARTICIPLES.

The **frightened** cat ran and hid under the porch. (participle)

Getting the dog into the house was my priority. (gerund)

My hope is **to establish** a level of tolerance between Coco and Buster. (infinitive)

Verbs

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

Lupe **opened** her mailbox. (action)

She was **excited** to find an e-mail from Carla. (state of being)

Auxiliary Verbs

An auxiliary verb is a verb that combines with a main verb to form a verb phrase. Auxiliary verbs help show voice, mood, and tense. Some common auxiliary verbs are the forms of *be*, *have*, and *do*. Other auxiliary verbs are *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *should*, and *will*.

Intransitive Verbs

An intransitive verb does not have a receiver of its action. It does not have a direct object.

Danny **relaxed** under the big oak tree.

Some verbs can be transitive or intransitive, depending on their use in the sentence.

Danny **plays** baseball in the summer. (transitive)

He usually **plays** in Gresham Park. (intransitive)

Irregular Verbs

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

Present	Past	Past Participle
sing	sang	sung
write	wrote	written
put	put	put

Linking Verbs

A linking verb joins a subject with a subject complement (a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective). The subject complement renames or describes the subject.

Ms. Roberts **became** a newspaper reporter.

She **feels** proud of her work.

The author of that article **is** she.

Grammar

Common linking verbs are *be, appear, become, feel, grow, look, remain, seem, smell, sound, stay, taste, and turn*. Some of these verbs can be transitive, intransitive, or linking verbs.

He **felt** the heat of the sun on his back. (transitive verb)

She **felt** strongly about winning the game. (intransitive)

Danny **felt** tired after the game. (linking verb)

Modal Auxiliaries

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

Any amateur chef **may join** the committee. (permission)

We **might assign** dishes at the meeting. (possibility)

Blanca **can bake** delicious cakes. (ability)

Everyone **must agree** on the menu. (necessity)

Cooks **should prepare** enough food for everyone. (obligation)

Marco **will act** as the contact person. (intention)

Phrasal Verbs

Some transitive and intransitive verbs are phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb is a combination of a main verb and a preposition or an adverb. The noun or pronoun that follows a phrasal verb is the direct object.

He **looks after** his little brother on weekends.

Yesterday he **set up** the croquet set.

He **wakes up** with a smile each morning.

Principal Parts

The four basic parts of all verbs are the present, or base form; the past; the past participle; and the present participle. The past and past participles of regular verbs are formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the base form. The present participle is formed by adding *-ing*.

Base	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
sail	sailed	sailed	sailing

Regular Verbs

The past and the past participles of a regular verb are formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the base form.

Base	Past	Past Participle
walk	walked	walked
smile	smiled	smiled
try	tried	tried
hop	hopped	hopped

Transitive Verbs

A transitive verb expresses an action that passes from a doer to a receiver. Every transitive verb has a receiver of the action. That receiver is the direct object.

Sheila **kicked** the ball into the net.

Voice

Voice shows whether the subject of a transitive verb is the doer or the receiver of the action.

Active Voice

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

Sheila **kicked** the winning goal.

Passive Voice

When a transitive verb is in the passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action. A verb in the passive voice is formed by combining some form of *be* with the past participle of the main verb.

The winning goal **was kicked** by Sheila.

Mechanics

Capitalization and Punctuation

Apostrophes

An apostrophe is used to show possession.

the man's coat the boys' jackets

An apostrophe is used to show the omission of letters or numbers.

can't we'll the flood of '98

An apostrophe is used to show the plural of lowercase letters but not of capital letters unless the plural could be mistaken for a word

a's u's Ps U's A's

Capitalization

A capital letter is used for the first word in a sentence, the first word in a direct quotation, and the first word of most lines of poetry and songs.

My dad asked, "**W**ould you like to take a trip?"

My country, 'tis of thee, **S**weet land of liberty.

A capital letter is used for proper nouns and proper adjectives.

Abraham **L**incoln the **G**ettysburg **A**ddress

the **L**incoln **M**emorial **W**ashington, **D.C.**

American hero **K**entucky rail-splitter

A capital letter is used for a title when it precedes a person's name.

President Lincoln

A capital letter is used for the directions *North*, *South*, *East*, and *West* when they refer to sections of the country.

We left the **S**outh and drove north toward home.

A capital letter is used for the names of deities and sacred books.

Holy **S**pirit **B**ible **K**oran **O**ld Testament

A capital letter is used for the principal words in titles (but not the articles *a*, *an*, or *the*; coordinating conjunctions; or prepositions unless they are the first or last words).

To Kill a Mockingbird “The Willow and the Gingko”

Capital letters are used for abbreviations of words that are capitalized.

Mrs. Dr. Jan. Ave.

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.”
 O beautiful for spacious skies,
 For amber waves of grain.

Colons

A colon is used before a list when terms such as *the following* or *as follows* are used.

I'd like to visit the following cities: New Orleans, San Francisco,
 and Chicago.

A colon is used after the salutation of a business letter.

Dear Senator Smith:

Commas

Commas are used to separate words in a series of three or more.

My family has two dogs, a cat, and some fish.

Commas are used to separate adjectives of equal importance before a noun.

It's a little, white, fluffy kitten.

Commas are used to set off the parts of addresses, place names, and dates.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County,
 Kentucky.

Mechanics

Commas are used to set off words in direct address and parenthetical expressions.

Did you know, Eleanor, that the ship really sank?
Titanic was, as you may know, a popular movie.

Commas are used to set off nonrestrictive phrases and clauses.

The *Titanic*, a famous ocean liner, hit an iceberg.
The ship, which everyone had thought was unsinkable, disappeared under the icy waters.

Commas are used to set off a direct quotation or the parts of a divided quotation.

“I hope,” said Mrs. Litwac, “you have all finished your work.”

A comma is used before a coordinating conjunction that is used to connect clauses in a sentence.

I read the directions, but Joey built the model.

A comma is used after a conjunctive adverb in a compound sentence.

I missed a step in the directions; consequently, the model fell down.

Commas are used 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

A dash is used to indicate a sudden change of thought.

My uncle cooked the whole dinner—a surprise to us all.

Use a dash to draw attention to a nonrestrictive element.

The dinner—chicken, greens, and mashed potatoes—was delicious.

Exclamation Points

An exclamation point is used after most interjections and to end an exclamatory sentence.

Help! The rope is breaking!
Wow, that was close!

Hyphens

A hyphen is used to divide words between syllables at the end of a line.

The scientists studied the bone of the Tyranno-
saurus rex.

A hyphen is used in numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and to separate parts of some compound words.

drive-in mother-in-law

A hyphen is used to form some temporary adjectives.

He completed the three-year project.

Italics

Italics are used to set off the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, movies, television series, ships, and works of art. If you are writing by hand, use underlining for italics.

I saw a picture of the *Titanic* in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Parentheses

Parentheses can be used with nonrestrictive elements. Parentheses tell the reader that the writer added the 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

A period is used to end a declarative or an imperative sentence.

The dog is hungry. Please feed it.

A period is used after an abbreviation and after the initials in a name.

Co. Mrs. mi. R. L. Stevenson

Question Marks

A question mark is used to end an interrogative sentence.

What do you feed your dog?

Mechanics

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used before and after direct quotations and around the parts of a divided quotation.

“Why,” asked my brother, “didn’t you play the game?”

Quotation marks are used to set off the titles of stories, poems, songs, magazine and newspaper articles, television shows, and radio programs.

They sang “Deep River” and “Amazing Grace.”

Single quotation marks are used to set off quoted material within a quotation.

“Did they sing ‘America the Beautiful?’” Salma asked.

Semicolons

A semicolon is used to separate clauses in a compound sentence when they are not joined by a conjunction.

It rained all afternoon; the game was cancelled.

A semicolon is used to separate clauses in a compound sentence that are connected by a conjunctive adverb.

The water washed out the flower beds; furthermore, it flooded the basement.

Semicolons are used to separate phrases or clauses of the same type that include internal punctuation.

There were also floods on July 8, 2001; October 22, 2003; and August 15, 2005.

A semicolon is used before expressions such as *for example* and *namely* when they are used to introduce examples.

Many streets were under water; namely, Morris, Elm, Cornelia, and State.