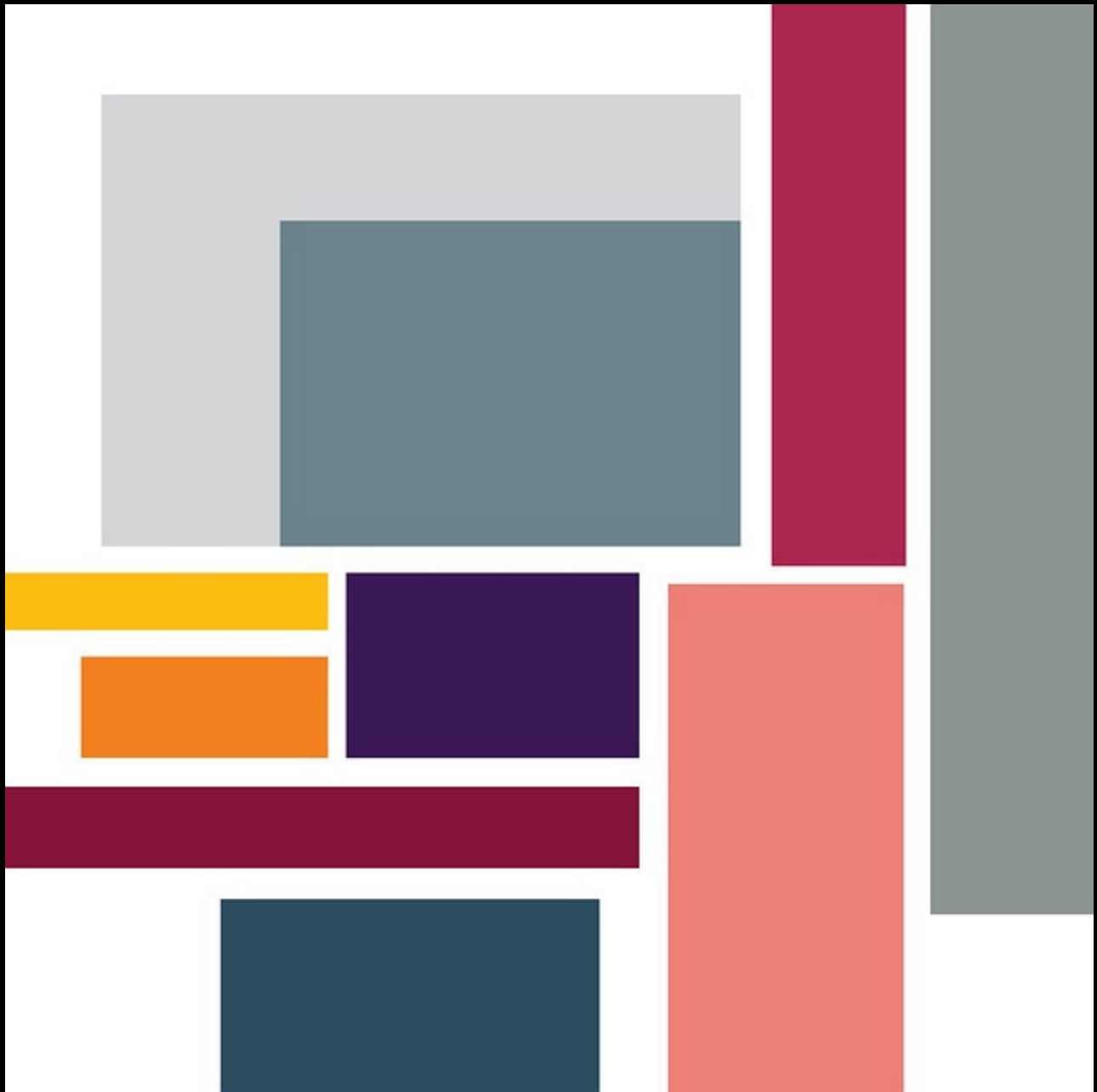


Parts of Speech



1. Noun

Nouns indicate people, places, objects, and ideas.

Common nouns refer to **general categories**, e.g., *girl, city, house, father, doctor, author, school*, and are **not capitalized**.

Proper nouns refer to **specific** people, places, and things. These nouns **are capitalized**. They include:

- Names of individuals and organizations, e.g., *Jane Austen, Microsoft, The University of Michigan*.
- Titles, e.g., *Pride and Prejudice, National Geographic, The Last Supper, The New York Times*.
- States, cities, provinces, countries, and languages, e.g., *Los Angeles, Nebraska, Ontario, Thailand, Spanish*.
- Time periods, e.g., *The Renaissance, The Great Depression, The Cold War*.

Collective nouns refer to groups and organizations, e.g., *family, team, country, school, society, company*. (Note that in American English, these nouns are considered singular, whereas in British English, they are considered plural.)

Concrete nouns refer to objects that can be touched and felt, e.g., *book, table, dog*. These nouns are often derived from Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) words, and they tend to be associated with everyday language.

Abstract nouns refer to ideas and things that cannot be touched. These nouns are typically derived from Greek, Latin, or French words, and they tend to be associated with more formal academic language. They often have the following endings:

- -MENT, e.g., *movement*
- -TION, e.g., *notion*
- -SION, e.g., *exclusion*
- -ISM, e.g., *realism*
- -ITY, e.g., *unity*
- -NESS, e.g., *happiness*
- -TUDE, e.g., *solitude*
- -LOGY, e.g., *ideology*

With the exception of some proper nouns, most nouns can be preceded by **articles**. The **definite article** *the* is used to refer to specific nouns, and the **indefinite articles** *a* and *an* are used to refer to nouns in general.

- Nouns beginning with consonants should be preceded by *a*.
- Nouns beginning with vowels or vowel sounds should be preceded by *an*.

Consonant	Vowel
A pencil	An object
A leader	An idea
A reaction	An hour

As a general rule, if you are not sure whether a word can be a noun, try placing *a(n)* or *the* before it. For example, *report* can be a noun because you can say *a report* or *the report*, but *relate* cannot be a noun because it is incorrect to say *a relate* or *the relate*.

2. Pronoun

Pronouns replace nouns.

Examples: *it, they, them, which, s/he, this, that*

- Samantha loves basketball. **She** plays **it** every day after school.
- Marco walks to school with Sherri and Ann. **He** meets **them** at the corner.

Personal pronouns refer to people. They are often referred to in the following way:

	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	I	We
2 nd Person	You	You (pl.)
3 rd Person	S/he, It, One	They

Indefinite pronouns refer to unspecified quantities.

(N)either	One	Some
No one	Each	Something
None	Everybody	Several
Any	Everyone	Many
Anybody	Few	Others
Anyone	Both	All

3. Verb

There are two main types of verbs:

- 1) **Action** verbs indicate specific activities e.g., *talk, write, travel, speak, jump, go, believe*.

The nouns that follow these verbs are **objects**: **direct objects** immediately follow verbs (e.g., *The dog chased the ball*), and **indirect objects** are separated from verbs by prepositions (e.g., *The dog jumped on the sofa*).

- 2) **Being** verbs, also known as **linking verbs**, indicate states of being, seeming, and feeling, e.g., *be, become, seem, appear, feel, stay, remain, taste*.

The nouns or adjectives that follow these verbs are known as **complements**. For example, in the sentence *The sky is blue*, the adjective *blue* is the complement of the verb *is*. In the sentence *She wants to become a doctor*, the noun *doctor* is the complement of the verb *become*.

The “to” form of a verb is known as the **infinitive**. If you are uncertain whether a word can be used as a verb, try placing *to* in front of it to form an infinitive. For example, *clean* can be a verb because you can say *to clean*, but *sheet* cannot be a verb because you cannot say *to sheet*.

Verbs are not always used as infinitives, however. In order to indicate who is performing an action, it is necessary to **conjugate** the verb and provide its **subject** (typically a noun or pronoun).

Most conjugations simply involve removing the *to* from the infinitive (e.g., *to read* → *I read*); however, third-person singular verbs add an *-s* at the end (e.g., *to work* → *it works*).

To be and *to have*, the most common English verbs, are **irregular**: their conjugated forms differ from their infinitives.

	Singular	Plural
To Be	I am	We are
	You are	You (pl.) are
	S/he, It is	They are

	Singular	Plural
To Have	I have	We have
	You have	You (pl.) have
	S/he, It has	They have

The **tense** of a verb indicates when an action occurred.

It is = Present	It would be = Conditional
It has been = Present Perfect	It would have been = Past Conditional
It was = Simple Past	It will be = Future
It had been = Past Perfect	It will have been = Future Perfect

4. Preposition

Prepositions are **location** and **time** words: they indicate where people/things are, where they're going, or when they occurred. They are usually followed by nouns.

Example: The dog ran **under** the fence and jumped **into** the neighboring yard **in** only a matter **of** seconds.

Common prepositions include the following:

About	Along	Behind	Beyond	From	Off	Through(out)
Above	Among	Below	By	In(side)	On	Toward
Across	Around	Beneath	Despite	Near	Over	Underneath
After	At	Beside	During	Next to	Since	Until
Against	Before	Between	For	Of	To	With(out)

5. Adjective

Adjectives modify nouns, pronouns, and other adjectives. They answer the question “what is *x* like”?

Examples: *large, pretty, interesting, solid, wide, exceptional, smart, complicated, blue*

- The class was so **boring** that I thought I would fall asleep.
- The **beautiful** view left them at a loss for words.
- We agreed to meet in front of the **light blue** house.

6. Adverb

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and clauses. They frequently – but not always – end in *-ly*. They answer the question “how is *x* done”?

Examples: *rapidly, calmly, strikingly, mildly, boldly, sharply, well, fast, very*

- She smiled **warmly** at him when he entered the room.
- He did **exceedingly** well on the test.
- The professors spoke so **rapidly** that I could **hardly** keep up.

A number of common adverbs involve **time**. Note that the majority of them do not end in *-ly*.

Almost	Before	Just	Next	Soon
Already	Even	Last	Now	Still
Also	First	Later	Often	Tomorrow
Always	Forever	Never	Sometimes	Yesterday

Conjunctive adverbs are transition words: they indicate relationships between clauses.

Examples: *however, therefore, thus, moreover, consequently, nevertheless, indeed*

- The game was canceled because of the rain; it was, **however**, rescheduled for Tuesday.
- I overslept by an hour this morning. **Therefore**, I was late for my first class.

7. Conjunction

Conjunctions are **transition words** that indicate relationships between words, phrases, and clauses. Unlike, conjunctive adverbs, which can appear either at the beginning or in the middle of a clause, conjunctions must be used at the beginning of a clause.

There are two main types of conjunctions:

Coordinating conjunctions join two independent clauses (complete sentences). There are seven coordinating conjunctions, known by the acronym FANBOYS: **F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o.

- Emma went to the dentist, **but** she later went to the candy store.
- We watched the movie until midnight, **and** then we went to bed.

Note that some coordinating conjunctions can also be placed between nouns or adjectives.

- Wolves **and** dogs are closely related.
- Silk is a delicate **yet** strong material.

Subordinating conjunctions join dependent clauses (fragments) and independent clauses.

After	Before	Though	Whenever
Although	Despite	Unless	Whereas
As	If	Until	Whether
Because	Since	When	While

- **Because** I stayed up too late, I overslept this morning.
- The book is interesting, **although** it is also very challenging to read.

8. Interjection

Interjections are “exclamation” words. They are often punctuated with exclamation points.

- Right!
- Finally!
- Unbelievable!

Interjections are rarely used in formal writing. Unless they are included in a quotation that you are citing, you should generally avoid using interjections (as well as exclamation points) in your papers because they will make your writing seem too casual.

Multipurpose Parts of Speech

Note that some words can act as more than one part of speech.

For example, some words can be used as either nouns or verbs.

When such words act as nouns, they are typically preceded by *a(n)* or *the*.

- The waiter handed me **the drink**.

When these words act as verbs, they describe actions and are preceded by subjects (nouns or pronouns).

- I **drank** the water very quickly.

Likewise, “time” words such as *before*, *after*, and *until* can act as either prepositions or conjunctions.

When these words act as prepositions, they precede nouns.

- We went to dinner **before** the movie.

When these words act as conjunctions, they precede subjects and verbs.

- **Before** we went to the movie, we stopped for dinner.

In addition, some words that are typically used as nouns can also act as modifiers (adjectives), in which case they are known as **adjectival nouns**. Often, these words involve nationalities and/or professions. In such cases, they are typically placed immediately before proper names.

Compare:

- Frank Gehry is **an American** and **an architect** who has designed some of the most famous contemporary structures in the world.

In this sentence, *American* and *architect* are used as nouns that act as complements of the verb *is*.

- **American architect** Frank Gehry has designed some of the most famous contemporary structures in the world.

In this sentence, *American* and *architect* are used as adjectives that modify *Frank Gehry*.

Exercise: Identifying Parts of Speech

For the following sentences, identify the part of speech in each underlined word or phrase.

1. A large stash of books that once belonged to Thomas Jefferson was recently
A B C D E
discovered.

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

2. Although the center of Los Angeles has long been famous for its traffic jams,
A B C
the city's center is becoming increasingly accessible to pedestrians.
D E

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

3. The presence of the Olympic stadium has transformed the formerly run-down
A B C
area of the city.
D E

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

4. The author's first novel has received generally favorable reviews, but it has
A B C
thus far failed to become an overwhelming success.
D E

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

5. The increasing emphasis on test scores has some education experts concerned
A B C
that young children's ability to learn through play is being compromised.
D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

6. The discovery that both Lewis Carroll and Chopin had epilepsy is threatening
A B C
to redefine the concept of genius.
D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

7. Drum languages, once common throughout Africa as a means of sending
A B
messages, began to disappear almost as soon as they were documented.
C D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

8. British scientist J.D. Bernal believed that people would eventually be replaced
A B C
by creatures that were half-human and half-machine.
D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

9. New research shows that those who live on islands are far more likely to
A B C
suffer from obesity than those who live in other environments.
D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

10. The book *Cane*, written by poet and author Jean Toomer, contains a mix of
A B C D
fiction, poetry, and drama.
E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

11. Protests against the country's government have been growing in
A B
recent days, and observers fear that they may explode into utter chaos.
C D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

12. Painted by Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players* depicts three men seated around
A B
a table, with a fourth gazing watchfully in the background.
C D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

13. It is arguable whether Mark Augustus Landis, responsible for perpetrating
A B
one of the largest art-forgery sprees ever, ever actually broke the law.
C D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

14. Activities such as bird-watching evolved from people's desire to observe the
A B
natural world without actively participating in it.
C D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

15. Australian geography is remarkably varied; although Australia is the world's
A B C
smallest continent, it is the sixth largest country.
D E

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

Answers: Identifying Parts of Speech

1. A: Adjective, B: Noun, C: Verb, D: Verb, E: Adverb
2. A: Conjunction, B: Adjective, C: Pronoun, D: Adverb, E: Preposition
3. A: Noun, B: Verb, C: Adverb, D: Preposition, E: Noun
4. A: Adverb, B: Conjunction, C: Pronoun, D: Verb (Infinitive), E: Adjective
5. A: Adjective, B: Preposition, C: Verb, D: Verb (Infinitive), E: Verb
6. A: Noun, B: Verb, C: Verb, D: Noun, E: Preposition
7. A: Adjective, B: Noun (Singular), C: Verb, D: Pronoun, E: Verb
8. A: Adjective, B: Verb, C: Adverb, D: Preposition, E: Verb
9. A: Verb, B: Pronoun, C: Pronoun, D: Preposition, E: Noun
10. A: Noun, B: Adjective (Adjectival Noun), C: Verb, D: Preposition, E: Noun
11. A: Preposition, B: Verb, C: Adjective, D: Verb, E: Verb
12. A: Verb, B: Preposition, C: Preposition D: Adverb, E: Preposition
13. A: Pronoun, B: Preposition, C: Preposition, D: Adjective, E: Verb
14. A: Noun, B: Verb, C: Adjective, D: Adverb, E: Pronoun
15. A: Adjective, B: Adverb, C: Verb, D: Adjective, E: Pronoun