

Grammar Overview

Table 1. Grammar Terminology: Overview

Table 2. Adjectives (and Articles) and Adverbs

Table 3. Conjunctions

Table 4. Prepositions

See also <http://alldolledupkits.com/dev/Writing/Tables5-10-NounPronoun-Final.pdf>, for the following tables:

Table 5. Nouns and Pronouns

Table 6. Noun Types

Table 7. Pronoun Types: Definite vs. Indefinite

Table 8. Pronoun Types: Personal, Reflexive, Intensive, Interrogative, Demonstrative, Relative

Table 9. Personal Pronouns

Table 10. Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

See also <http://alldolledupkits.com/dev/Writing/Tables11-19-Verbs-Final.pdf>, for the following tables:

Table 11. Types of Verbs: Action vs. Auxiliary

Table 12. Action Verbs

Table 13. Auxiliary (Helping) Verbs: Linking Verbs

Table 14. Verbals: Gerunds, Infinitives, and Participles

Table 15. Participles, Used with Auxiliary Verbs, to Form Verb Phrases

Table 16. Other Auxiliary Verbs: Verb Phrases with *Have*, *Be*, *Do*, and Modal Verbs

Table 17. Modal Verbs

Table 18. Verb Tenses and Their Progressive Forms

Table 19. Verb Moods

Table 1. Grammar Terminology: Overview

Part of speech	What it is and what it does	Example in a sentence	Tables to see for further information
Noun	Word that identifies or names a person, place, or thing	<i>Nancy</i> penned a <i>soliloquy</i> while on her <i>veranda</i> .	Tables 5–6
Pronoun	Word that takes the place of one or more nouns or pronouns	<i>She</i> penned <i>it</i> while <i>she</i> sat on <i>her</i> veranda.	Tables 5, 7–10
Verb	Word that expresses either an action or a state of being	Nancy <i>penned</i> her soliloquy while she <i>sat</i> on her veranda.	Tables 11–19
Adjective	Word that <i>modifies</i> (describes or defines) a person, place, or thing, specifying, e.g., size, number, shape, color, texture, sound, type	Nancy penned her <i>wicked</i> soliloquy while sitting on her <i>rickety, dilapidated, jerry-built</i> veranda.	Table 2
Adverb	Word that modifies an action or a modifier (an adjective or another adverb), telling where, when, to what extent, and so on	Nancy <i>enthusiastically</i> penned her <i>deliciously</i> wicked soliloquy <i>while</i> sitting on her <i>haphazardly</i> battered, jerry-built veranda.	Table 2
Conjunction	Word that joins words, word groups, or clauses.	Nancy was sipping a julep <i>and</i> penning her soliloquy, <i>when</i> her cellphone jangled her out of her reverie.	Table 3
Preposition	Word that demonstrates the relationship between the object of the preposition and the noun or verb to which it is appended	Nancy penned her soliloquy while <i>in</i> an overstuffed easychair <i>on</i> the veranda, <i>overlooking</i> the lake.	Table 4
Interjection	Word that expresses an emotion but has no grammatical relationship to the rest of the sentence, e.g., <i>ah, aha, harumph, hmm, jeez, oh, oops, ouch, uh, whew, wow, yipes, yippee, zounds</i>	When her cellphone rang, Nancy cried, “ <i>Golly! Gee whiz!</i> What now? <i>Oh</i> , it’s Rosy.” “ <i>Ay-yay-yay</i> , Nancy!” Rosy yelped. “My boa constrictor wriggled into my heating vents. <i>Yikes!</i> Help!”	n/a

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Table 2. Adjectives (and Articles) and Adverbs

Part of speech	What it does	Example Uses in Sentences
Adjective	Word that <i>modifies</i> (describes or defines) a noun or a pronoun, specifying, e.g., size, number, shape, color, texture, sound, type	The <i>unctuous, obsequious</i> salesperson caressed the <i>calloused, knobbly</i> feet of Cinderella’s stepsister.
Article	indefinite: <i>a, an</i> modifies/identifies any individual belonging to a general group of people, places, or things	<i>A</i> humorless, smiling politician kissed <i>a</i> frightened, bawling baby.
	definite: <i>the</i> modifies/identifies a particular person, place, or thing	<i>The</i> frightened baby regurgitated onto <i>the</i> humorless politician.
Other parts of speech that can act as adjectives	Most nouns can serve double duty as adjectives modifying another noun. E.g.: <i>apple pie, fruit salad, meat eater, office party, book buyer</i>	The <i>family</i> room includes some <i>bean-bag</i> chairs, two <i>recliner</i> chairs, a <i>sofa</i> sleeper, a <i>game</i> table, and a flat- <i>screen</i> TV.
	Many pronouns can also act as adjectives, e.g., <i>all, another, any, both, each, either, few, many, more, most, much, neither, one, other, several, some, such, that, these, this, those, what, which, whose</i>	<i>Each</i> book on <i>this</i> list can be found in <i>any</i> library. <i>Few</i> books can be found in <i>all</i> libraries. <i>Several</i> books can go on <i>these</i> shelves. <i>Those</i> bookshelves can hold <i>more</i> books.
	As possessives, both nouns and pronouns can also serve as adjectives.	Janice found <i>her</i> book in <i>Greg’s</i> studio.
Adverb	Word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb; an adverb modifies either an action or another modifier, specifying, e.g., how, where, when, or to what extent (how much/many, how long/often, etc.)	The <i>charmingly</i> demented grandfather ate <i>enthusiastically</i> as crustacean fragments flew <i>haphazardly</i> from his plate.
Other parts of speech that can act as adverbs	Nouns sometimes act as adverbs, telling where, when, to what extent, and so on.	After burgling relentlessly all weekend, the thieves returned <i>home</i> <i>Monday</i> , exhausted. (Where? <i>home</i> . When? <i>Monday</i> .)
	Adjectives occasionally act as adverbs, modifying adjectives. (Most adjectives, however, take “-ly” when used as adverbs.)	Susie’s <i>pretty</i> smart. (<i>Not</i> to be confused with “Susie danced <i>prettily</i> .”)

Table 3. Conjunctions

Conjunction	Word that joins words, phrases, or clauses		
Example Uses in a Sentence	<i>Not only</i> words, <i>but also</i> phrases <i>and</i> clauses can be joined by conjunctions. The three types of conjunctions are coordinating, subordinating, <i>and</i> correlative. <i>Because</i> there are three types of conjunctions, it is sometimes hard to figure out which words are conjunctions.		
Types of Conjunctions	What it is (and does)	Instances or examples	Examples of uses in sentences
Coordinating	Connects words, phrases, or clauses that are parallel, used in the same way	I.e., <i>and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet</i>	Cranberries, bananas, <i>and</i> grapefruit are all fruits, <i>but</i> they don't combine well in a salad. Tom won't eat grapefruit, <i>nor</i> will he eat cranberries, <i>yet</i> he loves to eat bananas.
Subordinating	Introduces a subordinate clause and links it to an independent clause; subordinate clauses may appear before or after the independent clause.	E.g., <i>after, although, as, as if, as much/little as, as though, because, before, how, however, if, in order that, provided, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, while</i>	<i>However</i> Tom had reached that decision, he was determined to stick to it. Jerri agreed to go along with him, <i>though</i> she thought he was foolish to want to move in with Yogi. <i>Wherever</i> Jerri and Tom lived, she always felt at home, <i>as long as</i> she and Tom were together.
Correlative	Pair of words that connect words, phrases, or clauses that are parallel, used in the same way	E.g., <i>both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, whether . . . or</i>	<i>Both</i> Tom <i>and</i> Jerri enjoy watching cartoons. Unfortunately, <i>neither</i> Tom <i>nor</i> Jerri owns a television. Fortunately, their roommate Yogi <i>not only</i> owns a television, <i>but also</i> keeps it in the living room, so all of them can watch it. It's hard to know <i>whether</i> Yogi really likes to watch TV with Tom and Jerri <i>or</i> he just feels sorry for them.

Table 4. Prepositions

Preposition	Examples	Uses in sentences
Word that demonstrates the relationship between the object of the preposition and the noun or verb to which it is appended	E.g., <i>about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, concerning, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, nearby, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without</i>	<p>“<i>Over</i> the river and <i>through</i> the woods, <i>to</i> Grandmother’s house we go.”</p> <p>While the swan paddled madly <i>beneath</i> the surface, <i>above</i> the water, she seemed to glide effortlessly <i>across</i> the lake <i>to</i> her nest <i>near</i> the shore.</p> <p>The handball flew <i>from</i> Rodolfo’s palm <i>onto</i> the back wall, rebounded <i>off</i> the concrete <i>into</i> the side wall, then bounced <i>back toward</i> Rodolfo before falling <i>to</i> the ground.</p>
Some prepositions are actually phrases	E.g., <i>aside from, as of, by means of, far from, in front/place/spite of, instead of, next to, out of, to the right/left/rear/front of</i>	Berta, <i>along with</i> her puppies, had to get <i>out of</i> the house quickly <i>because of</i> the noxious fumes. <i>In addition to</i> her concern for her own welfare, Berta worried about her puppies, <i>in spite of</i> knowing it would be difficult to find a hotel that would allow pets. <i>According to</i> Ernie, <i>apart from</i> her children and grandchildren, Berta’s puppies are <i>closest to</i> her heart.
Some prepositions can act as adverbs or as conjunctions	Some prepositions, such as <i>out, down, or up</i> , can act as adverbs (e.g., “stand <i>out</i> ,” “sit <i>down</i> ,” “get <i>up</i> ”).	Whereas Kendra enjoyed reading <i>outside</i> , under a tree, her twin sister Kimmy enjoyed reading <i>inside</i> , snuggled into an easy chair.
	Some prepositions, such as <i>before</i> , can act as conjunctions.	<i>Until</i> she met Beto, Samantha kept dating irresponsible guys. <i>After</i> she got to know Beto, she realized she enjoyed being around grown-up men.