

Grammar Rules: Parts of Speech

Words are classed into eight categories according to their uses in a sentence.

1. Noun

Name for a person, animal, thing, place, idea, activity.

John, cat, box, desert, liberty, golf

2. Pronoun

Alternate name for a noun.

he, she, it

3. Adjective

Modifies a noun or pronoun.

big, good, full

4. Verb

Expresses action or existence.

went, purred, is

5. Adverb

Modifies a verb, adverb, or adjective.

quickly, loudly, here

6. Conjunction

Connects words, phrases, or clauses.

and, or, but

7. Preposition

Precedes phrase that acts as a modifier or noun.

with, for, at

8. Interjection

Expresses emotion.

Gosh! Wow! Super!

Amazingly, only *eight* parts of speech are used to classify hundreds of thousands of words. The challenge is that many words can be used for more than one part of speech.

Select yes on the ballot. (noun)

Cast a yes vote. (adjective)

He voted yes. (adverb)

Yes! (Interjection)

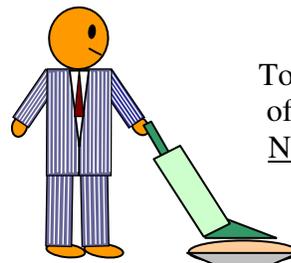
Additionally, phrases and clauses can act as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.



N PA VAC PI

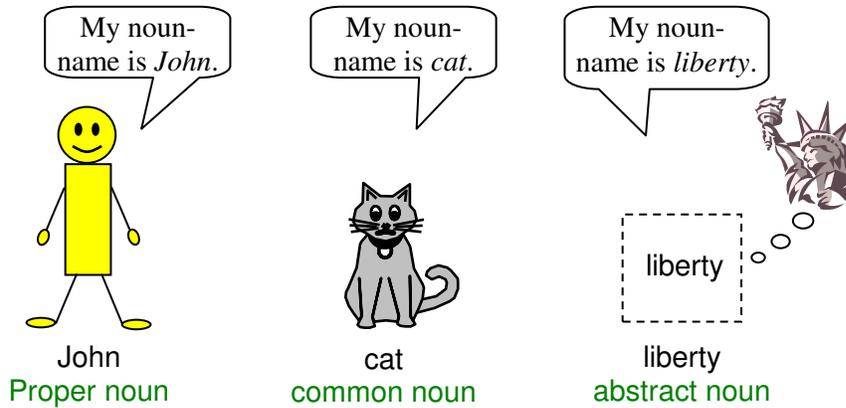
Noun-Pronoun-Adjective
Verb-Adverb-Conjunction
Preposition-Interjection

That's my Pa!



To memorize the 8 parts of speech, imagine that N's PA VACuums PIe!

1. Noun = Name



Compound Noun: Made of two or more words: ice water, notebook, brother-in-law

Appositive: Noun or noun phrase that identifies a nearby noun or pronoun. My son *Bill* is happy.

2. Pronoun = Pro-Name

Professional or alternate names used by nouns to enhance their careers.



Types of Pronouns

Personal: I, me, mine, my / you, your / he, him, his / she, her / we, our, us / they, them, their / it...

Indefinite (not specific): all, any, anyone, both, each, either, everyone, few, many...

Interrogative (ask questions): what?, which?, who?, whom?, whose?...

Demonstrative (point out): this, that, these, those...

Reflexive (reflect back): myself, yourself, himself, herself, themselves...

Relative (link dependent clauses): that, which, who, whoever, whom, whose...

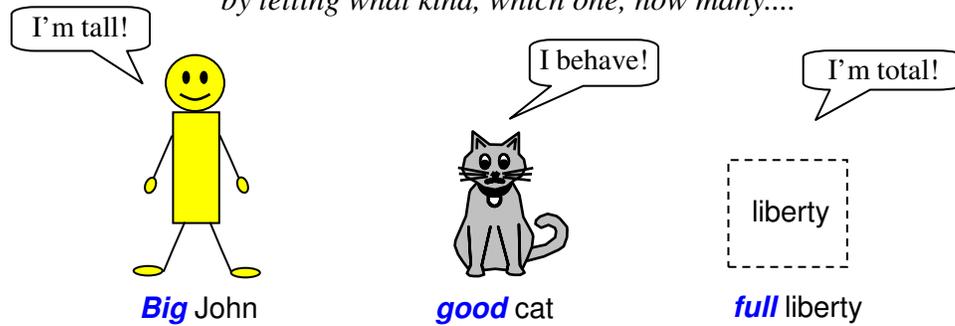
When used to show possession, pronouns behave like adjectives and are called *determiners*.
their car.

Antecedent: The noun or noun phrase a pronoun refers to. *John* made his bed.

Ante means "before." *Cede* means "to go." An antecedent in a sense "goes before" or existed before the pronoun, although it can occur afterwards in a sentence. It was John's *bed*.

3. Adjective Advertises

Advertises details about a noun or pronoun by telling what kind, which one, how many....

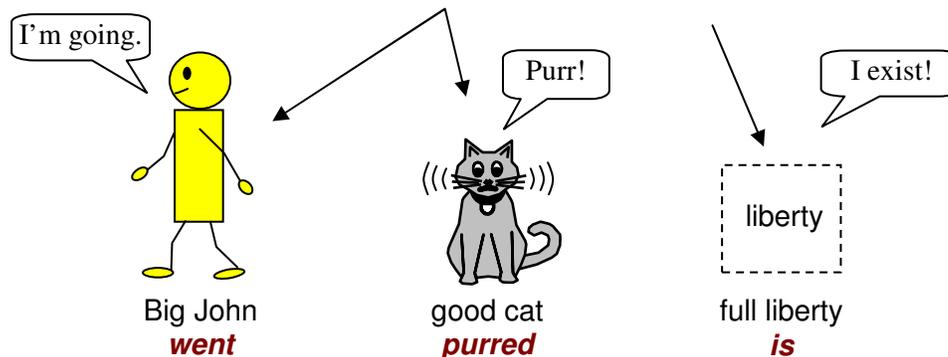


Articles (*the, a, an*) are also adjectives.

Proper Adjectives are Proper Nouns used as adjectives: *Boston* bank, *French* fries.

4. Verb = moVement or being

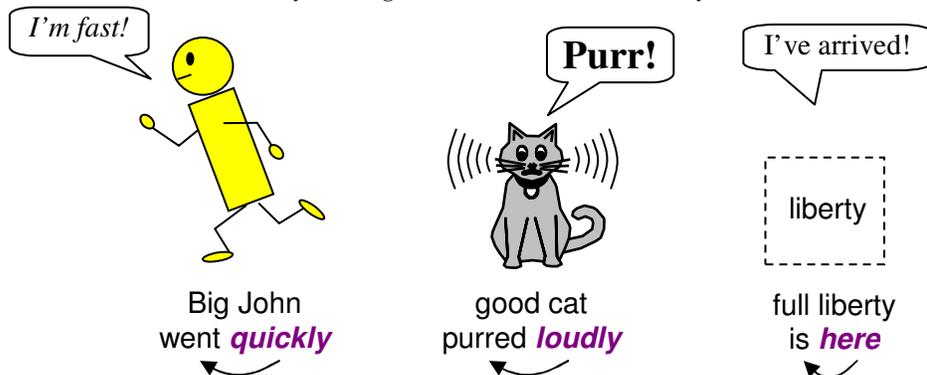
Describes a noun's movement (action) or being (existence).



Phrasal Verbs generally consist of a verb plus a preposition: *Turn up* the music.

5. Adverb Adds to verb

Adds to the meaning of a verb (or an adjective or another adverb) by telling what, when, where, why, how....

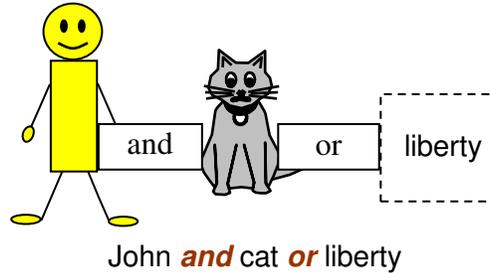


Only an adverb can modify an adjective (*very good*) or another adverb (*very loudly*).

Adverbial Conjunctions connect independent clauses in a compound sentence: *consequently, hence, however, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, therefore...*

6. Conjunction Conjoins

Connects words, phrases, or clauses “at the hip” like conjoined twins.



In addition to conjunctions, relative pronouns, adverbial conjunctives, and prepositions are called **connectives**.

Coordinating (equal rank items): for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so  **fanboys**

Subordinating (dependent clauses): after, although, as, as if, because, before, if, once, since, so that, than, that, unless, until, when, where, while

Correlative (item pairs): both-and, either-or, neither-nor

7. Preposition Positions

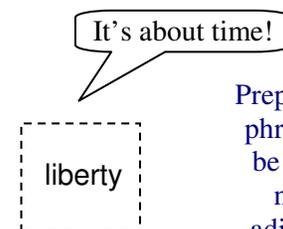
Precedes a phrase that acts as a modifier or noun by indicating a position in time, location, or manner.



Big John went quickly **with** his friend



good cat purred loudly **for** several minutes



full liberty is here **at** last

Prepositional phrases can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

The noun or pronoun at the end of the phrase is the *object* of the preposition.

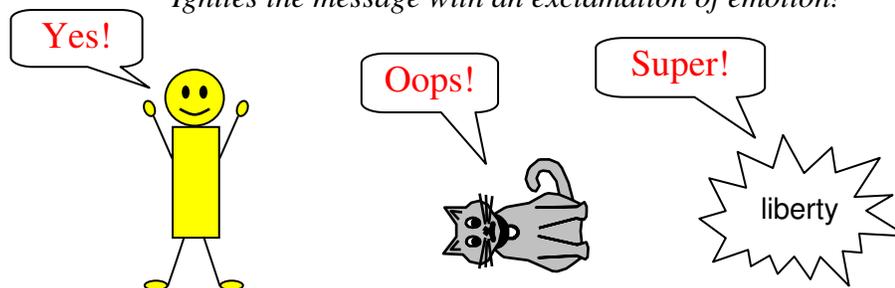
Time: before/after, during, past, until

Location: above/below, across, along, around, behind, beside, between, in/out, into, near/far, on/off, over/under, through, up/down, within

Multipurpose: about, against, as, at, by, of, for, from, to, with, without

8. Interjection Ignites!

Ignites the message with an exclamation of emotion!



Interjections can stand alone or be part of a sentence.

Yes! It's me.

Oh, is it?

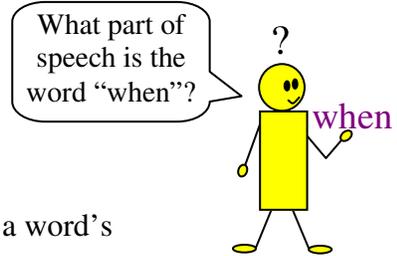
Expletives are interjectory words or expressions. *There is no one here! Darn it!*

Parts-of-Speech Puzzles

Although there are only eight parts of speech, it can be difficult to classify some words.

Some words are easy to classify: “Is it a person, place, or thing?” (noun); “Does it modify a noun?” (adjective), etc. But many words are less obvious and can be different parts of speech depending on how they are used.

When in doubt, the best option is to consult a dictionary, which lists the various parts of speech for a word in the order of most common usage along with definitions and examples.



But even a dictionary may not make classifying easy when a word’s shades of meaning and usage are nearly identical.

For example, looking up “when” in the *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* © 1996 yielded *four* parts of speech and *ten* alternate definitions. Here’s a sampling:

<u>Part of Speech</u>	<u>First Definition</u>	<u>First Example</u>
Adverb	at what time or period?	<i>When</i> are they to arrive?
Conjunction	at what time	to know <i>when</i> to be silent.
Pronoun	what time	Till <i>when</i> is the store open?
Noun	the time of anything	the <i>when</i> and the where of an act.

The following table lists a dozen words (in alphabetical order) that can be difficult to classify. The parts of speech are ranked (1, 2, 3...) in the order they are listed in Webster’s dictionary.

Parts-of-Speech Puzzles Chart

Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Conjunction, Preposition, Interjection

	Noun	Pron	Adj	Verb	Adv	Conj	Prep	Int
1. how	3				1	2		
2. not					1			2
3. now	3		4		1	2		
4. than						1	2	
5. that		1	2		3	4		
6. then	3		2		1			
7. what	2	1	3		4	6		5
8. when	4	3			1	2		
9. where	4	3			1	2		
10. which		1	2					
11. who		1						
12. why	3				1	2		4

Of the 12 words listed in the Chart:

- Adverbs have the most #1 rankings (7).
- Pronouns have the 2nd most #1 rankings (4).
- “What” can be *six* parts of speech!
- “Who” can be only *one* part of speech.
- Only “than” can be used as a preposition.
- No words can be verbs.



Your Turn!

Draw a line from the item to the best matching example.

Proper Noun	peach
Common Noun	glory
Abstract Noun	attorney general
Compound Noun	Sparky, <i>the dog</i> , barked
Appositive	<i>she</i> was happy
Personal Pronoun	the ones <i>who</i> were left behind
Relative Pronoun	it was the best <i>book</i>
Antecedent	<i>an</i> apple
Article	<i>Georgia</i> peach
Proper Adjective	<i>blow out</i> the candle
Phrasal Verb	<i>however</i> , I did not go
Adverbial Conjunctive	cats <i>and</i> dogs
Coordinating Conjunction	<i>because</i> he left town
Subordinating Conjunction	<i>under</i> the bench
Preposition	Oh my!
Interjection	Georgia

Following the example, mark parts of speech above each word of the sentences that follow.
Consult your dictionary as needed.

Int Pron Verb Adj Adj Conj Adj Noun Adv Prep Adj Noun
Wow! He kicked the red and white ball high into the air.

Sally slowly digested her food.

Mike rudely chewed and talked with his mouth open.

Hey! Do you think we can get some service at this restaurant?

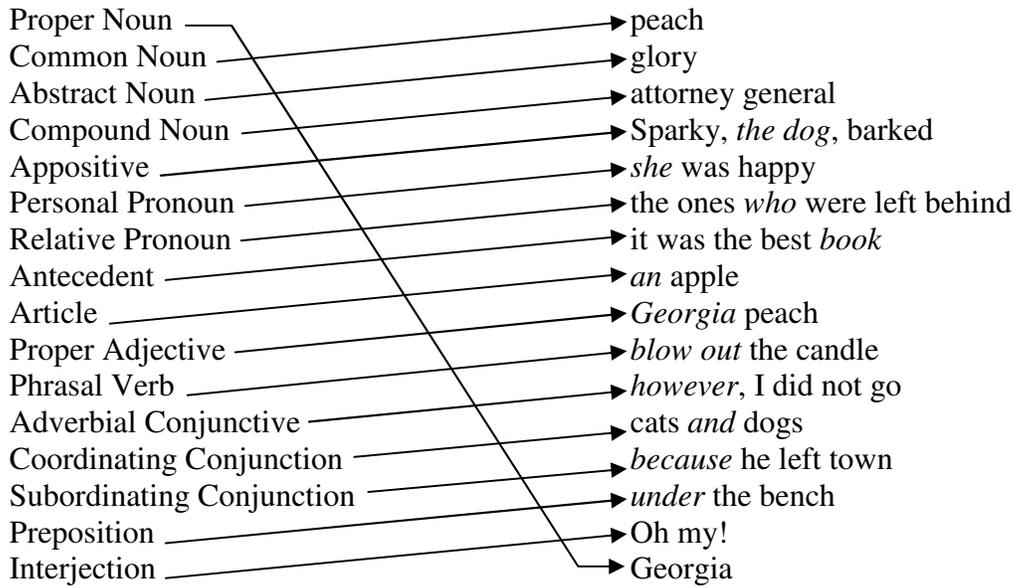
Finally! They had been waiting forever for good food and drink.

What! Why did you not ask when the kids who went into that house returned?

Why? How was I to know more about where they were then than I do now?

[Answers follow]

Answers



Noun Adv Verb Pron Noun
Sally slowly digested her food.

Noun Adv Verb Conj Verb Prep Pro Noun Adj
Mike rudely chewed and talked with his mouth open.

Int Verb Pro Verb Pro Verb Verb Adj Noun Prep Adj Noun
Hey! Do you think we can get some service at this restaurant?

s Int Pro Verb Verb Verb Adv Prep Adj Noun Conj Noun
Finally! They had been waiting forever for good food and drink.

Int Adv Verb Pron Adv Verb Conj Adj Noun Pron Verb Prep Adj Noun Verb
What! Why did you not ask when the kids who went into that house returned?

Int Adv Verb Pron Prep Verb Adv Prep Adv Pron Verb Adv Conj Pron Verb Adv
Why? How was I to know more about where they were then than I do now?