

## Grammar Lessons and Quizzes:

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## Lesson 1: Parts of Speech AND Subject - Predicate

**Subjects and Predicates:** To see how a sentence is constructed, you must first find its two parts: the subject and the predicate.

**Complete vs. Simple:** The **complete subject** tells whom or what the sentence is about. The **complete predicate** tells what the subject does or is. Each of these parts may consist of several words (the complete subject and the complete predicate make up the entire sentence). The **simple** subject is the noun or pronoun that names the person or thing being talked about without any modifiers; the simple predicate is the verb without any modifiers or other information.

- *Julia laughed at Ray's joke.*  
"Julia" is the simple subject; "laughed" is the simple predicate. The complete predicate is "laughed at Ray's joke."
- *The noisy children were playing on the playground.*  
The word "children" is the simple subject; "The noisy children" is the complete subject. "Playing" is the simple predicate; "were playing on the playground" is the complete predicate.

## Parts of Speech: The Big 9

Part of Speech	Function	Example Words	Example Sentences
<b>Adjective</b> (Includes <b>Articles</b> : <b>a</b> , <b>an</b> and <b>the</b> )	Modifies a noun	A/an, the, 72, some, good, big, red, well, interesting	My dog is <b>energetic</b> . I like <b>energetic</b> dogs.
<b>Adverb</b>	Modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb	Quickly, silently, well, badly, very, really	My dog eats <b>quickly</b> ; when he is <b>very</b> hungry, he eats <b>really</b> quickly.
<b>Conjunction</b>	Joins clauses or sentences or words	And, but, when	I like dogs <b>and</b> I like cats. I like cats <b>And</b> dogs. I like dogs <b>but</b> I don't like cats.
<b>Interjection</b>	Short exclamation, sometimes inserted into a sentence	Oh! Ouch!	<b>Ouch!</b> That hurts! <b>Hi!</b> How are you? <b>Well</b> , I don't know.
<b>Noun</b>	A thing or a person	Pen, dog, work, music, town, London, teacher, John	This is my <b>dog</b> . He lives in my <b>house</b> . We live in <b>New Paltz</b> .
<b>Preposition</b>	Links a noun to another word	To, at, after, on, but	We went <b>to</b> school <b>on</b> Monday.
<b>Pronoun</b>	Replaces a noun	I, you, he, she, some	Tara is Indian. <b>She</b> is lovely.
<b>Verb</b>	An action or a state	(To) be, have, do, like, work, sing, can, must	Grammargirl.com <b>is</b> a web site. I <b>like</b> Grammargirl.com.

## Lesson 2: Nouns

- Possessive Nouns
- Proper vs. Common Nouns

### Possessive Nouns:

- To make a singular noun possessive, add an apostrophe + s  
If one boy has a paper, it is **the boy's paper**.
- To make a plural noun possessive, add only an apostrophe.  
If two or more boys have papers, they are **the boys' papers**.
- Form the plural before forming the possessive:  
*Karen and Brian Mills are having a party; the Millses (the plural of Mills) are having a party. We are invited to the Millses' party (the couple's party).*

**Proper vs. Common Nouns:** Of the two types of nouns—common and proper—capitalize only proper nouns (proper adjectives are also capitalized). Proper nouns name specific persons, places, and things. Examples:

- Persons (all names)

- Groups: specific groups or organizations (race, nationality, religion, governmental body, organization)
- Places: streets, cities, country, continent, planet
- Things: Specific things, like pets' names, holidays, languages, awards and prizes.
- Deities and revered personages (Buddha, Zeus, etc.)
- School subjects and course titles
- Points of the compass, areas (Middle East), but not north, south, east, or west.
- Specific brand names (Kleenex), but not the general terms of the products (facial tissue).
- Capitalize the seasons *only* when they are given personal characteristics, as in poetry.

### Lesson 3: Pronouns: Pronoun Case (I vs. Me? Who vs. Whom?) and Pronoun Agreement

**Pronouns:** a pronoun is used in place of a noun, for example, in the sentence "*Andrew intercepted the ball; he kicked it as hard as he could.*" **He** refers to Andrew; **it** refers to the ball.)

**Pronoun case: subjective or objective?** Subjects and objects are represented by different pronouns. "**I**" is a subjective pronoun (as in "*I did it*"), yet "**ME**" is an objective pronoun (as in "*It happened to me.*"). (See Voice: Active vs. Passive.)

**Subject Pronouns:** Singular: I, you, he, she, it, who  
Plural: we, you, they, who

**Object Pronouns:** Singular: me, you, him, her, it, whom  
Plural: us, you, them, whom

How do you remember which one to use? Remember that **the subject acts** and **the object is acted upon**.

A. **I or ME?** The choice between I / me is usually easy. For example, you would never say, "*Me was very excited*"; you would say, "*I was very excited.*" Likewise, you would never say, "*Mother helped I with my suitcase*"; you would say, "*Mother helped me with my suitcase.*" But it is sometimes difficult to tell which word to use when the pronoun is coupled with another noun or pronoun, for example, in the sentence, "*The inspection of the brakes was performed by the mechanic and him.*" "**Him**" is the correct choice--and it is easy to tell when you take out "the mechanic." (Then the sentence would read, "*The inspection of the brakes was performed by him.*")

Be careful, though--check out the following:

- *John is smarter than me.*
- *John is smarter than I.*

Which is correct? While in this sentence it may look as though the pronoun is an object, actually the sentence is written in an incomplete form—it is missing the word "am." It should read: *John is smarter than I am.*

B. **WHO or WHOM?** To check whether you need a subject pronoun or an object pronoun, take the action out of the sentence and try a different pronoun. For example, in the sentence "*The prize goes to the runner **who** crossed the finish line first,*" the subordinate clause is "**who** crossed the finish line first." Let's say you weren't sure if this sentence is correct (whether to use "who" or "whom," whether to use an object pronoun or a subject pronoun). To check, substitute another pronoun, for example an object pronoun, "him." You would never say, "him crossed the finish line

first”—you would say, “he crossed the finish line first.” “He” is a subject pronoun—so you would use the subject pronoun “who.”

**Please correct the following sentences:**

1. Nathan only invited guys (**who / whom**) he thought played for high stakes.
2. I get a little jealous that my dog likes my neighbor more than (**I / me**).
3. Even though the other boys do not like Luke, he is much better off than (**them / they**).

- C. **Pronoun Agreement:** make sure you use EITHER singular or plural subjects in a sentence—don’t mix subjects within the sentence. For example:

INCORRECT: “If a person has the right to live, they should also have the right to die.”

CORRECT: “If a person has the right to live, he should also have the right to die.”

INCORRECT: “Nationwide, more than one million people make a living as a professional nurse.”

CORRECT: “Nationwide, more than one million people make a living as professional nurses.”

## Lesson 4: Verbs:

### ➤ Subject-Verb Agreement

#### ➤ Verb Tense

#### ➤ Verb Parallelism

**Verbs:** express an action (jump, think) or a state of being (is, become). Please be attentive to the following verb rules:

1. **Subject-Verb Agreement:** singular with singular, plural with plural. (Remember that a group is sometimes singular; for example, you would say that “the jury **is** back,” not “the jury **are** back.”)

- “The main **source** of income for Trinidad **is** textiles.” (Both are singular.)

- “The **samples** on the tray in the lab **need** testing.” (Both are plural.)

2. **Verb Tense:** discuss literature in the present tense. This may sound odd to you at first, but it will soon seem normal (trust me!). All your teachers (and later, your professors in college) will agree—it is the way to go. For example,

- In Lord of the Flies, the boys are stuck on the island after the plane crashes; the active setting of the novel encourages the boys to become savages.

- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a novel of good vs. evil; like Lord of the Flies, evil wins out in the end.

3. **Verb Parallelism** (within a sentence): Make sure verbs within a sentence are parallel, that they are *in the same form* as other verbs in the sentence. For example, “As a freshman in high school, you should be responsible; you should arrive to class on time, make sure you have all the books you need for class, and complete all of your homework without being reminded.”

INCORRECT: Some claim steroids enable athletes to rehabilitate faster and in more games.

CORRECT: Some claim steroids enable athletes to rehabilitate faster and enable them to play in more games.

## Lesson 5: Adverbs, Adjectives, Articles, Participles

**Adjectives:** adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. For example, the adjectives in the following sentence are highlighted:

- “The deep brown leather sofa was expensive.”

**That vs. Which:** “that” and “which” are generally considered adjectives, describing/modifying a noun. The traditional approach to the usage of these words is to use “that” with restrictive clauses and “which” with nonrestrictive clauses. While some writers seem to have abandoned the distinction entirely, no better rule has come along to replace the traditional rule. Have no fear; the rule is easy to master.

**Use “that” with restrictive clauses.** A restrictive clause is one that limits or restricts the subject in some way. When writing a restrictive clause, introduce it with the word “that” and no comma. (However, if the subject is or was a human being, use “who” to introduce the clause.) For example, the following sentence uses **that** correctly: “*The car that was parked nearest the building was stolen.*” Explanation: The use of “that” in this sentence is correct if the writer intends to emphasize that the location of the stolen car was significant. However, if the writer’s point is that the car was stolen, the sentence would read, “*The car, which was parked nearest the building, was stolen.*”

**Use “which” with nonrestrictive clauses.** A nonrestrictive clause may tell us something interesting or incidental about a subject, but it does not define that subject. When writing a nonrestrictive clause, introduce it with “which” and insert commas around the clause. (However, if the subject is or was a human being, use “who” to introduce the clause and insert commas around the clause.)

Still confused? To decide whether to use “that” or “which,” determine whether the clause containing the word is restrictive (whether it adds essential information to the sentence) or non-restrictive (whether it can be omitted without changing the main point of the sentence). When a clause is restrictive, use “that”; when it is non-restrictive, use “which.”

**People aren’t “that.”** Don’t use “that” in reference to a person; use “who” or “whom.” Don’t say, “*There are a lot of people that care about their cars.*” Say, “*There are a lot of people who care about their cars.*”

*Circle the correct word in each of the remaining sentences (3-5 are adjectives).*

1. He decided ( **that**    which ) he would join the track team.
2. The experiment, ( that    **which** ) we tried on Friday, was successful.
3. The house ( **that**    which ) we liked best was also the most expensive.

**Adjectives** also include **articles** (**a**, **an**, and **the**) and **participles**, which are verb forms acting as adjectives.

**Articles:** some **Adjectives**--*a*, *an*, and *the*--are called **articles**. An article can be definite or indefinite; “a” and “an” are indefinite articles, while “the” is a definite article. For example: **A** chair can mean any chair, yet **the** chair refers to a specific chair.

The rules for these articles are:

- When a singular noun begins with a consonant sound, use **a**.
- When a singular noun begins with a vowel sound, use **an**.
- With singular and plural nouns, use **the**.

**Participles:** a participle is a verb form acting as an adjective. A verb’s *-ing* form is its **present participle**; the *-ed* form is its **past participle**. (HINT: they end in *-ing* or *-ed*).

A past participle is used, for example, in the following sentence:

- “The peaches, which were finally **crated**, made Sam happy.”

**Adverbs:** adverbs are words that modify:

- a **verb** (He drove **slowly**. — *How did he drive?*)
- an **adjective** (He drove a **very** fast car. — *How fast was his car?*)
- another adverb (She moved **quite** slowly down the aisle. — *How slowly did she move?*)

Adverbs often tell when, where, why, or under what conditions something happens or happened.

Adverbs frequently end in *-ly*; however, many words and phrases not ending in *-ly* serve an adverbial function and an *-ly* ending is not a guarantee that a word is an adverb. The words *lovely*, *lonely*, *motherly*, *friendly*, *neighborly*, for instance, are adjectives, for example, in the sentence:

“That **lovely** woman lives in a **friendly** neighborhood.”

## Lesson 6: Prepositions and Idioms

**Prepositions:** a preposition is a word/phrase placed before a noun/pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in a sentence. (The words *as*, *at*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *on*, *like*, *to*, *with* are each prepositions.)

**Preposition rules:**

1. When writing in academic English, sentences do not end with prepositions.
2. Prepositions modify another word in a sentence and add information to the sentence--but different prepositions change the meaning of a sentence. For example, each of the following sentences means something different.
  - I am standing **by** you.
  - I am standing **for** you.
  - I am standing **near** you.
  - I am standing **under** you.

**Idioms:** An idiom is a rule that is specific to a certain language, a rule that doesn't really make sense. One of these rules in the English language, one idiom, is that certain words must be paired with certain prepositions.

Again, there are really no rules to idioms, so you need to use your ears and memorize the ones that are tricky. For example,

- I am indebted **to** you.
- I am resentful **of/for** you.
- I am delighted **by/for** you.
- I am jealous **of** you.
- I am worried **about** you.
- I am astounded **by** you.
- The men had a dispute **over** politics.
- You have a responsibility to take care **of** your pet.
- My friends are not so different **from** your friends.

Please correct the following sentences:

1. Amy is astounded (by / over) the movie.

2. John is jealous (of / over) Sean's athletic abilities.
3. Men and women have long disputed (over /of) who pays the check at the end of the meal.

**Prepositional Phrases:** nearly always function as an adjective or an adverb; prepositional phrases begin with a preposition and end with a noun or noun equivalent, called the object). For example, in the sentence "The scientist *from France* spoke first." (*From France* is a prepositional phrase modifying *scientist*.)

## Lesson 7: Parallel Syntax:

When you want readers to consider two or more ideas of equal importance or of a similar nature, you can make the ideas clearer by expressing the ideas in similar grammatical form (again, look back at the previous lesson about verb agreement). The repetition of the same grammatical structure within one sentence is called **parallel construction**. For example:

Nonparallel: The river is sixty feet *wide* and twelve feet *in depth*.

*Wide* is a descriptive adjective, but *in depth* is a prepositional phrase. These modifiers are nonparallel. A corrected (parallel) sentence would read: *The river is sixty feet wide and twelve feet deep.*

Please correct the following nonparallel sentence:

1. My duties included checking out books, to reshelve them, and to write overdue notices.
2. Lauren is treasurer not only of the garden club but also of the club that plays bridge.
3. Neither a touchdown nor kicking a field goal can save the game now.
4. Those sunglasses are either lost or someone stole them.

Reminder: Lesson 7, Parallel Structure, refers to sentence structure, which was also presented in previous lessons. Refer to:

Lesson 3: Pronoun Agreement

Lesson 4: Verb Parallelism, and

Lesson 5: Parallel Structure and Adjective Parallelism

## Lesson 8: Punctuation: Rules for: Comma, Semi-Colon, Colon, Hyphen, Quotation Marks

**Colon:** use a colon to introduce a list or an explanation:

*EX: there is only one guaranteed method to lose weight: eat less and exercise more.*

A colon following a verb is unnecessary. For example, the colon in the following sentence is not needed:

*INCORRECT: The best way to lose weight is: eat less and exercise more.*

A revised sentence would read:

*CORRECT: The best way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise more.*

**Commas:** there are a number of ways in which the comma is used:

1. Use commas to set off most introductory elements.  
*EX: To save money, I often take the bus.*
2. Use commas to set off nonrestrictive modifiers from a sentence.  
*EX: Coach Hall, who was invited to the party, celebrated the victory.*
3. Use commas to separate coordinate adjectives (equal adjectives):  
*EX: It was a dull, dark day.*
4. Use a comma to set off dialogue or a direct quotation.  
*EX: The lawyer stated, "The car was unsafe at any speed."*
5. Use commas to set off addresses, dates, degrees, or titles:  
*EX: San Antonio, Texas, is his hometown.*
6. Use commas to separate items in a series: The last comma when listing items in a series is fading away; soon it will be a thing of the past.

Old Style Series Comma: *He purchased a car with power windows, anti-lock brakes, dual air bags, and an alarm system.*

New Style Series Comma: *He purchased a car with power windows, anti-lock brakes, dual air bags and an alarm system.*

**Comma Splice:** a comma splice is created when a comma is used in a sentence instead of a semi-colon, for example, in the following incorrect sentence: "I was hungry, I ate dinner." (See **Semi-colon**).

**Hyphen:** hyphens can be finicky; it is best to consult a dictionary to be sure, but here are some basic rules.

- Compound numbers (ninety-nine)
- Compound nouns (mother-in-law)
- Coequal nouns (writer-illustrator)
- Compound modifiers the precede nouns (self-fulfilling prophecy)
- Phrases as modifiers (out-of-this-world experience)
- Prefixes and suffixes (anti-American, pro-American, post-Vietnam War)

**Quotation Marks:** punctuation should be kept within quotation marks except when using a semi-colon. For example, when writing the following line of dialogue, note that the comma is inside the quotation marks:

*"The Yankees can not lose," said Jason.*



## Lesson 9:

- **Diction, Syntax**
- **Active vs. Passive Voice**
- **Homonyms, Affect vs. Effect**
- **Titles of Literature**

**Diction:** diction means choice of words. When writing, make sure you use the word that best fits the sentence, the most descriptive word.

**Syntax:** Sentence structure.

**Voice: Active vs. Passive:** in a sentence using the active voice, the subject is acting, for example, in the sentence “She drove the car.” If this same thought was communicated through the passive voice, it might read, “The car was driven by her.” Writing in the active voice is generally stronger. (See Pronoun Case.)

**Homonyms:** homonyms are words that sound alike but function differently (there/their/they’re; to/too/two; where/wear/we’re; it’s/its; whose/who’s), affect (an action) vs. effect (a noun), lie (to recline or to fib) vs. lay (to place). Remember that you use “it’s” for “it is” or “it has”; otherwise you need to use “its” (as in the sentence “*The car had its lights on.*” Consider “whose/who’s” in the same way. Use “who’s” for “who is” or “who has”—otherwise use “whose.”)

### **AFFECT vs. EFFECT**

**Affect** (a verb, an action) vs. **effect** (a noun)—remember that affect is an action; effect is the result of that action. For example: McDonald’s **affects** our culture; the **effects** are high blood pressure, obesity and heart attacks.

**Titles:** the titles of longer works (novels, plays, and works of non-fiction) are underlined; the titles of shorter works (essays, poetry, short stories) are put in quotation marks. For example,

- Hamlet is a drama written by Shakespeare; it is his longest play.
- “Incident” is a poem written by Countee Cullen.

**Lesson 10: Lesson 10 is a review of all previous lessons—then there is a quiz that will encompass those specific grammatical issues.**