**The Parts of Speech**

Traditional grammar classifies words based on eight **parts of speech**: the [verb](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/verbs.html#verb), the [noun](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/nouns.html#noun), the [pronoun](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/pronouns.html#pronoun), the [adjective](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/adjectve.html#adjective), the [adverb](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/adverbs.html#adverb), the [preposition](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/preposit.html#preposition), the [conjunction](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/conjunct.html#conjunction), and the [interjection](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/interjct.html#interjection).

Each **part of speech** explains not what the word *is*, but how the word *is used*. In fact, the same word can be a noun in one [sentence](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/subjpred.html#sentence) and a verb or adjective in the next. The next few examples show how a word's part of speech can change from one sentence to the next.

**Books** are made of ink, paper, and glue.

In this sentence, "books" is a noun, the [subject](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/subjpred.html#subject) of the sentence.

Deborah waits patiently while Bridget **books** the tickets.

Here "books" is a verb, and its subject is "Bridget."

We **walk** down the street.

In this sentence, "walk" is a verb, and its subject is the pronoun "we".

The mail carrier stood on the **walk**.

In this example, "walk" is a noun, which is part of a [prepositional phrase](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/phrfunc.html#prepositional%20phrase) describing where the mail carrier stood.

The town decided to build a new **jail**.

Here "jail" is a noun, which is the [object](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/objcompl.html#object) of the [infinitive phrase](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/phrfunc.html#infinitive%20phrase) "to build."

The sheriff told us that if we did not leave town immediately he would **jail** us.

Here "jail" is part of the [compound verb](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/vbcmpd.html#compound%20verb) "would jail."

They heard high pitched **cries** in the middle of the night.

In this sentence, "cries" is a noun acting as the [direct object](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/objcompl.html#direct%20object) of the verb "heard."

The baby **cries** all night long and all day long.

But here "cries" is a verb that describes the actions of the subject of the sentence, the baby.

**Word categories**

* [NOUN](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#noun#noun) - [PRONOUN](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#pronoun#pronoun) - [VERB](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#verb#verb) - [ADJECTIVE](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#adjective#adjective)
* [ADVERB](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#adverb#adverb) - [PREPOSITION](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#preposition#preposition) - [CONJUNCTION](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#conjunction#conjunction) - [INTERJECTION](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/speech/1_6a.htm#interjection#interjection)
  1. **An overview of nouns**

**A noun:** any word which names a person, place, thing, idea, animal, quality, or action.

1. **Count Nouns**: anything which can be counted; singular and plural  
   Example: car - cars
2. **Mass Nouns**: entities which cannot be counted; they have no plural form.  
   Example: money
3. **Collective Nouns**: groups of people or things; sing. and plural.  
   Example: herd - herds
4. **Possessive Nouns**: express ownership by adding an apostrophe.  
   Examples: (singular.) Kelly's anger (plural.) birds' feathers
   1. **An overview of pronouns**

**A pronoun**: a word which takes the place of a noun (called "the antecedent")

1. **Personal**: they refer to person/people speaking, spoken to or spoken about.  
   Examples: I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they .
2. **Possessive**: they function independently; they show possession.  
   Examples: my, mine, your, yours, our, ours, his, her, hers .
3. **Indefinite**: they have no specific antecedents.

Examples: another, both, everything, nothing

1. **Reflexive**: they show that the subject performs actions to/for itself  
   Examples: myself, yourself, itself, ourselves, themselves
2. **Intensive**: they refer back to a noun/pronoun to add emphasis to it  
   Examples: (same forms as reflexive pronouns)
3. **Reciprocal**: they show a mutual action or relationship

Examples : each other, one another

1. **Interrogative**: they are used to ask a question

Examples: who, which, what

1. **Relative**: they are used to introduce a relative clause

Examples: who, which, that

1. **Demonstrative**: they substitute for specific nouns

Examples: this, that, these, those

* 1. **An overview of verbs**

A verb: expresses action or state of being

1. **Transitive**: it is an action verb; it passes action on to a direct object  
   Example: We bought a car.
2. **Intransitive**: it does not indicate a transfer of action; it does not require a direct object  
   Example: The eagle soared.
3. **Linking**: it joins the subject with a word that renames/describes it  
   Example: The sky is blue.
4. **Main**: it indicates the primary activity
5. **Auxiliary**: "helps" the main verb
6. **Modal**: indicates ability, obligation, permission, possibility  
   Examples: can, may, must, should, could, might, ought, would
7. **Finite**: it describes a definite and limited action or condition
8. **Non-finite/Verbal**: shows an unfinished action or condition
   * **Infinitives**: to + verb; act as nouns, adjectives, adverbs
   * **Participles**: past or present; always act as adjectives
   * **Gerunds**: present participle form; act as nouns
   1. **An overview of adjectives**

An adjective: modifies nouns and pronouns

1. **Descriptive**: it names a quality of the noun
   * **Attributive**: Eg. The brown cow.
   * **Predicate**: Eg. It was a brown cow.
2. **Limiting**: it limits a noun
   * **Definite/Indefinite Articles**: Eg. the, a, an
   * **Possessive**: Eg. his, her, its, their
   * **Demonstrative**: Eg. this, that, these, those
   * **Indefinite**: Eg. several, few, less, many, more
   * **Interrogative**: Eg. what, which, whose
   * **Cardinal**: Eg. one, two, four
   * **Ordinal**: Eg. third, fourth, fiftieth
   * **Nouns**: Eg. the **milk** cow
   * **Proper**: Eg. the **German** cow
   1. **An overview of adverbs**

An adverb: modifies verbs, adjectives, adverbs, sentences

Examples: sang **loudly**, ran **swiftly**

* 1. **An overview of prepositions**

A preposition: links a noun or a pronoun (the object of the preposition) with some other word or expression.

Examples: about, below, in, over, until

* 1. **An overview of conjunctions**

A conjunction : links sentence elements, ie. words, phrases, clauses

1. **Coordinating**: it joins sentence parts of equal grammatical status

Examples: and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet

1. **Correlative**: they are coordinating conjunctions that work in pairs; they join words, phrases, clauses, sentences.

Examples: both...and, either...or, neither...nor

1. **Subordinating**: they connect clauses of unequal status

Examples: after, because, that, though

* 1. **An overview of interjections**

An interjection is an unusual kind of word, because it often stands alone. Interjections are words which express emotion or surprise, and they are usually followed by exclamation marks.

Examples: *Ouch!, Hello!, Hurray!, Oh no!, Ha!* yuk, ouch, eh .

**Exercise:**

Identify the [part of speech](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/partsp.html#part%20of%20speech) of the **underlined** word in each of the following [sentences](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/subjpred.html#sentence):

1. The clown chased a dog around the **ring** and then fell flat on her face.
2. The geese **indolently** waddled across the intersection.
3. **Yikes!** I'm late for class.
4. Bruno's **shabby** thesaurus tumbled out of the book bag when the bus suddenly pulled out into traffic.
5. Mr. Frederick angrily **stamped** out the fire that the local hooligans had started on his verandah.
6. Later that summer, she asked herself, "What was **I** thinking of?"
7. She thought that the twenty zucchini plants **would** not **be** enough so she planted another ten.
8. **Although** she gave hundreds of zucchini away, the enormous mound left over frightened her.
9. Everywhere she went, **she** talked about the prolific veggies.
10. The manager **confidently** made his presentation to the board of directors.
11. Frankenstein **is** the name of the scientist, not the monster.
12. Her greatest fear is that the world will end before she finds a comfortable pair **of** panty-hose.
13. That suitcase is **hers**.
14. **Everyone** in the room cheered when the announcement was made.
15. The sun was shining as we **set** out for our first winter camping trip.
16. **Small** children often insist that they can do it by themselves.
17. **Dust** covered every surface in the locked bedroom.
18. The census taker knocked **loudly** on all the doors but nobody was home.
19. They wondered if there truly was honour **among** thieves.
20. Exciting new products **and** effective marketing strategies will guarantee the company's success.