

# Eight Parts of Speech

**NOUNS** refer to a person, place, thing, or concept. Nouns can be proper, common, concrete, abstract, count or non-count.

- Proper nouns are capitalized: *Sam Jones, San Antonio, Tylenol, Math 101*.
- Common nouns (all other persons, places, or things) are not capitalized: *man, city, medicine, class*.
- Concrete nouns can be seen: *building, flower, rock, spice*.
- Abstract nouns are qualities and ideas: *fairness, magnificence, reality, integrity*.
- Count nouns can be counted or have plural forms: *boy, boys, town, towns, mouse, mice*.
- Non-count nouns cannot be counted or do not have plural forms: *tolerance, gold, mud, stuff*.

**PRONOUNS** replace a noun or act as a substitute (or antecedent) for a specific noun. Pronouns can be personal, possessive, intensive, reflexive, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite, and reciprocal.

- Personal pronouns: *I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, you, them, they*
- Possessive pronouns: *your, yours, my, mine, her, hers, his, its, your, yours, our, ours, their, theirs*
- Possessive pronouns that serve as adjectives: *your, my, our, his, her, its, their*
- Intensive and Reflexive pronouns: *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*
- Relative pronouns: *who, whom, whose, that, which*
- Interrogative pronouns: *who, whom, whose, which, what*
- Demonstrative pronouns: *this, that, these, those*
- Indefinite pronouns: *all, any, anything, both, each, few, either, one, nothing, none*
- Reciprocal pronouns: *each other, one another*

**VERBS** describe an action or the act of being. “Be” verbs include one or more helping verbs, followed by a main verb. Helping verbs, combined with main verbs, create tense.

- Helping: *am, are, be, been, being, can, could, did, do, does, had, have, has, is, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would, was, were*.
- Main verbs can change form. For example:

Base form:	<i>try</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>eat</i>
Present (-s) form:	<i>tries</i>	<i>sees</i>	<i>eats</i>
Past form:	<i>tried</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>ate</i>
Past Participle form:	<i>have tried</i>	<i>have seen</i>	<i>have eaten</i>
Present Participle form:	<i>am trying</i>	<i>are seeing</i>	<i>are eating</i>
- “Be” verbs have eight forms:
  - Base: *be*
  - Present Tense: *am, is, are*
  - Past Tense: *was, were*
  - Present Participle: *being*
  - Past Participle: *been*
- Active vs. Passive verbs: In active voice (*The dog bit the boy*), the subject does the action. In passive voice (*The boy was bitten by the dog*), the subject receives the action. Choosing active over passive voice expresses meaning more powerfully than forms of the verb *be* or verbs in passive voice. Passive verbs are weaker because their subjects receive rather than do the action.

**ADJECTIVES** modify or describe nouns or pronouns ONLY. If a word answers the following questions, it is probably an adjective: *Which one? What kind of? How many?*

- Adjectives usually come before the word they modify or follow linking verbs, which describe the subject: The dog was *older*. My dog is *brown*. The *older, brown* dog is *my* pet.
- Articles (*a, an, the*) are adjectives.
- Some pronouns (*all, her, his, its, my, their, this, and your*) are adjectives.
- Nouns that modify other nouns are adjectives: *peach* cobbler, *orange* tree.

**ADVERBS** modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs ONLY. If a word answers the following questions, it is probably an adverb: *When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?*

- Examples include: *today, yesterday, tomorrow, first, then, not, never, often, before, after, there, here, upstairs, downstairs, carefully, tastefully, occasionally, actually, logically, personally.*

**PREPOSITIONS** usually occur before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase that modifies another word in the sentence. These are known as prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases often act as adjectives or adverbs and show relationships of words in sentences.

- As adjectives: When the prepositional phrase is an adjective, it usually follows the noun or pronoun that it modifies. Adjective phrases tell us which one or what kind of.
- As adverbs: When prepositional phrases act as adverbs, they modify the verb but can also modify adjectives or other adverbs. A prepositional phrase modifying a verb can appear in any place in the sentence.
- Most common prepositions: *about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, as, at, before, behind, below, beside, besides, between, beyond, but, by, concerning, considering, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, next, of, off, on, onto, opposite, out, outside, over, past, plus, regarding, respecting, round, since, than, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, underneath, unlike, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without.*

**CONJUNCTIONS** connect thoughts. They join words, phrases, or clauses. They help the reader understand the relationship between the words they join. Different types of conjunctions are coordinating, correlative, subordinating conjunctions, and conjunctive adverbs.

- Coordinating conjunctions: *FANBOYS = for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*
- Correlative conjunctions: *both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, whether . . . or.*
- Subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, as if, because, before, if, once, since, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, and while.*
- Conjunctive adverbs: *finally, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, similarly, then, therefore, thus.*

**INTERJECTIONS** express emotion or surprise.

- Examples: *Amen! Bye! Duh! Gee! Hello! Hey! Hurray! Wow! Yeah!*

See *A Writer's Reference*, pp. 305-12, for additional information and examples.