



Parts of a Sentence

Noun, verbs, and adjectives are the main parts of a sentence. Once you understand those parts of speech, you're ready to start learning how to construct sentences. In order to learn to construct sentences, there are a few more parts of speech to learn.

If you want to review the Use of Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives, [click here](#).

Articles

- An article is similar to an adjective because it **modifies nouns**. They come before a noun or noun phrase in a sentence. In English, the articles are “the” and “a/an.” “The” modifies specific nouns. “A/an” modifies non-specific nouns. In other words, “the” is a definite article and “a/an” are indefinite articles.

Example 1: I watched **the** movie.

This example refers to a specific movie, so “the” is used.

Example 2: I watched **a** good movie.

This sentence refers to a movie in general, not a specific one. Additionally, the article comes before the whole noun phrase (good movie).

- When using a or an, “a” comes before words that start with consonants and “an” comes before words that start with vowels.

Example 1: I ate **a** pear.

Example 2: I ate **an** apple.

* Pear starts with a consonant, so “a” precedes it. “Apple” starts with a vowel, so “an” precedes it.

Subject and Predicate

- Every complete sentence needs a subject and predicate. A subject is the main noun of the sentence, or the noun that is completing an action/doing something.

Example 1: **The girl** sat on the couch.

Example 2: **The boy** read a book.

* Both “the boy” and “the girl” are the main focus of each sentence. They are completing an action (sitting/reading), which leads us to the next part of the sentence.

- Predicates tell us what the subject of the sentence is doing. The predicate is the part of the sentence that contains a verb. It will state what the subject does, or something about the subject.

Example 1: The woman walked on the beach.

In this sentence, the woman (who is the subject) performs an action (walking on the beach). The whole phrase that tells us what she is doing is the predicate.



Example 2: The woman **is blonde**.

Being blonde isn't an action performed by the subject, but it states something about the subject. The subject has blonde hair, so it is something that is constant.

Conjunctions

- A conjunction is a part of the sentence that can **join two separate sentences together** without changing any of the words of the sentences. And, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet are the conjunctions.

Example 1: I wanted to eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We didn't have any jelly.

This example has no conjunction. Here is how to connect it with a conjunction.

Example 2: I wanted to eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, **but** we didn't have any jelly.

"But," the conjunction in this sentence, connects the two sentences from the first example into one sentence.

Prepositions

- Prepositions are words that can be combined with a noun or pronoun to make phrases that modify verbs, nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. These phrases are called prepositional phrases. **Prepositional phrases act as an adjective or adverb to express time, space, or direction in a sentence.**
- Here is a list of common prepositions in the English language: Aboard, about, above, across, after, against, along, amid, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, over, past, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, unlike, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without.

Examples: The dog jumped **over** the fence **in** the backyard.

In this example, "over" tells us where the dog jumped, and "in" tells us where the fence was. These prepositional phrases (over the fence/in the backyard) express spatial meaning.

Meet **at** six o'clock **since** I'm working until five.

Both "at" and "since" deal with time. The prepositional phrases here are "at six o'clock" and "since I'm working until five."

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427.

Resources consulted: Purdue OWL, English Club, Grammar CCC