



Use of Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives

Nouns, verbs, and adjectives are parts of speech, or the building blocks for writing complete sentences. Nouns are people, places, or things. Verbs are action words. Adjectives are descriptive words.



Nouns

- A noun is a part of speech that signifies a person, place, or thing.

Example 1: The **rabbit** read the **book**.

Example 2: **Anna** visited **France**.

Both “rabbit” and “book” are nouns because they are “things.” They are general words for people, places, or things, so they are **improper nouns**. “Anna” is a noun because she is a person, and “France” is a noun because it’s a place. Anna is the girl’s name and France is the name of a country, so they are **proper nouns**.

- The previous examples are **tangible nouns**, or things you can touch or hold, but nouns can also be **intangible** or **abstract**. This means that they aren’t things you can touch, like feelings.

Example 1: **Honesty** is important.

Example 2: He is searching for **happiness**.

“Honesty” and “happiness” are concepts that are more abstract than “rabbit” or “book,” but they are both still nouns.

- Nouns can also be singular or plural. **Singular nouns** refer to only one person, place or thing, and **plural nouns** refer to more than one.

Example 1: She owns a **dog**.

Example 2: She owns two **dogs**.

There is only one dog in the first example, so the noun “dog” remains unchanged. To show that there are multiple dogs, an “s” is added to the end of “dog” to make it plural.

Pronouns

- Pronouns are words that replace nouns in a sentence. In the following examples, the first example does not have a pronoun and the second one does.

Example 1: **Jasmine** is a princess.

Example 2: **She** is a princess.

“She” is a pronoun used to replace the proper noun “Jasmine.”



- Example pronouns:

<i>Subject Pronouns</i>	<i>Object Pronouns</i>
I	Me
We	Us
You	You
She	Her
He	Him
It	It
They	Them

- **Subject pronouns** replace the subjects of sentences. Subjects of sentences perform action in sentences. **Object pronouns** replace the object in the sentence that is receiving action.

Example 1: The **girl** hugged the **boy**.

Example 2: **She** hugged **him**.

“The girl” is the subject of this sentence since she is performing an action on “the boy.” “The girl” is replaced by subject pronouns “she,” and “the boy” is replaced by object pronoun “him.”

Adjectives

- Adjectives describe nouns. They tell us which, what kind, or how many of a certain noun there is. An adjective is the part of speech that modifies a noun.

Example 1: Elsa is **blonde**.

Example 2: Elsa lives in a **big blue** castle.

In the first example, the adjective describes how Elsa looks. In the second example, two verbs, big and blue, are used in a row to modify the castle.

- Adjectives can be introduced by a **helping verb** (like “is” for singular nouns or “are” for plural nouns) as in the first example, or placed in front of the noun they are modifying like in the second example.

Example 1: The **intelligent** girl is **tall**.

Example 2: The **athletic** boys are **funny**.

In both examples, the first adjective comes before the noun, and the second adjective is introduced by a helping verb.

Adjectives are very useful in writing because they help readers visualize or understand what an author has written.





Verbs

- Verbs indicate action or state of being in sentences.

Example 1: Batman **drives** the Batmobile.

Example 2: Natasha **is** a spy.

The first example describes what Batman is doing, and the second example describes Natasha's state, or what she is always doing. Being a spy is her profession, so it is a state she is always in that verbs can help describe.

- Verbs can also be in different tenses.

Example 1: Thor **throws** the hammer.

Example 2: Thor **threw** the hammer.

The first example shows what Thor is currently doing, while the second example shows what he already did.

- Often there are multiple verbs in a sentence, or even entire verb phrases including helping verbs.

Example 1: Thor **jumped** and **caught** the hammer.

Example 2: Thor **was throwing** the hammer at his brother.

In the second example, the helping verb "was" is a part of the entire verb phrase "was throwing."



Helping Verbs

- Helping Verbs**, as the name suggests, help to extend the meaning of verbs already used in a sentence. Sometimes an action verb requires further context or meaning.

Example 1: Beyoncé **is** singing.

Example 2: Beyoncé **was** singing.

In the first example, "is" shows what action Beyoncé currently performs. The second example shows the same, put in past tense. Other examples of helping verbs are: am, as, are, were, been, be, can, has, shall, will, do, does, did, have, should, may, might, being, would, must, could, and had.

Adverbs

- Like adjectives, adverbs are used to modify. However instead of modifying nouns, adverbs modify verbs. Adverbs describe how verbs, or actions, were done.

Example 1: Beyoncé sang beautifully.

Example 2: The crowd screamed loudly.



In both examples, the adverbs modify the verbs. We are able to understand how Beyoncé sang and how the crowd reacted. Similar to helping verbs, adverbs are used to help people better understand verb usage in a sentence.

Works Consulted

- Purdue Owl, ESL Partyland, and grammar.yourdictionary.com

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.*