

Sentence Parts

Remember

Different schools of grammar use differing terminology and sometimes postulate different explanations of grammatical meaning. Remember, whether there are nine principal parts of speech, or eight, or eighteen (the pie gets sliced in different ways), you need to have intuitive working definitions for each. If I ask you what an *adjective* is, or a *preposition*, you need to be able to say something. If I ask you to identify the parts of speech within a sentence, you need to be able to give it a shot.

Stepping through the Material

We need to go over some *sentence basics*. This may be simple stuff, but it is also foundational material. You need to keep the simple distinctions up front in your mind in order to attempt more complex analysis.

Many folks write “sentence fragments” or “incomplete sentences.” Such constructions don’t have both subject and predicate and they don’t express complete ideas. Really good writers get away with fragments: they construct ideas where the subject or predicate are well understood, if not stated. These writers are making conscious, stylistic decisions. They are often mimicking spoken English. Generally speaking, we don’t get to do this.

There are four types of sentences: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory. If one of our goals is to be able to take apart the grammar of a sentence, knowing some of the tricks is helpful.

Declarative sentences are normally Subject + Verb order. *This is the typical order in the English language. In some languages, Verb + Noun is typical (classical Arabic, Insular Celtic languages, and Hawaiian).*

Interrogative sentences, questions, often reverse the normal sentence order. This is good to remember when working to identify the parts of a complex interrogative sentence. They may split the verb: *Do you remember your first grade teacher? Do you?*

Imperative sentences most often have as their subject “You” understood. They are normally commands. (“Think of an imperative

sentence that is not a command.” *I don’t think you can do so.*)

Exclamatory sentences. There is not much to say about exclamatory sentences. They often use interjections. Most good writers do not overuse them.

A *Subject* is a noun, pronoun, or *noun group* (noun phrase) about which something is said. The subject can be divided into simple subject and complete subject.

The big shaggy dog noisily slurped the warm, greenish water.

“dog” is the simple subject. “The big shaggy dog” is the complete subject (that is, the simple subject plus all words that modify or complete it).

Again, the complete subject is the simple subject plus all words that are associated with it: these are additional words that *modify* or *complete* the simple subject.

A *Predicate* is the part of the sentence that makes a statement about the subject.

The predicate includes the verb (which may be made up of main verb plus helping or auxiliary verbs), various verb objects or complements that complete the statement begun by the verb, plus any modifiers.

Grammatical Analysis

Many grammarians suggest that you should begin grammatical analysis by finding the verb. Although this is good advice – verbs are deeply important (and often powerful), you can follow any method that works. But remember that the verb is important. If you cannot find it, you are sunk.

Parts of Speech

Consider the following sentences.

The *counter* was made from granite and steel.
I will *counter* with a left hook of wit.
The poor odd fellow made a strange *counter* offer.

The fact that many words can function as more than one part of speech is extremely important. You cannot memorize the usage every individual word in complete detail; context is essential.

Consider the parts of speech listed below. Write two sentences that use each part of speech. You can use definitions provided here:

https://blogs.stockton.edu/grammar/files/2023/09/8_principal_parts_F2023.pdf .

If we were meeting on this day, I would ask for volunteers to go up to the board to write sentences using each part of speech. I would then ask you to explain the part of speech and how it functions within your sentences.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1) Nouns | 6) Conjunctions (coordinating & subordinate) |
| 2) Pronouns | 7) Prepositions |
| 3) Adjectives | 8) Interjections |
| 4) Verbs | |
| 5) Adverbs | |

Note that some grammarians describe *articles* (or *determiners*) – *a*, *an*, *the* – as a separate part of speech. Admittedly, they are specialized adjectives. In this course we will consider them as a type of modifying adjective.

A Bit More

Perhaps no single word or part of speech is too tricky (quick, define an adverb). But when words and parts of speech start to work together, things can get more complicated.

Let's start with a simple *prepositional phrase*. At its simplest the prepositional phrase has a preposition (such as *in, on, of, at, by*) and an object of a preposition, a noun or pronoun (such as *in house, by heart, of you, at the corner, etc.*). The preposition joins its object with some other word in the sentence and indicates a relationship between those words.

Perhaps the key point is that each word of the prepositional phrase joins together in a unit of meaning and the entire phrase functions as though it were an adjective or adverb (sometimes but not often as a noun).

Dickie drove (to the Wawa) (with a friend) (from her old neighborhood).

The first prepositional phrase, "to the Wawa," modifies "drove," telling where Dickie traveled; "drove" is a verb, so it is an adverbial prepositional phrase. The second prepositional phrase also modifies "drove," so it is also adverbial. The third prepositional phrase modifies "friend," a noun, so it is an adjectival prepositional phrase.

Marge's need (for silence) (in the morning) was famous (on the lake).

The first prepositional phrase modifies "need," a noun, so it is adjectival. The second modifies "silence," noun, so it is also adjectival. The third modifies "famous" an adjective, so it is adverbial.

A Discriminating Point of Grammar

Consider the following sentences. Can you see the difference in the use of the word “down”?

Tom scanned down the page. (adverb)

Tom jumped (down the hole). (preposition)

One way to view the grammatical difference in the use of “down” is to delete the word from each sentence.

Tom scanned the page.

Tom jumped the hole.

In the first sentence, the general meaning is retained even without “down.” Tom still scanned the page; we just don’t know in what direction; “down” is a useful but not necessary modifier. In the second sentence, however, without “down” the meaning has been completely altered. “Tom jumped down the hole” means just that: Tom jumped *into* a hole. With “down” removed, though, the meaning shifts to something like “Tom jumped *over* the hole.” This suggests the greater significance of “down” in the second example. Here “down” is acting as a preposition and not only joins but adds meaning (as part of an adv. prep. phrase).

Remember, understanding words in context is essential to analyzing grammar.

Phrases

Phrases are groups of words that can be seen to act as a single part of speech, that have an internal grammar, but do not have both a subject and predicate.

some phrases

noun phrase

verb phrase

prepositional phrase

verbal phrases

The driving snow made tobogganing better. [noun phrase]

The kids had been sitting (at the edge) (of the hill). [verb phrase, two prepositional phrases.]

Clauses

Clauses are groups of words that *do have both a subject and a predicate*.

Dependent clauses can be seen to act as a single part of speech, have an internal grammar, and have both a subject and predicate.

There are two major types of clauses

1) those that can stand alone = Independent clauses

2) those that cannot stand alone = Dependent clauses There are two types of Dependent clauses

Subordinate clauses

Relative clauses

Subordinate clause (*if, although, when*)

If you read that book, your mind may be scarred.

Relative clause (begins with a relative pronoun: *who, which, that*. Etc.)

I knew a cat who had ten lives.

We will spend quite a bit of time on phrases and clauses during this course. For now I will simply state that the distinction between phrases and clauses is one of the most basic and important distinctions in grammar. Despite their fundamental differences, phrases and clauses operate in strikingly similar ways.

I am not concerned that you memorize the distinctions between simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences, but you should understand the distinctions being made. It is these sorts of rich sentences that provide grammatical challenges.

- Simple = independent clause
- compound = two or more independent clauses
- complex = independent clause and dependent clause
- compound-complex = at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause

The differences, when you come down to it, depend on the mix of dependent and independent clauses. We need to get used to recognizing clauses. They often hide in plain sight.

There is a point to be made about compound sentences and punctuation. A compound sentence has two independent clauses. When they are joined by a coordinating conjunction, they need to employ a comma (except for short or quite informal writing).

Another challenge is presented by sentences (whether simple, compound, complex or otherwise) that have multiple subjects and multiple verbs.

The computer, the robotic toy, and two dogs WALKED in the park and LAUGHED at the park benches.

Sentence Patterns

Sentence patterns help to sort out and understand various types of verb objects and complements.

S-AV	Queen Jane walked.
S-AV-DO	She fed the fish.
S-AV-IO-DO	She threw Zoey the bone
S-AV-DO-OC	She called Dylan brother / She called Dylan silly.
S-LV-SC	She is a character / She has been sick. ¹

(S = subject. AV = action verb. DO = direct object. IO = indirect object. OC = object complement. LV = linking verb. SC = subject complement.)

You must be aware of definitions for the 8 principal parts of speech. You must also have working definitions for the following grammatical concepts.

Subject
Predicate
direct object
indirect object
object complement (n. or adj.)
subject Complement (PN + PA)

The sentence patterns described above are a useful way to divide the grammatical universe into categories. Below is another way to understand this universe. Consider what this imperfect chart is attempting to explain. It suggests that a basic divide exists between “modifiers” and “verb objects and complements.”

¹ These sentence patterns are borrowed from David and Barb Daniels, *HarperCollins College Outline: English Grammar*, p. 20.

An imperfect chart

<i>Modifiers</i>	<i>Verb Objects & Complements</i>
adjectives	Action Verbs
adverbs	DO
prepositional phrases [†]	IO
participles	Object Complements, nouns <i>and</i> adjectives [*]
participial phrases	
infinitives (where they modify)	
infinitive phrases (where they modify)	Linking Verbs
Subordinate clauses (where they modify)	SC (PA* + PN)
Relative clauses (where they modify)	

† The chart breaks down a bit here since prepositional phrases are made from prepositions and *objects* of prepositions; nevertheless, prepositional phrases function as a unit, and the way that they function is to modify (except in very rare occasions when they act as nouns).

* The chart breaks down here as well because these items serve as complements, but they also modify.

Thanks for your patience working through this set of notes.

Here's a fun sentence

"The scholar, despite the lack of air conditioning, kept on working by the hot window."

Sentence by Bill Wend – note the adverb "on" and the gerund "working." See the OED for "despite," here a preposition short for "despite of."

Eight Principal Parts of Speech

Noun. A word that names a person, place or thing. Grammatically, nouns are used in many ways, chiefly as subjects, objects and predicate nouns.

Pronoun. A word that replaces a noun. Another definition might read “a way to identify a person, place or thing without naming it.” Pronouns have a rich variety: personal pronouns, relative pronouns, reflexive, interrogative, demonstrative and indefinite. An aspect of pronouns that has become difficult to master for American English speakers is case. Most pronouns decline for subject, object, and possessive case and should be used accordingly.

Verb. A word (or words in the case of verbs with auxiliaries) that makes a statement about the subject of a clause. Most verbs in English describe actions; they are action verbs. Linking verbs, less prevalent than action verbs but used with great frequency, are the second class of verbs. Linking verbs – verbs that show a state of being – do not describe actions; it may be helpful to think of them as grammatical equal signs.

Adjective. An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun. Certain phrases and clauses can function adjectivally, working as units to modify nouns and pronouns.

Adverb. An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, other adverbs, and sometimes entire sentences. Certain phrases and clauses can function adverbially, working as units to modify verbs, adjective or adverbs, etc.

Preposition. A preposition is a word (often small, often ditzzy, although not always) that connects a noun or pronoun, which is the object of the preposition, to another word in the sentence, providing additional meaning. Prepositions frequently relate to place or time (consider *in*, *at*, *by*, *near*, *on*, *in*).

The cat (in the house). Here the preposition is *in*; the object of *in* is *house*; both connect to *cat*. You see the added meaning by contrasting *cat house* with *cat in the house*.

Conjunction. A conjunction is a word that connects. Coordinating conjunctions (think of *and* or *but*) join equivalent grammatical units: words, phrases or clauses. Subordinating conjunctions introduce a type of dependent clause called subordinate clauses.

Interjection. A word, usually at the opening of a sentence, that is clearly part of the sentence meaning, but is grammatically unrelated to other words in the sentence.

Looking more closely at nouns

Nouns are words that name: Grammarians have come up with different groupings:

Common (words for types of things, people, and places)

Proper (nouns that serve as the name for a specific person, place, or thing)

Collective (denoting a group or collective – *flock, band, the Eagles*)

Abstract (referring to something conceptual – *sadness, euphoria*)

Concrete (describing things that can be sensed – *cat, cookie, mom*)

Mass (denoting something that cannot be counted – *sugar, sand*)

Compound (made up of two or more nouns – *high school, battlewagon*)

You might also mention verbal nouns (gerunds). We will save our discussion of verbal nouns (gerunds) for verbs and verbals.

I am not overly concerned about these classifications, and I don't think you should be, but they do make sense.

The subject of a sentence may have a noun in it (or a pronoun), but not all nouns are subjects. Nouns have many uses:

subject complement of verb

direct object of verb

indirect object of verb

object complement (when a noun)

subject complement (predicate noun)

object of preposition

appositive (*Jane, the troublemaker, walked into the room.*)

in direct address (*Jane, please clean your room.*) – a cross between subject, appositive & subject complement?)

The grammarian winced. (subject)

The grammarian threw Tom the text. (indirect object, direct object)

The grammarian is a scholar. (subject complement—predicate noun)

The grammarian pronounced Tom his pupil. (direct object, object complement)

The grammarian threw the text to Tom. (object of preposition) (notice relationship between i.o. and this prep. phrase)

The grammarian, poor soul, needed more time to study. (appositive)

Do not forget, grammarians, the test is approaching. (direct address)

Hearse

Declension & Conjugation

Old English (Anglo-Saxon, which developed in the 400s and 500s) was a heavily declined and conjugated language. Nouns, pronouns and adjectives had different endings depending on their use in a sentence – as subject, indirect or direct objects, and so forth – in other words they declined by case. Verbs and adverbs changed their endings, they were conjugated, depending on tense, person, number, and voice. Word order was nearly insignificant (at least technically); there were no such things as prepositions. Changing word endings, suffixes (and sometimes prefixes), showed how a noun was to be used (its declension) or a verb (its conjugation).

Some of these complexities fell away during the Anglo-Saxon period under the influence of competing Norse languages. More fell away during the Middle English period, leaving few by the time of the early modern English period.

Anglo Saxon c. 500 – c. 1100 (b. Hastings, 1066)

Middle English c. 1100/1250 – c. 1500

Early Modern English c. 1500 – c. 1700

Some of the complexities of verb conjugation remain (past, present, participial forms) but helping verbs have taken most of the starch out of a formerly complicated system.

Some noun/pronoun declensions remain as well. Nouns and pronouns are declined as one of three cases:

subject (subjective, nominative)

object (objective)

possessive

Case

The property of a noun or a pronoun that indicates its relation to other words in the sentence. Case denotes (it marks) whether a noun or pronoun is functioning as subject, object, or is possessive. The difficulty is that most nouns no longer *show* case, except for the possessive case. English has lost the complexity it previously had.

So, how do we identify the case of a noun? By its use within the sentence.

If a noun or pronoun functions as a subject, it must be in the subject case; if it acts as an object (of any sort), it must be in the object case; if it demonstrates possession (and very well might have an apostrophe), it is in the possessive case.

The possessive case is interesting. Usually we define possessives as *showing possession* and identify the apostrophe as signaling possession. But many subtle concepts other than possession can be signaled:

the cat's paw, Johnson's dictionary, Ken's umbrella (physical ownership—even here though, the degree of possession varies)

the teacher's directive, Timothy's shame, Mug Mug's ambition (showing action or feeling)

the student's defeat, my grandmother's death, Pike's pursuers (showing association)

an hour's delay, a day's journey, a week's vacation (showing measure)

yesterday's newspaper, duty's call, for pity's sake (god knows, miscellaneous)

Such possessive constructions do have the similarity that they are the equivalent of phrases with the preposition *of*.

Check out the following

his skate
the *kid's* skate
the young *kid's* skate

his is clearly an adjective. How does *kid's* function differently from *his*? How about *young*? I want to call *young* an adjective, but if it modifies *kid's* should I call it an adverb? **Isn't grammar fun.**

Pronouns

To simply say pronouns are words that rename or replace nouns is to give them short shrift. There are several, relatively distinct categories:

- personal
- reflexive (with intensifying and reciprocal as subcategories)
- relative
- interrogative
- demonstrative
- indefinite

Consider the complexity of case for the personal pronouns.

Personal Pronouns retain some of the complex declension found in Old English and, to a lesser degree, Middle English nouns and pronouns.

They are declined for person (1st=person speaking, 2nd=person spoken to, 3rd=person or thing spoken about), gender (in the third person) and case.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Singular			
Subject	I	you	he, she, it
Object	me	you	him, her, it
Possessive	my, mine	your, yours	his, her, hers, its
Plural			
Subject	we	you	they
Object	us	you	them
Possessive	our, ours	your, yours	their, theirs

Examples

Subject

He is lonely. *They* knew [what *they* wanted.]

Predicate Noun

It must have been *she*. Was it *he* who told you? It is *I*.
This is *she*.

Direct Object

Tom knows *her*. Have you seen *them*?

Indirect Object

Give *him* your address. She showed *me* another way.

Object of a preposition

Are you coming with *me*? Nothing can come between *us*. Nothing can come between *you* and *me*.

Notice that certain possessive forms (*my*, *our*, *your*, *their*), while commonly listed under pronouns, are never used that way. They act as adjectives:

It was *my* donut.

I named *their* grammar the best. [note the object complement]

Reflexive (also known as Compound Personal Pronouns)

Certain possessive and objective forms combine with *self* or *selves* to make compound personal pronouns: *myself*, *ourselves*, *yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves*.

These forms can be used as **reflexive** or **intensifying** pronouns.

The reflexive construction shows the action of a verb returning to the subject:

I enjoyed *myself*.

She woke *herself*.

They conducted *themselves* well. Behave *yourself*.

The intensifying construction is used for emphasis, and usually appears immediately after the noun or pronoun it emphasizes:

I *myself* saw the cat.
The captain *himself* didn't know what to do.
The car *itself* was undamaged.

How would you describe the third pronoun in the following sentence?

She did it *herself*. [It is intensifying but appears to be used reflexively – sort of a cross?]

Be careful to avoid falsely pompous constructions using these pronouns:

Harry and myself were present. (Use *I* instead)
The cat was given to Chris and myself. (Use *me* instead)

Reciprocal Pronouns

each other and *one another* are called reciprocal pronouns, since they express a relationship back and forth. Grammatically, the two words are considered as one word.

Relative Pronouns

Two categories: *definite* relative pronouns and *indefinite* relative pronouns.

The definite relative pronouns are *who*, *which*, and *that*. *Whom* is the objective case form of *who*; *whose* is the possessive case: *who*, *whom*, *whose*.

These pronouns occur in constructions called *relative clauses*. A clause, as you know, is a group of words containing a subject and a verb. A definite relative clause depends upon a word or words in the main clause:

The man *who stole the car* has been caught.

The man has been caught is the main clause. The relative clause is used as an adjective to modify the noun *man*. Notice that the relative pronoun *who* does double duty: it is the subject of *stole* in the relative clause; it also stands for the noun *man* and connects the relative clause to this noun.

The choice of *who* or *whom* depends on its construction **within** the relative clause.

The man *whom you accused* is not guilty.

The grammarian *to whom I spoke* was very helpful.

Here the relative pronouns serve as objects, of the verb *accused* and of the preposition *to*; therefore the objective form is used.

Compare:

whom you accused
who accused you

Whose, the possessive form of *who*, is commonly used as an adjective.

The woman *whose house I rented* is my cousin. (*Whose* modifies *house*)

The relative pronouns *which* and *that* do not have case changes.

The wind [*that* comes in spring] . . . (subject)
The house [*that* Tom built] . . . (direct object)
The book [*to which* he referred] . . . (obj. of prep)

Indefinite Relative Pronouns

Definite relative pronouns have antecedents in the main clause and are adjectival. When used without antecedents, relative pronouns are called *indefinite*.

The common indefinite relative pronouns include: *who* (*whom*, *whose*), *which*, *what*, *whoever* (*whomever*), *whatever*.

I can guess [*whom* you're referring to.]
I know [*whose* it was]
[*What* I think] doesn't seem to matter.
[*Whoever* comes] will be welcome
He does [*whatever* he likes.]

Notice that the relative clauses in these sentences are not used as adjectives but as nouns.

While the the distinction of definite and indefinite relative pronouns is important, in the end, it is useful to memorize all relative pronouns (regardless of definite and indefinite distinctions:

Who, whom, whose
That
Which
What
Whoever, whomever, whosever

Interrogative Pronouns

The forms *who* (*whom*), *which*, and *what* may introduce questions. When they do, they are described as interrogative pronouns.

Who told you that story? *Whom* has he selected? *Which* do you prefer?
What is the price of beans?
I want to know *who* told you that lie.

Notice:

Who did you take to the party? (colloquial)
Whom did you take to the party? (formal)

Demonstrative Pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns are *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*. They are usually defined as pronouns that point.

This is the answer.

Those were the days.

That was too much.

Notice the similarities and differences between demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative adjectives.

This is my book. Are *those* the pictures? (pronouns)

This book is mine. Did you take *those* pictures? (adjectives)

Indefinite Pronouns

These are the pronouns that cause some agreement trouble.

Singular: anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, somebody, someone, something, another, each, either, neither, nobody, nothing, none, one.

Plural: all, any, both, enough, few, more, none, plenty, several, some.

complacence vs. *complaisance*

Look these up in the *OED*.

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

We have been working with prepositional phrases since the first day of class. They are a deeply important building block of the English language.

Prepositions combine with nouns or pronouns and their modifiers to create *prepositional phrases*.

Common Prepositions (there are many others that are less common)

about	above	across	after
against	along	among	around
at	before	behind	between
beyond	but	by	concerning
despite	down	during	except
following	for	from	in
including	into	like	near
of	off	on	onto
out	over	past	plus
since	throughout	to	towards
under	until	up	upon
up to	with	within	without

Prepositions often help explain **placement** (*against, beyond, in, towards*) and **time** (*since, until, before*), but they can add meaning in a many other ways as well. Most importantly, prepositions join with a noun or pronoun (the object of the preposition) and the resulting phrase adds meaning to a sentence, usually modifying other nouns and verbs.

Prepositions, Adjectives, Adverbs

More Prepositions

In the following sentences, identify all prepositions and describe the words they modify.

A train jumper from the town by the supply depot sat with his legs
dangling out of the car near the rear of the train.

One way to see the phrasing is below:

A train jumper (from the town) (by the supply depot) sat (with his legs)
(dangling out of the car) (near the rear) (of the train).

But is “dangling out of” a compound preposition or just “out of” with “dangling” following but modifying “legs”? Perhaps the following parsing is more appropriate.

A train jumper (from the town) (by the supply depot) sat (with his legs)
dangling (out of the car) (near the rear) (of the train).

Here are more good practice sentences (for the answers, see the end of these notes):

In the shade of a walnut tree, Zoey with great zest sat at the picnic table
and ate dog biscuits from the package [that had been stored in the drawer
by the door]. *I have placed the final adjectival relative clause in brackets.*

Old-time hockey is played on a frozen pond or lake. You must first clear
the ice of snow. Gather all of your friends next. On skates with stick in
hand, drop the puck between you and a teammate and start the game.

From Absecon to Chatsworth is 30 miles.

Prepositions, Adjectives, Adverbs

A Look at Adjectives

Adjectives fall into two major categories: *descriptive* and *limiting*. The descriptive are fairly straightforward. Let me glance at the various types of limiting adjectives.

possessive adjectives: *our* garden, *her* gloves, *your* job

relative adjectives: the man *whose* name you mentioned; I know *what* time it is.

interrogative adjectives: *Which* house? *What* kind? *Whose* idea?

demonstrative adjectives: *this* toy, *that* litter box, *those* hockey pucks

indefinite adjectives: *each* boy, *some* candy, *another* day, *either* dog

Articles: *a*, *an*, *the*

Negatives: many negatives are adverbs, such as “not” and “never,” but *no* is an adjective – “we have no bananas.”

Note how close adjectives and pronouns can be.

Interrogative Pronouns/Interrogative adjectives

Demonstrative Pronouns/Demonstrative Adjectives

Possessive Pronouns/Possessive Adjectives

Relative Pronouns/Relative Adjectives

You NEED to consider context.

Prepositions, Adjectives, Adverbs

Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, verbals, and *sometimes* entire sentences.

Most adverbs modify verbs in certain regular ways:

by telling how: they moved *swiftly*
by telling when: they moved *immediately*
by telling where: they moved *forward*
by telling how much or to what extent: they moved *slightly*

Adverbs may modify adjectives or other adverbs, usually telling how or to what extent:

with adverbs: *rather* awkwardly; *very* awkwardly
with adjectives: *almost* six feet; *exactly* six feet

The function of an adverb, however, is not always easy to define. Some common adverbs (*possibly, indeed, however, not, therefore, etc.*) do not seem to answer the usual questions; nor do they always, as adjectives do, refer to specific words in the sentence:

He did *not* answer to his name.
Possibly the best route would be across the causeway.
It was *indeed* a disastrous venture.

In sentences like the last two, the adverb is sometimes said to modify the whole idea of the sentence rather than a particular word.

Prepositions, Adjectives, Adverbs

Many words that are commonly prepositions can be used as adverbs, the difference being that as prepositions they take objects and as adverbs they do not:

Kinsella strolled *by*. (adv)
Kinsella strolled *by* the house. (prep)

Don't look *down*. (adv)
Look *down* the valley. (prep)

Let's walk *around*. (adv)
Let's walk *around* the house. (prep)

Conjunctive Adverbs

A conjunctive adverb—*however* is the prototype—is a word that indicates the relationship between ideas but that does not simply link two independent clauses together in the manner of a coordinating conjunction. Conjunctive adverbs indicate the relationship between one idea and the next. These adverbs modify the whole sentence.

Google “conjunctive adverbs” for a decent list of these common adverbs. Here’s one:

<http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/conjunctiveadverb.htm>

Conjunctive adverbs can be a bit puzzling to punctuate. For an in-depth discussion of ways to punctuate them, consult the following webpage:

<https://blogs.stockton.edu/helpwithpunctuation/3-the-semicolon/a-semicolons-however/>

Prepositions, Adjectives, Adverbs

Prepositional phrases identified:

(In the shade) (of a walnut tree), Zoey (with great zest) sat (at the picnic table) and ate dog biscuits (from the package) [that had been stored (in the drawer) (by the door)].

Old-time hockey is played (on a frozen pond or lake). You must first clear the ice (of snow). Gather all (of your friends) next. (On skates) (with stick) (in hand), drop the puck (between you and a teammate) and start the game.

(From Absecon) (to Chatsworth) is 30 miles.

Verbals

Tom where Ken had had had had had had had had had had better success

Verbals

The difference between a verbal and a verb is basically in the way it is used in a sentence. A verbal can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb; it is never a verb. However, it is derived from a verb and in certain ways it retains a measure of “verbiness.”

Participles

Present participles and past participles (two of the principal parts of a verb) are commonly used with auxiliary verbs to form verb phrases: *is working, has worked, was stating, was stated, has been stated, is going, has been going, has gone, is sitting, has sat.*

When present or past participles are used *without* auxiliary verbs, they are verbals. When used as adjectives, to modify nouns or pronouns, these sorts of verbals are simply called participles.

Note: Present participles always need a helping verb to create a main (or finite) verb: you cannot create a complete thought with *John swimming*. Past participles need auxiliaries too, but since the form of verbs in the past tense and past participial tense are often the same, it may appear as though past participles do not need auxiliaries. *John sat* uses a past tense verb – *John has sat* uses the past participial form of the same verb.

Note 2: The meaning of the word “participial” is “relating to or involving a participle.” We describe tenses of participles as the present *participial* tense or the past *participial* tense. When words join with participles, as described below, they are *participial phrases*.

Verbals

A simple participle is used exactly like an adjective, next to its noun:

a *startling* cry; the *strolling* kittens; the *abandoned* toy.

A participle or a participial phrase may appear in any of several positions in a sentence, but often it modifies the subject of the sentence:

Sitting, he played his harmonica. (modifies he)

Laughing gaily, she turned away. (modifies she)

Shaking his fist at me, he walked back to the car. (modifies he)

Seen from across the valley, the red roofs are very distinct. (modifies roofs)

The auctioneer, *pausing for a moment*, looked down into the crowd.
(modifies auctioneer)

The candles *lighted* (or *lit*) *in the living room* looked very nice. (modifies candles)

He showed us the book *opened at the first page*. (modifies the direct object, book)

Participles can end in -ing, -ed, -en, or have an irregular ending.

Gerunds

A gerund looks like a present participle; it always ends in -ing: *going*, *writing*, *swimming*, *adventuring*.

It is always used as a noun. Some grammarians call this a noun participle.

His *skating* is remarkable (subject)

She enjoys *lying* in the hammock. (direct object)

Playing a musical instrument affords relaxation. (subject)

Mr. Jones objects to your *using* his lawn. (object of prep.)

Verbals

Verbal Phrases

You will notice in several of the examples above that the verbal is often accompanied by a variety of other words, forming a verbal phrase. Infinitives, participles, and gerunds *all* can create phrases. Here is where their “verb” heritage rears its head.

Verbals can be modified or have objects and complements in the same manner as a verb. Thus, verbal phrases may include modifying adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, direct objects – even indirect objects and subject complements. Remember that these modifiers and/or complements are working with the verbal, forming its interior grammar, not the rest of the sentence.

Ranging for food keeps Manny and Tilde happy.

[When I decided to move the feed bag (to the basement),] they were happy.

The crew saw Manny’s bowl roll down the stairs.

The final example above is tricky. First, the infinitive is hidden because its marker *to* is absent. Second, there are two generally recognized ways to describe the action here:

- 1) “bowl” is the subject of the infinitive “to roll”;
- 2) “bowl” is DO and “to roll” (or “to roll down the stairs”) is an OC.

Most grammarians are proponents of the first theory of analysis; we shall be too.

Verbals

Infinitives

An infinitive is generally a form of a verb preceded by the infinitive marker *to*. It looks like this:

to go, to swim, to laugh, to write, to consider.

Infinitives can be formed in varied tenses (so can participles and gerunds). Auxiliary verbs help them to do so and such helping verbs are then considered part of the infinitive. Infinitives can have active or passive voice.

	<i>Active</i>	<i>passive</i>
present:	to see, to steal	to be seen, to be stolen
perfect:	to have seen	to have been seen
	to have stolen	to have been stolen

Just like participles and gerunds, infinitives can form phrases with objects and complements:

To have seen the duck seemed lucky. (*Duck* is the object of the infinitive; the entire phrase acts as subject of the sentence.)

The young ragamuffins hoped to paint the driveway blue. (*Driveway* is the object of the infinitive; the entire phrase serves as direct object of the main verb *hoped*.)

Sometimes the sign of the infinitive, *to*, is omitted:

Help Denny tip that expensive plate. [w/ its phrase, acting as DO]

CeCe watched the fish snap at the fisherman. [w/ its phrase, acting as DO]

Can you feel the floor move? [w/ its phrase, acting as DO]

Verbals

Infinitives can function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs:

I hate *to go*. (noun, DO)

To have fallen would have been nasty. (noun, subject)

It is time *to go*. (adj., modifies *time*)

There are plenty of jobs *to be done*. (adj, modifies *jobs*)

He always plays *to win*. (modifies the verb *plays*)

We were unable *to go*. (modifies the adjective *unable*)

To be fully informed, Josephine read her local webpage. (adverbial, modifying the entire clause)

Infinitives have greater complexity than discussed here. For additional discussion, especially about pseudo-subjects of infinitives, please see the Verbal PowerPoint on our class blog.

Find it here: <https://blogs.stockton.edu/grammar/files/2021/10/Verbals.pdf>

Dependent Clauses



DEPENDENT CLAUSES

Folks, the following discussion may seem daunting at first, but there are no grammatical concepts here that you have not seen and worked with. You'll be introduced to some combinations we haven't talked about yet, but the ideas are the same.

You will remember that clauses have both subject and predicate.

Dependent clauses are simply clauses that do not stand alone but are part of a larger sentence structure. They have an internal grammar that can be analyzed; they include both subject and predicate; and as units of meaning they function like nouns, adverbs, or adjectives. There are two types:

- *Subordinate clauses*, as units of meaning, most frequently act as adverbs or nouns (infrequently, they function as adjectives).
- *Relative clauses*, as units of meaning, most frequently act as adjectives or nouns (infrequently, they function as adverbs).

Subordinating Conjunctions & Subordinate Clauses

Subordinating conjunctions are used to connect dependent clauses to some sentence element in a main clause. When we analyze subordinate clauses, the subordinate conjunction is first in line.

I often describe subordinate conjunctions as “flopping around up front.” Sometimes I circle them and set them aside as simply subordinating.

Two points should be made here.

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- First, within the clause itself the subordinate conjunction does not usually appear to work in a puzzle-piece way as do relative pronouns in relative clauses (thus the “flopping around”).
- Second, the conjunction is nevertheless having an important and distinct grammatical influence over the clause – it is subordinating it.

A partial list of subordinate conjunctions:

After	How	Though
Although	If	Till
As	Inasmuch	Unless
As if	In order that	Until
As long as	Lest	When
As much as	Now that	Whenever
As soon as	Once	Where
As though	Provided (that)	Whereas
Because	Since	Wherever
Before	So that	Whether
Even if	Than	While
Even though	THAT	Why

A list of relative pronouns:

Who (whom, whose)
Whoever (whomever, whosever)
THAT
Which
What
Whatever
Whichever

Dependent Clauses



Adverbial Subordinate Clauses

When used adverbially, subordinate clauses often modify verbs. Adverbial clauses answer the questions *why*, *when*, *where*, *how* – but not *what*.

As a test, adverbial subordinate clauses can usually be moved to different positions within a sentence.

The flight was postponed [*because* the pilot had an aching toe.]
{*why*}

[*Because* the pilot had an aching toe], the flight was postponed.]

The flight, [*because* the pilot had an aching toe], was postponed.

(You) Try it once more [*before* you give up.] {*when*}

We'll miss the last bus [*if* we don't hurry.] {*why*}

Vincent will fail his tests [*unless* he undertakes some serious studying.] {*why*}

It looks [*as if* it might rain again.] {*how*}

As suggested above, adverbial subordinate clauses may precede the main clause:

[*When* the bell rings,] you'll see a mad rush.

[*After* he left,] I found his briefcase in the sink.

Subordinate Clauses functioning as Nouns

Subordinate clauses that act as noun clauses are most commonly used as objects or predicate nouns.

Dependent Clauses



He thinks [*that* no one else can do the job.] *d.o.*
Nobody knows [*why* the coffee pot was moved.] *d.o.*
You must decide [*whether* the reward is worth the effort.] *d.o.*
Bear knew [*that* his obsession was an obsession]. *d.o.*
The question is [*how* we can control him.] *p.n.*

They can also be used as subjects of a clause:

[How they were to find the apples] was not said. *subj.*
[When we will pay the piper] can be negotiated. *subj.*

Adjectival Subordinate Clauses

Some subordinate clauses – a clear minority – function adjectivally.
Consider the following examples:

The thought [*that* oceans will rise] has become real.
The fact [*that* water can be deadly] is proven.
The possibility [*that* I can move away from here] is remote.

Note the use of *that*. We will speak more about this word, which can be a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun.

Be Careful: Some of the words used as subordinating conjunctions can also be used as prepositions. (The same is true of the *coordinating* conjunctions *but* and *for*.)

As I predicted, Big Sam is causing trouble again. (*sub. conj.*)
He has served three terms *as* captain of the funeral crew. (*prep.*)

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I haven't seen Joe *since* his garage fell down. (*sub. conj.*)

I haven't seen Joe *since* Halloween. (*prep.*)

They're willing enough, *but* they need more practice. (*coord. conj.*)

You seem to have everything *but* the kitchen sink. (*prep.*)

Relative Pronouns & Relative Clauses

Relative clauses typically open with a relative pronoun, although they may begin with a preposition followed by a relative pronoun. They normally function as adjectives or as nouns (infrequently as adverbs).

We have been working with relative clauses for some time. When I am discussing case, it is often within a relative clause.

Relative clauses [that function as adjectives] regularly follow the noun or pronoun that they modify.

I know a man *who* owns one.

He is a man *whom* everyone admires.

The rifle *of which* you speak never belonged to me.

The rifle *which* you speak of never belonged to him.

The rifle *that* you speak about ain't mine.

The garden *that* surrounds the house is overgrown with weed.

In many sentences the relative pronoun can be omitted, particularly when, within the dependent clause, it is the object of a verb or a preposition:

The man *she* married couldn't support her ("whom she married")

Dependent Clauses



Everybody *I speak to* seems to agree. (“to whom I speak”)

The picture *I showed you* is a Tom Thomson. (“that I showed you”)

The route *he took* is a little shorter (“that he took” or “which he took”)

Definite relative pronouns have antecedents in the main clause.

The MUSIC BOX which Janey owned held magic.

Relative clauses using definite relative pronouns are adjectival. All of the examples above make use of definite relative pronouns.

Indefinite Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are called *indefinite* when they are used in sentences without antecedents. Relative clauses using indefinite relative pronouns function as nouns.

Common indefinite relative pronouns include *who* (*whom*, *whose*), *which*, *what*, *whoever* (*whomever*), *whatever*.

I can guess [*whom* you’re referring to.] *d.o.*

I know [*whose* it was] *d.o.*

[*What* I think] doesn’t seem to matter. *subj.*

[*Whoever* comes] will be welcome *subj.*

She was [*what* she wanted to be] *p.n.*

He does [*whatever* he likes.] *d.o.*

Dependent Clauses



A Matter of Categorization

I have suggested before that various schools of grammarians analyze grammar from slightly different perspectives and that they often apply different terminology to describe similar analyses.

Here's an example. Some grammarians would rather maintain a solid distinction between relative clauses acting as adjectives and relative clauses acting as nouns. They go so far as to suggest that relative clauses only function adjectivally. Any clause that opens with a relative pronoun but functions as a noun they denominate *Nominal Clauses*. We shall not maintain this distinction, but be aware.

Other schools of grammarian thought suggest that relative clauses that function as nouns are in fact “headless.” Here is how their logic goes:

This slender bed is [what we must sleep in tomorrow eve]. *p.n.*
Playdough is not [what we asked for]. *p.n.*

These examples can be described as “headless” clauses if you recognize, identify, or imagine missing noun phrases:

This small bed is {THE PLACE} [which we must sleep in tomorrow]. *adj.*
Playdough is not {THE ITEM} [which we asked for]. *adj.*

English is full of elliptical constructions. These *may* be described as such (or as “headless”), but it strikes me as a needless reduction of grammatical possibilities (*It demands that all relative clauses must ultimately be adjectival. Why?*).

At any rate, the metamorphosis of the example involves an aggressive substitution that seems to discount its own line of reasoning. {But I'll

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raise this issue again when we discuss relative adverbs.}

A Kicker

You will have noticed in several of the examples above that *that* is a commonly used relative pronoun. Intriguingly, *that* can also serve as a subordinate conjunction.

The potato patch [that he planted] was fecund.

They loved [that he was troubled].
[That trouble was coming] was obvious.

The first sentence above use *that* as a relative pronoun; the relative clause acts adjectivally. Note that *that* has an obvious place within the grammar of the relative clause (as *d.o.*).

The second pair of sentences use *that* as a subordinate conjunction. Both clauses function as nouns. Note that *that* does not have an obvious place within the grammar of the subordinate clause (other than to make the clause dependent).

This can be difficult. Consider the following examples:

She was pleased [that he ate].
She was pleased [because he ate].

In the first sentence, *That he ate* looks like a relative clause – *he ate that* – but if so, then note the adverbial function of the clause. Why was *She pleased?*

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The second clause is obviously adverbial and subordinate. So what to do? Perhaps *that* in the first example is not the *do* of the clause. Or perhaps we have an elliptical construction and the sentence should be understood as follows:

She was pleased (by the fact [that he ate]).

In the elliptical reconstruction above, the relative clause is once more functioning in a standard fashion, adjectivally.

But if you don't go for the elliptical construction, perhaps you simply want to describe the relative clause *that he ate* as acting adverbially. Fun, right?

Potter's Theorem

Several years ago Phil Potter, a student in this course, postulated what has become known as *Potter's Theorem*: "When attempting to distinguish between *that* used as a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun, substitute *which* for *that*. If it makes reasonable sense, you have a relative pronoun."

Applying Potter's Theorem to the example above allows us to reach an obvious conclusion.

Relative Clauses with Relative Adverbs

Here's a twist that I have not revealed clearly before. Relative pronouns are not the only part of speech that may open relative clauses. Related to *relative pronouns* and functioning similarly are *relative adverbs* – *where*, *when*, *why*.

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Toddy looked in the well [*where* Megan had secreted her diary].
(*The clause acts adjectivally.*)

The workmanship [*where* it could be seen] was poor at best.
(*adj.*)

Name a time [*when* it is good for hurricanes to arrive]. (*adj.*)

The rain provided the reason [*why* I did not attend]. (*adj.*)

Just as relative pronouns are often dropped out of relative clauses, so too are relative adverbs:

The rain provided the reason [I did not attend].
Name a time [it is good for hurricanes to arrive].

Another Kicker

The three relative adverbs – *where*, *when*, *why* – can also be subordinate conjunctions (just as the relative pronoun *that* can be a subordinate conjunction). So, if you are not paying attention, this can get confusing.

Consider the following sentences:

Bear thought about occasions [*when* he did not ache for yogurt].
Bear tensed [*when* he did not ache for yogurt].

In the first example *when* is a relative adverb; the entire relative clause is acting adjectivally, modifying *occasions*.

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In the second example *when* is a subordinate conjunction; the subordinate clause is acting adverbially, modifying *tensed*.

The easiest way to differentiate between relative adverbs and the same word as subordinate conjunction is to watch the function of the clause: adjectival? it is relative; adverbial? it is subordinate.

Adverbial Relative Clauses

In some cases relative clauses function adverbially. Consider the following examples:

Dylan rides a skateboard, which many college students do.

I'm exhausted, which you are not.

Today is Halloween, which means trouble.

Here the relative clause asserts a power of modification that washes across the entire main clause.

How about this one?

The toys are in a chest, where they will remain.

Is this describing the chest, or because of its nonrestrictive punctuation, is it washing across the entire main clause?

Modification is difficult.

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Impacted Relative Clauses

My understanding of impacted relative clauses, also called double relative clauses, has evolved over time; it may continue to evolve. Here's the way I analyze them now. First, remember that like standard relative clauses, they function as units of meaning within the wider sentence. Second, when analyzing their internal grammar it may help to see them operating similarly to dialogue with speech tags. Consider the following clause structure:

[Relative pronoun + Speech tag + Remainder of Relative Clause]

. . . [whoever + she thinks + had a bad day].

Jane likes to congratulate [whoever she thinks had a bad day].
whoever, she thinks, had a bad day. OR *she thinks whoever had a bad day.* The standard portion of the clause, *whoever had a bad day*, functions as d.o. to *she thinks*. The entire impacted clause acts as a noun, the object of the infinitive “to congratulate”

Thinking about [whoever she believes loves dogs] has become a mission of sorts for Zoey.

whoever, she believes, loves dogs. OR *she believes whoever loves dogs.* The standard portion of the clause, *whoever loves dogs*, functions as d.o. to *she believes*. The entire clause acts as the object of the preposition *about*.

I'm exhausted, [which I know you're not].

which, I know, you're not. OR *I know you are not which.* The standard portion of the clause, *you are not which*, functions as d.o. of *I know*. The entire clause acts

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adverbially washing across the main clause.

Substitution for the relative pronoun complicates the analysis. First, let's rearrange the clause into normal order:

. . . she thinks whoever had a bad day.

In this order the case of the pronoun is ambiguous: does it serve as d.o. of *she thinks* or is it subject of *had a bad day*? Here is the reordered clause with a noun substitution:

. . . she thinks Dylan had a bad day.

Again, there is a problem. How can two independent clauses coexist in such proximity without punctuation? In order to clarify, the clause may be rewritten as follows:

. . . she thinks [that Dylan had a bad day].

Here we have changed part of the impacted relative clause to a subordinate clause which acts as d.o. of *she thinks* (exactly as *whoever had a bad day* operates in the original impacted clause). Of course by following substitution (that dangerous game), we have stepped far from our original sentence and the sense is lost:

Jane likes to congratulate [she thinks {that Dylan had a bad day}].

But we might rearrange one last time:

Jane likes to congratulate [Dylan that she thinks had a bad day].

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But now shouldn't it read *Dylan* [*who she thinks had a bad day*]? If so, we are right back where we started with an impacted relative clause (though one that functions adjectivally). Not quite sure what this means, but I offer it as an intriguing grammatical crux.

Something entirely different, the Expletive "it"

A noun clause may appear at the end of a sentence, introduced by the expletive *it*. In this common construction, the noun clause is considered the subject of the verb.)

Where he gets his supply is not generally known.

subordinate clause acting as noun

It is not generally known *where he gets his supply*.

same construction with expletive "it"

That her mother was there was unfortunate.

subordinate clause acting as noun

It is unfortunate *that her mother was there*.

same construction with expletive "it"

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A bit more on Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word whose primary function is to join words or groups of words. There are two main types of conjunctions: *coordinating* conjunctions (which include *correlative* conjunctions) and *subordinating* conjunctions.

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are normally used to connect sentence elements of the same grammatical class: nouns with nouns, adverbs with adverbs, clauses with clauses.

The words used as coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, *yet*.

Correlative Conjunctions

The coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, and *nor* are often used with *both*, *not only*, *either*, and *neither*, respectively, to form what are known as correlative conjunctions.

Correlatives are always used in pairs.

Both faculty *and* administrators will back such a contract.

Usually the meaning is practically the same as it would be with a simple coordinating conjunction, but there is an additional degree of emphasis.