



Everyday Grammar and Punctuation

Parts of speech...

Words in the English language can be classified into **parts of speech** according to the function they perform in the sentence.

Verb - this expresses an action. It is a doing word. (to run, to love, to eat).

Verb tense – this tells us about time..."when the action happened".

- ❖ **Past tense** – He remembered the book;
- ❖ **Future tense** – Next year I will go to Manor High School;
- ❖ **Present tense** – I live in Oadby.

Imperative verbs – give commands e.g. add the hot water, chop the cucumber, feed your hamster, stir the mixture.

Noun – a thing or item...such as... a person, place or idea (table, Nikita, London, fear).

- ❖ **Concrete nouns** are things you can touch or observe with your senses, e.g. chair, town, bicycle;
- ❖ **Abstract nouns** are ideas or concepts, e.g. sadness, hatred, boredom;
- ❖ **Proper nouns** are the names of specific things – individual things! The names of particular places, things and people are the most common examples of proper nouns , e.g. Harmeet, Leicestershire, January, Diwali, Monday;
- ❖ **Common nouns** are just ordinary things, e.g. dog, city, month, boy, day, country.

Adjective – tells you about a noun... describing words.

- ❖ The wooden table.
- ❖ The sky was blue.
- ❖ The hairy monkey

Adverb – describes how a verb is done – when, where or how it happens; they often end in the suffix "- ly".

- ❖ She ran quickly;
- ❖ Matthew ate greedily ;
- ❖ Suddenly he disappeared.

Pronoun – a word that stands in for a noun (I, he, she, it, they, we, you.)

- ❖ Bethany ran for the bus - can be ... She ran for the bus.

Preposition – a word to do with place or position - (to, under, behind, in, outside).

Conjunction – a word that connects together words, sentences, phrases, or clauses. It is sometimes called a connective – (and, or, so, then, therefore, however, because).

- ❖ Huzaifa fell over; however, he got up to come second in the race.
- ❖ Shaniya stayed with her sheep because they were afraid of the foxes.

Interjection – a part of a sentence that stands alone and expresses a strong emotion or reaction – Ouch! Hello! What? Excuse me!

Determiner – a determiner is a word that introduces a noun, such as ... a/an, the, this, those, every, many)

Examples:

- ❖ a cat;
- ❖ the cat;
- ❖ this cat;
- ❖ those cats;
- ❖ every cat;
- ❖ many cats.

The determiner the... is known as the **definite article** and the determiner a (or an)... as the **indefinite article**.

Possessive determiners – words like... my, our, your, his, her, its and their... are known as possessive determiners. They come before nouns and are sometimes known as **possessive pronouns**.

- ❖ **My** leg hurts.
- ❖ Aaron swapped **his** bike.
- ❖ Take **your** children to the zoo.

Sentences, phrases and clauses

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that make complete sense. It must contain a main verb and begin with a capital letter. It ends in a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark.

Examples:

- ❖ Samik plays tennis.
- ❖ Layla likes acting on stage.
- ❖ Ashveer walked down the hill and into town.

- ❖ Almost all of your work will be written in sentences.

Breaking the rules for effect!

Sometimes in your writing you might find the need to break the rules to get an interesting effect to your work.

Examples:

- ❖ The room was a complete bomb blast! UTTER CHAOS!
- ❖ This was a soldier. A machine. A unit of fear!
- ❖ It was a steady beating...thud, thud, thud! The rhythm of a heart.

It should always be clear that this is being done for effect and not an error in your work.

What is a clause?

A **clause** is a group of words containing a verb, which makes up part of a sentence.

Examples:

1. They arrived early because everyone was really excited.

= two clauses: 1. 'they arrived early' 2. 'because everyone was really excited.'

2. The man wanted to sneeze and he got his handkerchief out.

= two clauses: 1 'the man wanted to sneeze' 2 'and got his handkerchief out'

NOTE: every clause has a verb ... 'arrived', 'excited', 'wanted', 'got out'

Types of clause. Clauses can be put into two types:

- 1) **Independent or main** clauses – these make sense on their own and have a subject and a verb in them;
- 2) **Subordinate** clauses – these need another part of the sentence to make sense.

Examples:

1. Independent or main clauses:

- ❖ It was hot
- ❖ I eat a lot of bread
- ❖ This tree is very old

2. Subordinate clauses:

- ❖ Because of the amount of rain we've had
- ❖ Even though they were really keen to start
- ❖ Running down the hill

Types of sentences: We classify sentences according to the number and types of clauses that are present. There are three types of sentences.

1. Simple sentences: These have just one main clause in them.

Examples:

- ❖ The shops are on the other street.
- ❖ We often go to France.

2. Compound sentences: These have two or more clauses in them, all of them being main clauses. The clauses are joined together by **conjunction** like **and, or, so** and **but**

Examples:

- ❖ The rain has been heavy and we have decided not to go out.
- ❖ The child in the green shirt won the race but, her horse was bigger than the rest.

3. Complex sentences: These have two or more clauses in them and are a mixture main clauses and subordinate clauses.

Examples:

- ❖ If you'd like to learn to play guitar this term, you will need to sign up for lessons.
- ❖ Teachers often spend whole evenings marking, even when they are very tired.

Phrases: A phrase is a small group of words that forms a meaningful part of a clause. There are several different types, as follows:

Noun phrase - A noun phrase is built around a single noun,

Examples:

- ❖ **A vase of roses** stood on the table.
- ❖ She was reading **a book about the emancipation of women**.

Verb phrase - A verb phrase is the verbal part of a clause.

Examples:

- ❖ She **had been living** in London.
- ❖ I **will be going** to high school next year.

Adjective phrase - An adjective phrase is built around an adjective.

Examples:

- ❖ He's led a **very interesting** life.
- ❖ A lot of the girls are **really keen** on football.

Adverbial phrase - An adverbial phrase is built round an adverb by adding words before and/or after it.

Examples:

- ❖ The tortoise ran **very slowly**.
- ❖ They wanted to leave the country **as fast as possible**.

Prepositional phrase - In a prepositional phrase the preposition always comes at the beginning.

Examples:

- ❖ I wanted to live **near the sea**.
- ❖ The dog was hiding **under the kitchen table**.

Capital letters

Capital letters at the start of sentences:

Every sentence should start with a capital letter. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Capital letters for proper nouns and names: We give capital letters to any proper noun. This means the actual name of something or someone. We give capitals to all the main words that are part of the name. **Examples:**

- ❖ Harry Singh Flora;
- ❖ Launde Primary School;
- ❖ Leicester;
- ❖ Easter;
- ❖ Leicester Tigers;
- ❖ The Battle of Bosworth Field;
- ❖ Leicester City Football Club;
- ❖ Rutland Water
- ❖ Monday July 13.

Capital letters for titles: We give capital letters to all the main words in titles, including in books, films, and pieces of work. Small words (such as of, the, a, an) are not given capitals unless they are the first word of the title.

Examples:

- ❖ The History of Leicestershire;
- ❖ Charlie and the Chocolate Factory;
- ❖ The Prince of Wales;
- ❖ The Return of the Jedi;
- ❖ The Uses of Capital Letters.

Abbreviations: When you abbreviate a word, you should use capitals

Examples:

- ❖ GCSE,
- ❖ TV,
- ❖ BBC.
- ❖ LCFC

The pronoun 'I': Whenever you use the pronoun 'I' to represent yourself, you must use a capital. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Common confusions:

1. **Common nouns used as names.** People are often tempted to write 'My Mum' or 'My Dog', thinking that, , it is a proper noun. However, 'mum' and 'dog' are not their names and so you should not use a capital letter.

The exception to this is if or when the common noun is used as their name

Examples:

- ❖ I loved the way that Mum was always laughing.
- ❖ We named him Dog because we couldn't think of another name for him.

2. **Importance.** Some people are tempted to use capital letters just to suggest that something is important.

Examples:

- ❖ You must always do your Homework.
- ❖ At the school, Football is a popular sport.

This is wrong. Football and Homework are not proper nouns and should not have capital letters.

Commas

The comma is a much misused piece of punctuation. This is partly because there are several different situations in which the comma is the correct piece of punctuation to use. The trick is to identify those situations so as not to use the comma in places where it really should not be.

The following are some of the situations in which a comma should be used:

To separate words in a list of three or more items:

- ❖ I need to buy milk, bread, eggs and cheese.

To separate a subordinate clause from the main clause when the subordinate clause comes first in a sentence:

Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause at the start of a sentence from the main part of that sentence.

- ❖ After being caught in the rain, Michael was lucky not to catch a terrible cold.
- ❖ As the evening drew to a close, the children wandered home.

To separate parenthetical elements (asides) or subordinate clauses within a sentence:

A comma is used to set off subordinate clauses contained within main clauses. The subordinate clause (also known as an aside) is part of the sentence that can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence - it is just adding extra information.

Examples:

- ❖ Sam, the youngest pupil in the class, was always on time for school.
- ❖ The Thames, one of the greatest rivers in Great Britain, passes right through London.

It is important that the aside is opened and closed with a comma. A common mistake is to omit the second comma.

Commas are used to separate out words or clauses that are separate from the main part of the sentence.

Commas are used to separate phrases and words that come before, within, or after another part of the sentence. As above, these words or phrases could be removed without changing the essential meaning of the sentence.

Examples:

- ❖ In truth, there are a lot of houses for sale in Oadby
- ❖ It is, have you noticed, too cold to sit outside.

Commas are used to separate dates and years, towns and counties etc.:

Examples:

- ❖ His home was in Countesthorpe, Leicestershire.
- ❖ My father was born on March 13, 1949.

Commas are used to separate several adjectives.

Examples:

- ❖ The old, ramshackle, dilapidated house had a charm of its own.
- ❖ That rather dull-looking, badly-dressed, clumsy man is actually a university professor.

Apostrophes

The apostrophe is used for several different functions.

The apostrophe of contraction :

One use of the apostrophe is in contracted words, which have been joined together and shortened with letters taken out. The apostrophe is used where a letter or letters has/have been taken out.

Examples: He is = he's

I am = I'm

They have = They've

It is = It's

I would = I'd

Let us = Let's

She has = She's

Who is = who's