

PARTS OF SPEECH

Words are often named according to how they are used in sentences. These names for the words are called their parts of speech. The eight parts of speech in English are:

Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

Nouns

1. The names of persons, places, things, feelings, or ideas. Nouns usually answer the questions who or what.
2. Nouns are often preceded by "noun markers," the words a, an, and the. The word answering "who or what" asked after a noun marker will be a noun.
3. Nouns usually form a plural by adding an s. If you are unsure if a word is a noun, try adding s to mean more than one. If it works, the word is probably a noun.
4. Word endings -ance, -ancy, -ence, -ice, -ion, -ity, -ment, -ness, and -ure usually form nouns.

Verbs

1. Verbs are words which show action or doing. All sentences must have at least one verb.
2. A few verbs, called "linking verbs," express that someone or something exists or is a certain way. Memorize them: be, am, is, are, was, were, been, being. They are always verbs.
3. Verbs change form to show a difference in time. If you change a sentence from present to past, or past to present, the words which change are verbs.
4. Complete verbs may include two or more verbs working together and consisting of a main verb and "helping verbs." The only words that can be helping verbs are:

//can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must -- (always helping verbs)

//have, has, had, do, does, did, be, am, is, are, was, were, been, being -- (helping or main)

5. The endings -ify and -ize usually form verbs; -ing or -ed endings are common verb forms.
6. Check verbs by fitting them in one of the following: He or she _____. They _____.



Adjectives

1. Adjectives are words which describe only nouns. They tell what kind? or how many?
2. The noun markers a, an, and the are always adjectives.
3. Adjectives pile up in front of nouns. For example: the big, red, flashy car. All underlined words are adjectives describing the noun car.
4. Adjectives may also follow a linking verb and describe the subject of a sentence. For example: The car is big, red, and flashy.
5. The word endings -able, -ful, -ible, -ical, -ious, -ive, -y usually form adjectives.

Pronouns

1. Pronouns are words which take the place of nouns to keep from repeating the nouns over and over in a sentence or paragraph.
2. The most common pronouns are: I, he, we, she, they, me, him, us, her, them, it, this, that, who, which, what.
3. One form of pronoun shows possession or ownership. These possessive pronouns work like adjectives, describing nouns. They include the words my, mine, his, her, hers, our, ours, their, theirs, your, yours, its, and whose. Note that they don't use apostrophes.

Prepositions

1. Prepositions are common words which begin prepositional phrases (groups of words which work together). Prepositional phrases always start with a preposition and end with a noun or pronoun, and the entire phrase describes other words.
2. Most prepositions indicate time, place, or position.
3. The most common prepositions are: at, to, with, from, for, of, on, in, into, onto, between, under, over, against, and around. Your textbook has a more complete list of prepositions.

Conjunctions

1. Conjunctions are words which hook words, phrases, or sentences.
2. The most common conjunctions are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

Other common conjunctions are: because, when, while, as, since, although, whenever.

Check your textbook for a more complete list of these "subordinating conjunctions."



Adverbs

1. Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They answer the questions: how, when, where, why, or under what conditions.
2. A number of words are always adverbs. They include: not, very, often, here, almost, always, never, there, and too.
3. Adverbs very often end with -ly. However, be careful: not all words ending in -ly are adverbs.

Interjections

1. Words which express emotion or are "fillers" in sentences, but which serve little other function are called interjections.

For example: The underlined words in each of these sentences are interjections.

Oh, I am surprised. Ouch! I hit my hand. Yes, I am here.

