

Parts of speech

WORDS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LANGUAGE, BUT THEY MUST BE ARRANGED IN A RECOGNIZABLE ORDER.

Parts of speech refer to the way in which particular words are used. Some words can be classified as more than one word type, and they change type according to the sentence they belong to.

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Word types

The main parts of speech are nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. Interjections are also important, since they are used so often in everyday speech. Nouns (or pronouns) and verbs are the only essential components of a sentence.

▽ Different roles

Each type of word performs a different function. Some depend on others for sense; some exist solely to modify others.

Noun

A word used to name a person, animal, place, or thing.

EXAMPLES

William, mouse, supermarket, ladder, desk, station, ball, boy

ball



Adjective

A word used to describe a noun or pronoun.

EXAMPLES

shiny, dangerous, new, bouncy, noisy, colorful, wooden

colorful ball



Verb

A word that expresses an action or a state of being.

EXAMPLES

run, be, kick, go, think, do, play, stumble, touch

kick the ball



Adverb

A word that describes and adds information to a verb or a verb phrase.

EXAMPLES

quickly, soon, very, rather, too, almost, only, quietly

quickly kick the ball



Pronoun

A word that takes the place of a noun.

EXAMPLES

he, she, them, him, we, you, us, mine, yours, theirs

kick the ball to him



Preposition

A word that indicates the relationship between two people or things, usually in terms of where they are.

EXAMPLES

with, under, on, behind, into, over, across

kick the ball behind you



Putting words together

For speech to make sense, words must be linked to other words in the right way to form sentences. Imagine a sports team—each player representing one word. A lone player cannot achieve very much, but, teamed with other players and following strict rules, he can achieve a lot. These rules of play are like grammar—they determine both direction and purpose.



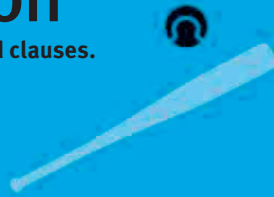
Conjunction

A word used to link words and clauses.

EXAMPLES

and, but, so, yet, or,
neither, nor, because

bat and ball



Interjection

A word that usually occurs alone and expresses emotion.

EXAMPLES

oh, hello, ah, ouch, phew,
yuck, hooray, help, er, um, oops



Article

A word used with a noun to refer to a specific person or thing, or someone or something in general.

EXAMPLES

a, an, the

the ball



Determiner

A word used in front of a noun to denote something specific or something of a particular type. Articles are also determiners.

EXAMPLES

those, many, my, his, few,
several, much, many

my ball



Summary sentence

article → noun → adverb → verb → determiner → adjective → noun → preposition → interjection

The boy quickly kicked his bouncy ball past a defender, but in his haste he stumbled. oops!

↑ article ↑ noun ↑ conjunction ↑ preposition ↑ determiner ↑ noun ↑ pronoun ↑ verb

