**Active and Passive**

Many verbs can be active or passive. For example, bite:

*The dog bit Ben. (active)*

*Ben was bitten by the dog. (passive)*

In the active sentence, the subject (the dog) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (Ben) is on the receiving end of the action. The two sentences give similar information, but there is a difference in focus. The first is about what the dog did; the second is about what happened to Ben.

All passive forms are made up of the verb be + past participle:

Active - *Somebody saw you.*

*We must find them.*

*I have repaired it.*

Passive -*You were seen.*

*They must be found.*

*It has been repaired.*

In a passive sentence, the ‘doer’ (or agent) may be identified using by :

*Ben was bitten by the dog*.

But very often, in passive sentences, the agent is unknown or insignificant, and therefore not identified:

*The computer has been repaired*.

Passive forms are common in impersonal, formal styles. For example:

*It was agreed that* ... (compare We agreed that ...).

*Application forms may be obtained from the address below*.

**Adjective**

An adjective is a word that describes somebody or something. Old, white, busy, careful and horrible are all adjectives.

Adjectives either come before a noun,

or after verbs such as be, get, seem, look (linking verbs):

*A busy day I’m busy*

*Nice shoes. Those shoes look nice.*

Adjectives (and adverbs) can have comparative and superlative forms. The comparative form is adjective + -er (for

one-syllable adjectives, and some two-syllable) or more + adjective (for adjectives of two or more syllables):

old - older

hot - hotter

easy - easier

dangerous - more dangerous

The corresponding superlative forms are -est or most ...:

small - smallest

big - biggest

funny - funniest

important - most important

**Adverb**

Adverbs give extra meaning to a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence:

I really enjoyed the party. (adverb + verb)

She’s really nice. (adverb + adjective)

He works really slowly. (adverb + adverb)

Really, he should do better. (adverb + sentence)

Many adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, for example quickly, dangerously, nicely, but there are many

adverbs which do not end in -ly. Note too that some -ly words are adjectives, not adverbs (eg lovely, silly, friendly).

In many cases, adverbs tell us:

how (manner) slowly, happily, dangerously, carefully

where (place) here, there, away, home, outside

when (time) now, yesterday, later, soon

how often (frequency) often, never, regularly

Other adverbs show

degree of intensity:

very slow(ly) fairly dangerous(ly) really good/well

the attitude of the speaker to what he or she is saying:

perhaps obviously fortunately

connections in meaning between sentences (see **connective**):

*however furthermore finally*

An **adverbial phrase** is a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb. For example: by car, to

school, last week, three times a day, first of all, of course:

adverbial phrase is a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb. For example: by car, to

school, last week, three times a day, first of all, of course:

*They left yesterday. (adverb) She looked at me strangely. (adverb)*

*They left a few days ago. She looked at me in a strange way.*

*(adverbial phrase) (adverbial phrase)*

Similarly, an **adverbial clause** functions in the same way as an adverb. For example:

*It was raining yesterday. (adverb)*

*It was raining when we went out. (adverbial clause).*

**Agreement**

In some cases the form of a verb changes according to its subject (so the verb and subject ‘agree’).

This happens with the verb be:

*I am/he is/they are*

*I was/you were*

and the third person singular (he/she/it) of the present tense:

*I like/she likes*

*I don’t/he doesn’t*

Note that singular collective **nouns** (eg team, family, government) can take a singular or plural verb form. For

example:

The team (= it) is playing well.

The team (= they) are playing well.

There are a few cases where a **determiner** must agree with a noun according to whether it is singular or plural. For

example:

*this house these houses*

*much traffic many car*

**Article**

*A, an* and *the* are articles. A (*an* before a vowel sound) is the indefinite article; *the* is the definite article. Articles are a

type of **determiner**.

**Auxiliary verbs**

These are verbs that are used together with other verbs. For example:

*we are going*

*Lucy has arrived*

*can you play*

In these sentences, *going, arrived* and *play* are the main verbs. *Are, has, and can* , are **auxiliary verbs**, and add extra

meaning to the **main verb**.

The most common auxiliary verbs are *be, have* and *do* (all of which can also be main verbs).

*Be* is used in continuous forms (be + -ing) and in passive forms:

*We are going away. Was the car damaged?*

Have is used in perfect verb forms:

*Lucy has arrived. I haven’t finished.*

Do is used to make questions and negatives in the simple present and past tenses:

*Do you know the answer? I didn’t see anybody.*

More than one auxiliary verb can be used together. For example:

*I have been waiting for ages*. (*have* and *been* are auxiliary verbs)

The remaining auxiliary verbs are **modal verbs**, eg can, will.

**Clause** ( Including **subordinate**)

A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (she drank some water) or a situation (she was thirsty/she

wanted a drink). It usually contains a **subject** (she in the examples) and **verb** (drank/was/wanted).

Note how a clause differs from a **phrase**:

*a big dog* (a phrase - this refers to ‘a big dog’ but doesn’t say what the dog did or what

happened to it)

*a big dog chased* (a clause - the dog did something)

A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:

*It was raining* (one clause)

*It was raining and we were cold*. (two main clauses joined by and)

*It was raining when we went out*. (main clause containing a subordinate clause - the subordinate clause is underlined)

A **main clause** is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (eg *It was raining*.). A **subordinate clause** (*when we went out*) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate clauses are underlined:

You’ll hurt yourself if you’re not careful.

Although it was cold, the weather was pleasant enough.

Where are the biscuits (that) I bought this morning?

John, who was very angry, began shouting.

What you said was not true.

Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb be

can be understood. For example:

*The weather, although rather cold, was pleasant enough.*

*(= although it was rather cold)*

*When in Rome, do as the Romans do.*

*(= when you are in Rome)*

*Glad to be home, George sat down in his favourite armchair.*

*(= he was glad to be home)*

see also **adverbial clause, noun clause, participle, phrase, relative clause, sentence**

**Conditional**

A conditional sentence is one in which one thing depends upon another. Conditional sentences often contain the **conjunction** *if*:

*I’ll help you if I can.*

*If the weather’s bad, we might not go out*.

Other conjunctions used in conditionals are *unless, providing*, provided and *as long as*.

A conditional sentence can refer to an imaginary situation. For example:

*I would help you if I could. (but in fact I can’t)*

*What would you do if you were in my position?*

*If the weather had been better, we could have gone to the beach.*

The term ‘conditional’ is sometimes used to refer to the form would + verb: would go, would help etc.

see also **auxiliary verb**

**Conjunction**

A word used to link **clauses** within a sentence. For example, in the following sentences, *but* and *if* are conjunctions:

*It was raining but it wasn’t cold.*

*We won’t go out if the weather’s bad.*

There are two kinds of conjunction:

a. Co-ordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or and so*). These join (and are placed between) two clauses of equal

weight.

*Do you want to go now or shall we wait a bit longer?*

*And, but* and *or* are also used to join words or phrases within a clause.

b. Subordinating conjunctions (eg *when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that*). These go at

the beginning of a subordinate **clause**:

*We were hungry because we hadn’t eaten all day.*

*Although we’d had plenty to eat, we were still hungry.*

*We were hungry when we got home*.

see also **clause, connective**

**Connective**

A connective is a word or phrase that links clauses or sentences. Connectives can be **conjunctions** (eg *but, when*,

*because)* or connecting **adverbs** (*eg however, then, therefore*).

Connecting adverbs (and adverbial phrases and clauses) maintain the **cohesion** of a text in several basic ways,

including:

addition *also, furthermore, moreover*

opposition *however, nevertheless, on the other hand*

reinforcing *besides, anyway, after all*

explaining *for example, in other words, that is to say*

listing *first(ly), first of all, finally*

indicating result *therefore, consequently, as a result*

indicating time *just then, meanwhile, later*

**Modal verbs**

The modal verbs are:

*can/could*

*will/would*

*shall/should*

*may/might*

*must/ought*

These **auxiliary verbs** are used to express such ideas as *must go* possibility, willingness, prediction, speculation, deduction

and necessity. They are all followed by the **infinitive**, and *ought* is followed by *to* + infinitive:

*I can help you.*

*We might go out tonight.*

*You ought to eat something.*

*Stephanie will be here soon.*

*I wouldn’t do that if I were you.*

*I must go now.*

These verbs can occur with other auxiliary verbs (be and have):

I’ll be leaving at 11.30.

You should have asked me.

They must have been working.

In this context have is unstressed and therefore identical in speech to unstressed of; this is why the misspelling of for

standard have or ‘ve is not uncommon.

**Noun**

A noun is a word that denotes somebody or something. In the sentence *My younger sister won some money in a*

*competition, ‘sister’, ‘money’* and ‘*competition’* are nouns.

Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). For example *sister/sisters*,

*problem/problems, party/parties*. Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter,*

*cotton, electricity, money, happiness.*

A **collective noun** is a word that refers to a group. For example, *crowd, flock, team*. Although these are singular in

form, we often think of them as plural in meaning and use them with a plural verb. For example, if we say *The team*

*have won all their games so far*, we think of *‘the team’* as *‘they’* (rather than ‘it’).

**Proper nouns** are the names of people, places, organisations, etc. These normally begin with a capital letter:

*Amanda, Birmingham, Microsoft, Islam, November*.

**Noun phrase** is a wider term than ‘noun’. It can refer to a single noun (*money*),a pronoun (*it*) or a group of words

that functions in the same way as a noun in a sentence, for example:

*a lot of money*

*my younger sister*

*a new car*

*the best team in the world*

Similarly, a **noun clause** functions in the same way as a noun. For example:

*The story was not true*. (noun)

*What you said was not true*. (noun clause)

**Phrase**

A phrase is a group of words that act as one unit. So *dog* is a word, but *the dog, a big dog* or *that dog over there* are all

phrases. Strictly speaking, a phrase can also consist of just one word. For example, in the sentence *Dogs are nice*,

‘*dogs*’ and ‘*nice*’ are both one-word phrases.

A phrase can function as a noun, an adjective or an adverb:

a noun phrase *a big dog, my last holiday*

an adjectival phrase (*she’s not) as old as you, (I’m) really hungry*

an adverbial phrase (*they left) five minutes ago,(she walks) very slowly*

If a phrase begins with a **preposition** (like *in a hurry, along the* *lane)*, it can be called a prepositional phrase. A

prepositional phrase can be adjectival or adverbial in meaning:

adjectival (*I’m) in a hurry, (the man) with long hair*

adverbial (*they left) on Tuesday, (she lives) along the lane*

**Prefix**

A prefix is a **morpheme** which can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. For example:

*inedible*

*disappear*

*supermarket*

*unintentional*

**Preposition**

A preposition is a word like *at, over, by* and *with*. It is usually followed by a **noun phrase**. In the examples, the

preposition and the following noun phrase are underlined:

*We got home at midnight.*

*Did you come here by car?*

*Are you coming with me?*

*They jumped over a fence.*

*What’s the name of this street?*

*I fell asleep during the film*.

Prepositions often indicate time (*at midnight/during the film/on* *Friday*), position (*at the station/in a field*) or direction

(*to the station/over a fence*). There are many other meanings, including possession (*of this street*), means (*by car*) and

accompaniment (*with me*).

In questions and a few other structures, prepositions often occur at the end of the clause:

*Who did you go out with?*

*We haven’t got enough money to live on.*

*I found the book I was looking for*.

In formal style, the preposition can go before *whom* or *which* (*with whom, about which etc*):

*With whom do you wish to speak?*

Many prepositions (eg *on, over, up*) can also be used as **adverbs** (without a following noun or pronoun):

*We got on the bus*. (preposition - followed by a noun phrase)

*The bus stopped and we got on*. (adverb - no following noun or pronoun)

**Pronoun**

There are several kinds of pronoun, including:

personal pronouns

*I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it*

*I like him. They don’t want it.*

possessive pronouns

*mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its*

*Is this book yours or mine?*

reflexive pronouns

*myself, herself, themselves etc*

*I hurt myself. Enjoy yourselves!*

indefinite pronouns

*someone, anything, nobody, everything etc*

*Someone wants to see you about something*.

interrogative pronouns

*who/whom, whose, which, what*

*Who did that? What happened?*

relative pronouns

*who/whom, whose, which, that*

*The person who did that … The thing that annoyed me was …*

Many **determiners** can also be used as pronouns, including *this/that/these/those* and the quantifiers (*some, much*

etc). For example:

*These are mine.*

*Would you like some?*

Pronouns often ‘replace’ a noun or noun phrase and enable us to avoid repetition:

*I saw your father but I didn’t speak to him.* (= your father)

*‘We’re going away for the weekend.’ ‘Oh, are you? That’s nice.’* (= the fact you’re going away.

**Sentence**

A sentence can be simple, compound or complex.

A simple sentence consists of one **clause**:

*It was late.*

A compound sentence has two or more clauses joined by *and, or*, *but* or *so*.The clauses are of equal weight (they are

both main clauses):

*It was late but I wasn’t tired.*

A complex sentence consists of a main clause which itself includes one or more subordinate clauses:

*Although it was late,I wasn’t tired*. (subordinate clause beginning with *although* underlined)

Simple sentences can also be grouped as follows according to their structure:

declarative (for statements, suggestions, etc):

*The class yelled in triumph. Maybe we could eat afterwards.*

interrogative (for questions, requests, etc):

*Is your sister here? Could you show me how?*

imperative (for commands, instructions, etc):

*Hold this! Take the second left*.

exclamative (for exclamations):

*How peaceful she looks. What a pity!*

Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter, cotton, electricity, money*, *happiness*.

**Verbs, pronouns**, and **determiners** sometimes have different singular and plural forms:

*He was late They were late*

*Where is the key? Have you seen it? Where are the keys? Have you seen them?*

*Do you like this hat? Do you like these shoes?*

Note *that they/them/their* (plural words) are sometimes used to refer back to singular words that don’t designate a

specific person, such as *anyone* or *somebody*. In such cases, *they* usually means ‘he or she’:

*If anyone wants to ask a question, they can ask me later. (= he or she can ask me)*

*Did everybody do their homework?*

*Work with a partner. Ask them their name.*

**Statement**

A sentence that states a fact. Eg:

*There are 11 players in a football team*

**Subject and Object**

In the sentence *John kicked the ball*, the subject is ‘*John” a*nd the object is ‘*the ball’*.

The subject is the person or thing about which something is said. In sentences with a subject and an object, the

subject typically carries out an action, while the object is the person or thing affected by the action. In declarative

sentences (statements), the subject normally goes before the verb; the object goes after the verb.

Some verbs (eg *give, show, buy*) can have two objects, indirect and direct. For example:

*She gave the man some money*.

Here, ‘*some money*’ is the direct object (= what she gave). ‘*The* *man* is the indirect object (= the person who receives the direct object).

When a verb has an object, it is transitive, eg *find a job, like* *chocolate, lay the table*. If it has no object, it is intransitive

(eg *go, talk, lie*).

**Subordinate clause ( Including**

**main clause)**

A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (she drank some water) or a situation (she was thirsty/she

wanted a drink). It usually contains a **subject** (she in the examples) and **verb** (drank/was/wanted).

Note how a clause differs from a **phrase**:

*a big dog* (a phrase - this refers to ‘a big dog’ but doesn’t say what the dog did or what happened to it)

*a big dog chased me* (a clause - the dog did something)

A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:

*It was raining* (one clause)

*It was raining and we were cold*. (two main clauses joined by and)

It was raining when we went out. (main clause containing a subordinate clause - the subordinate clause is underlined)

A main clause is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (eg *It was raining*.). A subordinate clause

(*when we went out*) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate

clauses are underlined:

*You’ll hurt yourself if you’re not careful.*

*Although it was cold, the weather was pleasant enough.*

*Where are the biscuits (that) I bought this morning?*

*John, who was very angry, began shouting.*

*What you said was not true*.

Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb be can be

understood. For example:

*The weather, although rather cold, was pleasant enough.*

*(= although it was rather cold)*

*When in Rome, do as the Romans do.*

*(= when you are in Rome)*

*Glad to be home, George sat down in his favourite armchair.*

*(= he was glad to be home)*

**Tense**

A tense is a verb form that most often indicates time. English verbs have two basic tenses, present and past, and each of these can be simple or continuous. For example:

**Present Past**

*I play* (simple) *I played* (simple)

*I am playing* (continuous) *I was playing* (continuous)

Additionally, all these forms can be perfect (with *have*):

**Present perfect Past perfect**

*I have played* (perfect) *I had played* (perfect)

*I have been playing* (perfect continuous) *I had been playing* (perfect continuous)

English has no specific future tense. Future time can be expressed in a number of ways using *will* or present tenses.

For example:

*John will arrive tomorrow.*

*John will be arriving tomorrow.*

*John is going to arrive tomorrow.*

*John is arriving tomorrow.*

*John arrives tomorrow*.

**Verb**

A verb is a word that expresses an action, a happening, a process or a state. It can be thought of as a ‘doing’ or ‘being’

word. In the sentence *Mark is tired* and wants to go to bed, ‘*is*’, ‘*wants*’ and ‘*go* ’ are verbs. Sometimes two or more

words make up a verb phrase, such as *are going, didn’t want, has been waiting.*

Most verbs (except modal verbs, such as *can* or *will* ) have four or five different forms. For example:

base form or infinitive + -s + -ing (present participle) simple past

past participle

wait waits waiting waited

make makes making made

drive drives driving drove driven

A verb can be present or past:

*I wait/she waits* (present)

*I waited/she waited* (past)

Most verbs can occur in simple or continuous forms (be + -ing):

*I make* (simple present)/*I’m making* (present continuous)

*she drove* (simple past)/*she was driving* (past continuous)

A verb can also be perfect (*with have*):

*I have made/I have been making* (present perfect)

*he had driven/he had been driving* (past perfect)

If a verb is regular, the simple past and the past participle are the same, and end in -ed. For example:

wanted

played

answered

Verbs that do not follow this pattern are irregular. For example:

*make/made*

*catch/caught*

*see/saw/seen*

*come/came/come*

**Word class**

The main word classes are **verb, noun, adjective, adverb, pronoun,** **determiner, preposition and** **conjunction**.These are all dealt with separately in this glossary.

Note that a word can belong to more than one class. For example:

play verb (*I play*) or noun (*a play*)

*fit* noun (*a fit*), verb (*they fit*) or adjective (*I’m fit*)

*until* preposition (*until Monday*) or conjunction (*until I*

*come back*)

like verb (*I like*) or preposition (*do it like this*)

hard adjective (*it’s hard work*) or adverb (*I work hard*)

that determiner (*that book*) or pronoun (*who did that?*)

or conjunction (*he said that he …*)