

Parts of speech

The term “**parts of speech**” refers to **the words that make up a sentence and the functions those words perform within the sentence.**

There are 8 parts of speech, but these 6 are the most important to recognize first:

- 1) noun
- 2) verb
- 3) preposition
- 4) adjective
- 5) adverb
- 6) article

The same word can be used in different ways depending on what you want to say.

Let's heat this soup for dinner. (heat is used as a verb; it shows an action happening)

The heat in the desert can be unbearable. (heat is used as a noun; it names a weather condition)

Look at the next pages for examples of all these parts of speech . . .

Nouns

A noun names something, just as your parents named you.

Your name is a “proper noun.”

The name of just about everything else is a “common noun.”

- A noun answers the question: “What’s this?” or “Who’s this?”

▶ Gladys, Bill, Ms. Smith, Aunt Mary, Frank Sinatra

▶ car, book, love, disgust, freedom, dog, insurance, police officer

Verbs

- A verb tells time—**different tenses** tell us when something happens, will happen, or has happened.
 - ▶ I **ran** home. (yesterday, an hour ago)
 - We **are** happy. (now, today)
- A verb talks about **an action** or a **state of being**.
 - ▶ Maria **rides** the bus to work. (action)
 - Maria **seems** intelligent. (state)
- There are verbs that have a **linking** or **helping** function.
 - ▶ Bill **is** a doctor. (*is* links *Bill* with *doctor*)
 - He **is working** hard these days. (*is* helps *working* to create a verb tense)
- There are **regular verbs** that use *-ed* at the end to form a past tense, and **irregular verbs** that are all different in the past.
 - ▶ I **played** tennis.
 - My brother **swam** in the pool.
- **Modal verbs** give extra meaning to a sentence. Can, must, may, might, could, should, and would are modal verbs.
 - ▶ Tanya **might** go to the movies tonight, but she **should** stay home and do her homework. [The extra meanings are possibility (might) and advisability (should)]

Prepositions

- **Prepositions** tell where or when an action is taking place. They can also be used to add more information.
- in, on, to, around, with, toward, through, of, for, from, across, by (and many more!)

My sister is the girl **with** the long red hair who is standing **next to** the tall guy **by** the Coke machine.

- Prepositions are followed by nouns or noun phrases, and we call them “**prepositional phrases.**”

Look at all the important information added with prepositional phrases!



with the long red hair
next to the tall guy
by the Coke machine

“Modifying” words: **adjectives** and **adverbs**

To *modify* means to alter or change, so adjectives and adverbs are used to affect the meaning of other parts of speech.

- **Adjectives** modify **nouns**; they add a description to the noun and answer the question: “What kind?”

- **Adverbs** modify **verbs**; they describe actions and answer the questions: “How? How frequently?”

- **favorite things**

little girl

tropical storm

- She **spoke slowly**.
I **often go** dancing.

Articles

- Articles are used with nouns. **the** house, **a** cockroach, **an** egg,
- Articles are tricky in English! **some** chips
- For more information, see
Articles, Lesson 1 and
Articles, Lesson 2.