



# The Parts of Speech in English

There are 8 parts of speech. The easiest way to remember them is to go by spelling and sound. They fall into these natural groupings:

1. Nouns }
2. Pronouns }
3. Verbs }
4. Adverbs }
5. Adjectives }
6. Prepositions }
7. Conjunctions }
8. Interjections }

## 1. NOUNS

A **noun** is the name of:

- a. a person  
Mary sings.
- b. a place  
Vancouver is a city.
- c. a thing  
The dog barks.
- d. a quality  
Honesty is the best policy.
- e. a general idea  
Honour is important.
- f. a game or sport  
Tennis is enjoyable.
- g. an event or point in time  
Christmas occurs on December 25.



## 2. PRONOUNS

A **pronoun** is a word that stands for a noun. (In Latin, the word *pronoun* means “for a name”.) There are eight different kinds of pronouns:

- a. A **personal pronoun** refers to an individual or individuals.  
She is my teacher.
- b. A **relative pronoun** connects an independent clause to the dependent clause it introduces.  
The novel that I read was interesting.
- c. A **demonstrative pronoun** points out or identifies a noun or another pronoun.  
This is the man.
- d. An **interrogative pronoun** introduces a question.  
Who asked you to the dance?
- e. A **reflexive pronoun** refers to the subject of a sentence or clause.  
Did you hurt yourself?
- f. An **intensive pronoun** is used to draw particular attention to a noun.  
The doctor himself examined the x-rays.
- g. An **indefinite pronoun** is less specific in reference and less exact in meaning than other pronouns.  
Anyone may come.  
Several are here.
- h. A **reciprocal pronoun** completes an interchange of action mentioned in the predicate.  
The two teams complimented each other.  
The opposing lines scowled at each other.

## 3. VERBS

A **verb** is a word which expresses action or a state of being.

- a. action verbs:  
He hits the ball.  
They built the house.
- b. verbs of being (also called **linking verbs**)  
She is my sister.  
The cake tastes good.



## 4. ADVERBS

An **adverb** is a word which modifies or describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. (“**Modifies**“ means that it makes the meaning of the word more exact and specific. The job of adjectives and adverbs is to modify other words.)

- a. An adverb modifying a verb:  
He walks slowly.
- b. An adverb modifying an adjective:  
She is very pretty.
- c. An adverb modifying another adverb:  
He walks extremely slowly.

An **adverb** can also modify the sentence as a whole:

- a. Fortunately, the Learning Centre is open all summer.
- b. Personally, I don't like wasabi ice cream.

## 5. ADJECTIVES

An **adjective** is a word which modifies a noun or a pronoun by making the meaning more exact. There are four kinds of adjectives:

- a. **descriptive adjectives**  
She wore a yellow dress.
- b. **limiting adjectives**  
We are now in the third phase.
- c. **proper adjectives**:  
This is a Florida orange.
- d. Three little words are called the “**article adjectives**”. They are a, an, and the.  
They are also called simply **articles**.  
A book is on the table.  
An apple is good food.

## 6. PREPOSITIONS

A **preposition** is a linking word used before a noun or a pronoun to show the relationship of that noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence. (*Pre-* means “before”, so a preposition has a position before a noun or pronoun.) Every preposition has to have an object.

The bear ran into the woods.  
She did it for you.



## 7. CONJUNCTIONS

A **conjunction** is a linking word used to connect words or groups of words in a sentence.

- a. **Coordinating conjunctions** join words or groups of words of equal rank:  
I will read your essay, but I will not write it for you.

**Correlative conjunctions** are coordinating conjunctions which are used in pairs.  
Examples are both... and, either... or, not only... but also.  
Both Susan and Tom will go.

- b. **Subordinating conjunctions** join dependent clauses to independent clauses:  
I shall read the book when I have time.

## 8. INTERJECTIONS

An **interjection** is a word which expresses strong or sudden feeling. It has little grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence.

Oh! It is cold.  
Gosh, that will be fun.

