

# Grammar

The fundamentals to begin with!

# Parts of Speech

# Parts of Speech

Parts of speech are the eight categories into which words are classified according to their functions in sentences.

- Noun (Name of a person, place, or thing)
- Pronoun (A word that replaces a noun)
- Verb (A word that shows action or state of being)
- Adjective (A word that describes a noun or pronoun)
- Adverb (A word that describes an adjective or a verb)
- Preposition (A word that specifies location or a location in time)
- Conjunction (A word that joins words/phrases/clauses)
- Interjection (A word that expresses emotion)

Noun

# What is a Noun?

- A noun is the name of a person, place, organism, thing, quality, action, idea, emotion, etc.

Examples:

Nina, India, office, letter, chair, bravery, reading, innovation, joy.

# Types of Nouns

- Common and Proper Nouns
- Countable and Uncountable Nouns
- Collective Nouns
- Possessive Nouns
- Concrete and Abstract Nouns
- Nouns that are used as Adjectives

# Common and Proper Nouns

- A **common noun** is used to name a class/division among persons, places, or things. In simple words, it is the generic (common, rather than specific) name of a person, place or thing.
  - boy, city, company
- A **proper noun** is used to name a particular person, place, or thing. It starts with a capital letter.
  - Stephen, London, Microsoft

# Common and Proper Nouns

*In a grand ceremony organized in Dolby Theatre, Los Angeles, Morgan Freeman received the Academy Award nominations for his performance in multiple movies.*

- Common Nouns: ceremony, nominations, performance, movies (reference to class/division)
- Proper Nouns: Dolby Theatre, Los Angeles, Morgan Freeman, Academy Award (reference to a particular person/place/thing)

# Countable and Uncountable Nouns

- A **countable noun** refers to what can be counted. It can be singular or plural.
  - pen, glasses, books
- An **uncountable noun** refers to what cannot be usually counted using numbers. It takes a singular form.
  - water, information, happiness

Therefore, singular verbs are used to describe uncountable nouns.

Example:

Milk is nutritious.

# Countable and Uncountable Nouns

- Some nouns can be countable or uncountable, depending on the context.

Example:

Despite two lights in the room, there is not enough light.

- “lights” is countable while “light” is uncountable.

# Collective Nouns

- A **collective noun** is the name of a group - of persons, animals, or things. The group, as a whole, is taken as a single unit. In a sense, it is similar to (but not the same as) an uncountable noun.
  - team, jury, pack
- Correct the following sentence:
  - *A herd of goats was / were found grazing in the fields.*
    - Collective noun is taken as a single unit.
  - *A herd of goats was found grazing in the fields.*

# Possessive Nouns

- A **possessive noun** is used to show ownership.
- If a singular noun is to be made possessive, an apostrophe and an 's' are usually added.
  - *The girl's governess was an intelligent woman.*
    - Refers to the governess of a single girl
- If a plural noun is to be made possessive, an apostrophe is usually added. There is no 's' after the apostrophe.
  - *The girls' governess was an intelligent woman.*
    - Refers to the governess of a group of girls

# Use of Nouns as Adjectives

- Sometimes, a noun functions as an adjective. This means that this noun serves the purpose of describing another noun.
  - **production cost**  
Both “production” and “cost” are nouns; but “production” is functioning as an adjective here as “production” qualifies or describes “cost”.
  - **car race**  
“car” is an adjective for “race” here.
- Multiple consecutive nouns can also function as adjectives.
  - **plant health research center**  
“plant health research” is an adjective for “center” here.

Pronoun

# What is a Pronoun?

- Pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun or another pronoun.
  - he, you, they, her, his, none, any, many, some
- Pronouns are important because their use makes sentences less repetitive.
  - Molly is Graham's daughter; Molly is nine years old.

sounds better when written as

- 'Molly is Graham's daughter; she is nine years old.'

# Singular and Plural Pronouns

- Indefinite pronouns are always singular.
  - everyone, anybody, nobody, none, somebody, whoever, whatever, whatsoever, etc.

Correct the following:

- *Nobody was/were unhappy during the reign of the just and kind king.*

'Nobody' requires a singular verb.

- *Nobody was unhappy during the reign of the just and kind king.*

# Singular and Plural Pronouns

- Five pronouns that can be both singular and plural.

M- Many

A- Any

N- None

A- All

S- Some

Examples:

*All milk **was** consumed.*

*All children **are** playing.*

# Relative Pronouns

- A relative pronoun relates to what it modifies. It links a phrase or clause to another phrase or clause.
- There are five basic relative pronouns.
  - who, whom, whose, that, and which
- There are some compound relative pronouns too.
  - whoever, whomever, whichever

# Relative Pronouns

- Fill in the blank with an appropriate relative pronoun:

- *The castle belonged to the monarch \_\_\_\_\_ story the old man narrated.*

'Whose' is the possessive form of 'who' and 'which'.

- *The castle belonged to the monarch whose story the old man narrated.*

Verb

# What is a Verb?

- Verb is a word that reflects 'action' or 'state'.

Examples:

- 'write', 'jump' express action
  - 'be', 'exist', 'seem' express state
- Every sentence, even a single-word one, contains a verb.

Example:

Run!

# What is a Verb?

- Identify the verbs in the following:

- Jack remembered their hikes together.

The word “remembered” expresses a mental action. and is, therefore, a verb. Note: “hikes” is a noun here.

- Liza seemed to belong to a bygone era.

The word “seemed” gives the idea of state. Note: “to belong” is an infinitive (discussed later).

# Helping and Main Verbs

- The main verb has a meaning of its own. A helping verb, however, does not. Examples of helping verbs:  
*is, are, am, be, has, can, may, must*
- The 'help'-ing verbs are used with main verbs. Even though they do not, on their own, convey complete meaning, they are important for the grammatical structure of the sentence.

Example:

'Henry can' has little meaning while 'Henry swims' has a definite meaning. "can" is a helping verb, while "swims" is a main verb.

# Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

- A **transitive verb** is one that needs an object to express complete meaning.

- *The cat bit the boy.*

- Since “the boy” is needed to express the complete meaning, “bit” is a transitive verb.

- An **intransitive verb** is one that does not need an object to express complete meaning. It is either complete in itself or is completed by other words.

- *She ran.*

- Since “ran” does not need an object to express the complete meaning, it is an intransitive verb.

# Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

- Pick a choice with an intransitive verb.

A) *Alfred tied.*

B) *Alfred kicked.*

C) *Alfred denied.*

D) *Alfred cried.*

E) *Alfred stitched.*

Option D. Of the five options, only “Alfred cried.” conveys complete meaning and does not need an object.

Other verbs need objects. E.g., Alfred tied what? Alfred denied what?, etc.

# Active and Passive Verbs

- The **active voice** is used in speech most of the time. Here, the action performed by the subject is received by the object.
  - Juan wrote the book.
  - “Juan” has performed an action on “the book”.
- The **passive voice** is not used so much in everyday speech. Here, the action performed by the object is received by the subject.
  - The book was written by Juan.
  - The object “Juan” performs an action on the subject, “the book”.

On GMAT, while passive voice is not ‘incorrect’, active voice is a clearly ‘preferred’ choice.

Adjective

# What is an Adjective?

- An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun. It specifies a quality of the noun/pronoun it modifies.
- *The red wine was poured into the shining glass.*
  - “red” and “shining” are adjectives.

# Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

- A **comparative adjective** is used to compare *two* things.
  - *Earth is smaller than Jupiter.*
  - “smaller” is the comparative adjective here.
- A **superlative adjective** is used to express the highest degree of a quality relating to one entity from among a group.
  - *Mercury is the smallest planet in the Solar System.*
  - “smallest” is the superlative adjective here.

# Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

- Usually, '-er' and '-est' are added to get the comparative and superlative forms, respectively.

○ *Henry is \_\_\_\_\_ than Tom, but George is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all my friends. (tall)*

○ *Henry is taller than Tom, but George is the tallest of all my friends.*

Adverb

# What is an Adverb?

- An adverb is a word used to modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. It answers questions like 'how', 'when', 'where'.
  - The task was completed efficiently.
    - The adverb “efficiently” is modifying the verb “completed”.
- While most adverbs can be identified by the suffix *-ly*, others need to be identified by looking at the functions the different words are performing in the given sentence.

# Adverb

- Stephen performed the task even more diligently after the training.
  - The adverb “more” modifies the adverb “diligently”.
- Identify the adverb and what it modifies:
  - The beautifully written words won Orhan Pamuk the Nobel Prize.
    - “beautifully” is the adverb here. It modifies the adjective “written”.

Preposition

# What is a Preposition?

- A preposition is a word that indicates the relationship between a noun, pronoun, or phrase and other words in a sentence.
  - on, beside, during, beyond, above, by, despite
- The word or phrase introduced by it is called the *object of the preposition*. Usually, the temporal, spatial, or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence is indicated by a preposition.
  - *Thieves broke into their house last night.*
    - The preposition “into” is used to indicate the motion of someone or something from a point outside to a point inside some space.

# Preposition

- A preposition is always followed by a *noun*, *noun-phrase*, or *gerund*.
- Noun Phrase: A phrase acting as noun.
  - Example: The onus is on **the President of United States**.
    - “the president of United States” is a noun phrase.
- Gerund: Verb + ing that works as noun.
  - Example: Jack is working hard to enhance his **saving**.
    - “saving” is a gerund here.
    - “working” is a verb.
    - “is” is a helping verb.

# Prepositional Phrase

- A prepositional phrase is a phrase that begins with a preposition and includes its object. It can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.
  - at the station, with the group, from the sellers
  - *Elizabeth is the woman in the embroidered yellow gown.*
- Here, the prepositional phrase “in the embroidered yellow gown” is modifying the noun by means of describing it and is, therefore, functioning as an adjective.

# Conjunction

# What is a Conjunction?

- A conjunction is used to connect words, phrases, or clauses.
  - and, but, because, yet, so, although, whether
- Convert the following into one sentence by using a conjunction:
  - *Steve is fond of reading. He is fond of watching films.*
  - *Steve is fond of reading and watching films.*

# Coordinating Conjunctions

- A coordinating conjunction is used to join grammatically equal parts - whether they be words, phrases or independent clauses.
  - and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet
- For example, in the following sentence, “and” is a coordinating conjunction.
  - *Jack likes both coffee and tea.*

# Subordinating Conjunctions

- A subordinating conjunction is one that introduces a dependent clause, and indicates the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).
  - after, although, because, before, if, since, once, until, when, where, whether.
- Fill in the blank with the correct conjunction.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ *the book has been written in Spanish, its translations are widely available across the globe. (although/after/because/since)*
  - Although *the book has been written in Spanish, its translations are widely available across the globe.*
  - The subordinating conjunction “although” introduces the dependent clause “*Although the book has been written in Spanish*”.

# Interjection

# What are Interjections?

- Interjections are short exclamations that are often used in speech, but not as often in writing. They have no grammatical value.
- Interjections are sometimes followed by exclamation mark, when used in writing.
- Oh!, Alas!, Ouch!, Hurrah!
- Interjections are NOT tested on the GMAT!

Subject  
Object  
Predicate

# What are Subject and Object?

- **Subject** is the person (or thing) who (or which) carries out the action (verb).
  - In the sentence, "*Sam is kicking the ball.*", "Sam" is the subject since the action is being carried out by him.
- **Object** is the person (or thing) upon whom (or upon which) the action (verb) is carried out.
  - In "*Sam is kicking the ball.*", "ball" is the object since the action is being carried out on it.
- Subject is the 'who' part while object is the 'what' part of the sentence.
  - Who is kicking the ball? Sam. Sam is the subject.
  - What is Sam kicking? Ball. Ball is the object.

# What is a Predicate?

- **Predicate** indicates what the subject does or is.
  - In “*Sam is kicking the ball.*”, “is kicking the ball” is the predicate.
- A predicate must have a verb and a verb alone can be a predicate. But remember that verb and predicate are not the same. A verb may not be a predicate and a predicate may have words other than a verb.
  - In “*Sam reads.*”, “reads” is the predicate.
  - In “*the man in blue jacket is a professor*”, “is a professor” is the predicate.

# Phrases and Clauses

# What are Phrase and Clause?

- A **phrase** is a group of words which does not make complete sense. It is without a subject or a verb or both.
  - In the sentence, "*Alfred is a scholar of great repute.*", "a scholar of great repute" is a phrase.
- A **clause** is a group of words which contains a subject and an object, but may still not be independent. A clause alone can form a basic sentence. Complicated sentences can contain multiple clauses. Certain clauses can contain clauses within them.
  - In "*The wall, which the King's men built, was not strong enough.*", "which the King's men built" is a clause.

# Phrase and Clause

- Phrases make up a clause and clauses make up a sentence.
- Identify the phrases and clauses in the following sentence:
  - *That cruel man hit the monkey with a stick.*
    - *Phrases: That cruel man; hit the monkey; with a stick*
    - *Clauses: That cruel man hit the monkey; That cruel man hit the monkey with a stick*

# Types of Phrases

- **Noun Phrase:** A noun + a few words that modify the noun. The noun phrase works as noun in a sentence.

*The boy in blue shirt is Jack.*

- **Prepositional Phrase:** Starts with a preposition and mostly ends with a noun. What prepositional phrase ends with is called *object of preposition*. A prepositional phrase functions as an adjective or adverb in a sentence.

*The boy on the floor is Jack.*

- **Adjective Phrase:** An adjective + a few words that modify a noun in the sentence. Adjective phrase works as adjective in a sentence.

*The boy in a nice red jacket is Jack.*

# Types of Phrases

- **Adverb Phrase:** An adverb + a few words that work as an adverb in a sentence.

*Jack works in a meticulous manner.*

- **Verb Phrase:** Main verb + helping verb

*Jack is cooking his lunch.*

- **Infinitive Phrase:** 'to' + base verb + modifier or other word related to the infinitive.

*Jack likes to play soccer.*

*Jack shouted to call his friends.*

# Types of Phrases

- **Gerund Phrase:** Verb + ing + modifier or other words related to the gerund. Gerund works as noun in a sentence.

*Jack is fond of **writing short stories**.*

- **Participle Phrase:** Participle + modifier or other words related to the participle. A participle phrase is separated by commas and works as an adjective in a sentence. Jack received an email, **inviting for the interview**.

*Jack, **rested over the weekend**, is fresh for the long week.*

- **Absolute Phrase:** A group of words including a noun and a participle as well as any associated modifier. Absolute phrase modifies the entire sentence. It resembles a clause but it lacks a finite verb. It is separated by a comma or pair of commas.

*Jack has been working hard on computer, **his eyes sullen**.*

# Types of Clauses

- An **independent clause** is one that makes complete sense on its own and need not be joined to any other clause.
  - Jack went to business school before setting up his enterprise.
    - Here, “Jack went to business school” is an independent clause.
- A **dependent clause** is one that cannot make complete sense on its own and needs to be joined to another clause.
  - The dress the Australian woman is wearing is designed by Joe Matrino.
    - Here, “The dress the Australian woman is wearing” is a dependent clause.

Verbals –  
Gerunds  
Participles  
Infinitives

# What is a Verbal?

- Verbal is a verb form that works as a noun or an adjective.
- Verbals are of three types:
  - Gerunds
  - Participles
  - Infinitives

# Gerund

- Gerund is a verbal that ends in *-ing*. It functions as a noun and so occupies the same positions in sentences as nouns usually do.
- To check whether it is indeed functioning as a noun, replace with another noun that is not a gerund. The sentence will still make sense.
- *My mother does not like my cooking.*
  - Here, if “cooking” is replaced by another noun – say, “dress”, the sentence will still make sense.

# Gerund

- Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb:
  - *Most athletes reckon that (run) is a stress-busting activity.*
  - *Most athletes reckon that running is a stress-busting activity.*

# Participle

- Participle is a word formed from a verb that can be used as an adjective.
- The two types of participles are the present participle (ending *ing*) and the past participle (usually ending *-ed*, *-d*, *-t*, *-en*, or *-n*).
- Here are some participles being used as adjectives:

Verb	Past Participle	Present Participle
Bite	The bitten fruit	The biting snake
Steal	The stolen necklace	The stealing practice
Hack	The hacked website	The hacking business

# Infinitive

- An infinitive is a verbal consisting of the word 'to' plus a verb in its simplest form. It functions as a noun (subject, direct object, subject complement), an adjective, or an adverb. One must be alert to what function it is performing in any given sentence.
  - *To sing in their presence was his desire.* (subject)
  - *All he wanted was to escape.* (subject complement)
    - *He wants to escape.* (direct object)
    - *She no longer had the will to act.* (adjective)
  - *Eager to reach home, he left the party early.* (adverb)

# Infinitive

- Be alert to the words. Do not confuse an infinitive with a prepositional phrase beginning with 'to'; such a phrase contains 'to' plus a noun/pronoun
  - For instance, 'to the beautiful moon', 'to them' are prepositional phrases and not infinitives.
- Identify the infinitives;
  - *To err is human; to forgive, divine.*
  - *Infinitives: to err, to forgive*

# Verbals at a Glance...

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Gerund</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>	<b>Infinitive</b>
Bite	Biting (noun)	The bitten fruit	The biting snake	To bite
Steal	Stealing (noun)	The stolen necklace	The stealing practice	To steal
Hack	Hacking (noun)	The hacked website	The hacking business	To hack

# Punctuation

# Comma (,)

- Comma marks out associated words within sentences.
  - *Jack, Tara, and Maria are coming for the dinner.*
- Commas are used to set apart non-essential information. Removing the text between two commas should yield the core meaning of the sentence. In a correct sentence, the essential meaning is not put between two commas.
  - *Thomas, a baker, makes excellent fruit cakes.*
  - Removing “a baker”, the information between two commas, yields the core meaning of the sentence that “Thomas makes excellent fruit cakes.”.

# Comma (,)

- Comma cannot connect two independent clauses (semicolon is needed for such usage).
  - **Incorrect:** *The original inventor of the steam engine was James Watt, he was born in Scotland in 1736.*
  - **Correct:** *The original inventor of the steam engine was James Watt; he was born in Scotland in 1736.*

Or

- **Correct:** *The original inventor of the steam engine was James Watt, born in Scotland in 1736.*

# Colon (:)

- A colon is normally used in a sentence to lead from one idea to its consequences or logical continuation.
- A colon must precede a list (at the end of an independent clause), a phrase, or a complete independent clause.
  - **Correct:** *There was no truth in the accusation: they rejected it utterly.*
    - Colon highlights the cause-effect relationship.
  - **Incorrect:** *There was no truth in the accusation: it was totally false.*
    - Here, no consequence is stated after colon.
  - “no truth” and “totally false” result in parallel statements and therefore, semicolon will be the correct punctuation here.
- **Correct:** *I want the following items: butter, sugar, and flour.*
  - A list follows the colon.

# Colon (:)

- Avoid using a colon before a list if it directly follows a verb or preposition that would ordinarily need no punctuation in that sentence.

Example:

- Incorrect: *I have seen the greats, including: Barrymore, Guinness, and Streep.*
- Correct: *I have seen the greats, including Barrymore, Guinness, and Streep.*

# Semicolon (;)

- A semicolon is normally used to link two parallel statements.
- It is used to indicate a pause in a sentence, specifically one that is more pronounced than that indicated by a comma.

There are two reasons for using a semicolon:

## 1) To separate independent clauses

- Thus, when evaluating whether a semicolon or comma should be used to separate two connected thoughts in a sentence, simply check to see whether or not there's a subject and verb on each side of the punctuation mark.

I ate day-old sushi for breakfast; I spent a week in the hospital.

A semicolon is correctly used to designate the pause in the sentence because both sides of the semicolon are independent clauses.

# Semicolon (;)

- 2) To separate items that contain commas in a list.
- In this case, to avoid having an overwhelming number of commas in the sentence, semicolons are used as a larger division of structure.

In the following example, several cities and their respective states are listed in the same sentence.

- *The students in the class hailed from several different locations, including Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; and Sacramento, California.*

# Hyphen (-)

- The hyphen or dash is used to avoid ambiguity and link words.
  - “Fifty-odd people” and “Fifty odd people”.
    - When the hyphen is used, the phrase means “approximately fifty people”.
    - When the hyphen isn’t used, the phrase means “fifty strange people”.
- Hyphens are often used in pairs to set apart non-essential information; a dash before and a dash after the phrase are put.
- Hyphens are also used to indicate a break in thought.

# Hyphen (-)

Example:

In the history of feminist literature, three books: *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She* are considered to be landmark novels.

- A. three books: *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She* are considered
- B. three books: *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She*; are considered
- C. three books: *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She*, are considered
- D. three books - *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She* - are considered
- E. three books; *The Female Eunuch*, *The Beauty Myth*, and *She*, are considered

# Hyphen (-)

- Explanation:

- **Options A, B, and C are eliminated** because a colon is used to denote a list only at the end of an independent clause. Also, the sentence must conclude with the list which isn't the case here; "are considered to be landmark novels" follows the list.
- **Option E is eliminated** as a semicolon must separate two independent clauses which isn't the case here.
- Option D uses hyphens in pairs to set apart non-essential information - a dash before and a dash after the phrase. Thus, it is the best answer choice.

# Double Hyphen (--)

- It generally means 'namely'.

Example:

*Switzerland has four national languages -- French, German, Italian and Romansh.*

# Apostrophe (')

- An apostrophe is used to show possession.
  - *This is Rose's room.*
- For proper nouns ending in 's', use apostrophe + 's' to show possession.
  - *Those are Thomas's books.*
- To show plural possession, simply put an apostrophe after the plural form of the noun (*s or es*).
  - Example:
    - **guy's night out**
      - Refers to one guy's night out
    - **guys' night out**
      - Refers to many guys' night out

# Apostrophe (')

Avoid a common mistake:

- Do not use an apostrophe + 's' to make a regular noun plural.

*Incorrect: We have had many happy Christmas's.*

*Correct: We have had many happy Christmases.*

*Incorrect: Many VIP's are expected to attend the event.*

*Correct: Many VIPs are expected to attend the event.*

*Incorrect: The auditorium is full of MBA's.*

*Correct: The auditorium is full of MBAs.*

# Tip for Using Punctuation on GMAT's SC

- Ask yourself: *How is this piece of punctuation changing the meaning of the sentence?*
- If you're feeling confused, try to imagine the sentence without the punctuation and see if it still makes sense.
- Strategically use punctuation to your advantage.

## Examples:

- Where there are pairs of commas or dashes, see if you can skip the non-essential information in between to focus on fundamental rules such as subject-verb or pronoun agreement.
- Where there is a semicolon in one or more answer choices, check the other choices to make sure they are not run-on sentences needing a semicolon.

thank you



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