Supposition
Supposition, in Peter of Spain's framework, is the way a term in a proposition stands in for what it signifies, so that the sentence is about things in the world rather than just about words. The idea is that when we reason, a spoken or written term is "put in place of" the thing it signifies, and different kinds of supposition mark different patterns in how that substitution works (for example, whether the term ranges over a universal, a single individual, or many individuals at once). Supposition is always context-sensitive: it belongs to the term as it appears in a specific proposition and position, not to the word in isolation.

Examples: in "A man runs," "man" supposits for some individual human such as Sortes; in "Every human is an animal," "human" and "animal" have more complex, rule-governed suppositions.

Discrete Supposition
Discrete supposition is the kind of supposition had by discrete terms, expressions whose reference is fixed on a particular individual rather than a whole class. Instead of ranging over many possible instances, the term directly picks out a single thing, so the proposition is straightforwardly about that individual. Peter of Spain treats proper names and demonstratives as paradigmatic discrete terms, since they are designed to latch onto one item rather than a universal. In this way, discrete supposition is the "most determinate" kind of standing-for: there is exactly one bearer in view.

Examples: in "Socrates runs," "Socrates" has discrete supposition for that particular man; in "This one is sick," a pointing "this" supposits discretely for the individual indicated.

Common Supposition
Common supposition is the kind of supposition had by common terms, expressions that can apply to many individuals and so have a more "universal" reach. Nouns like "human," adjectives like "white," and many verbs are common in this sense: they are not tied to one particular thing but are, in principle, apt to be truly predicated of many. When a term has common supposition, it does not, by itself, single out one bearer; instead, it opens up a field of possible instances that more specific grammatical devices (like quantifiers and modifiers) can then shape. This makes common supposition the natural starting point for talking about species, properties, and repeatable features.

Examples: "human" in "A human runs" or "Every human is an animal," and "white" in "Every white thing is visible," all have common supposition.

Natural Supposition
Natural supposition is the default way a common term stands for the things it is naturally suited to signify, without any special restriction or extra device. When a term has natural supposition, it ranges over all the individuals that fall under its ordinary signification, and it can do so across times: past, present, and future. This is the “maximal” extension of the term, driven purely by what it means, not by extra temporal or modal operators. Natural supposition therefore describes how a bare common term would stand for its kind if nothing else in the sentence narrowed its reach.

Examples: taken on its own, “human” can have natural supposition for all humans who were, are, or will be; similarly, “cat” in its natural supposition ranges over every cat whatsoever.

Accidental Supposition
Accidental supposition arises when a common term’s natural reach is narrowed, expanded, or otherwise modified by something “accidental” to it in the sentence, often a syncategorematic word like “present,” “future,” or a quantifier. Instead of standing for everything it could naturally signify, the term now stands only for a designated subset (or specially marked portion) of its extension, where that restriction comes from how the whole proposition is built. In this way, accidental supposition makes clear that terms do not supposit in a vacuum: what they stand for is shaped by temporal, modal, and logical structure.

Examples: “present human” supposits accidentally for all humans currently living, not for past or future ones; “future human” for all humans who will exist, excluding those who exist now or have existed in the past.

Simple Supposition
Simple supposition is the pattern in which a common term stands, not for individual things, but for the universal or kind that it signifies. Instead of ranging over “lower” items in a genus–species hierarchy, the term refers to the species or genus itself, considered as a single, abstract entity. This is how we speak when doing classification or metaphysics rather than describing particular members: we are talking about what the kind is, not which individuals fall under it. Simple supposition thus contrasts with personal supposition, where the same term would stand for concrete instances.

Examples: in “Human is a species,” “human” has simple supposition for the universal human nature; in “Animal is a genus,” “animal” supposits simply for the genus rather than for individual animals.

Personal Supposition
Personal supposition is the pattern in which a common term stands for the individual things

“below” it in the logical hierarchy, so that the proposition is about actual members of the relevant kind rather than about the universal itself. This is the dominant, everyday mode of speech: when we say “humans,” “cats,” or “students,” we are usually talking about concrete individuals who walk around, act, and change. In Peter of Spain’s taxonomy, personal supposition is the main branch under which more fine-grained kinds like determinate and confused supposition are sorted, depending on how the term ranges over its many possible bearers.

Examples: in “A human runs,” “human” has personal supposition for one or more individual humans; in “Every cat sleeps,” “cat” personally supposits for all the cats involved.

Determinate Supposition
Determinate supposition is a kind of personal supposition in which a common term stands for “some one or other” of the things below it, such that the truth of the whole proposition requires that there be at least one such thing for which the predicate holds. The individual in question is not named, but the logical form allows you to descend to a single particular and preserve truth: if the sentence is true, it is because one concrete instance makes it so. Determinate supposition is characteristic of terms used indefinitely or with particular signs like “a,” “some,” or “a certain.”

Examples: “A human runs” or “Some human runs” are true just in case there is at least one human who runs; you can validly move from the general form to “Therefore, Sortes runs,” if Sortes is one such running human.

Confused Supposition
Confused supposition is a kind of personal supposition in which a common term stands for many individuals at once in such a way that you cannot simply isolate one bearer and preserve the truth conditions. Here the term’s reference is “spread out” over its whole extension: the proposition is true only if what is said holds of all the relevant things, or at least in a way that cannot be captured by singling out one instance. This kind of supposition is typically triggered by universal signs like “every,” which force the term to range across its entire (or at least a broad) field of application.

Examples: in “Every human is an animal,” “human” has confused supposition for all humans now existing; the sentence is true only if each such human is indeed an animal.

Movable and Distributive Supposition
Movable and distributive supposition is the subtype of confused supposition in which the common term stands for each of its many bearers conjunctively, in a way that licenses “descent” to any particular you choose while preserving truth. When supposition is movable and distributive, a universally quantified statement commits you to every individual in the class, so that from the general claim you can infer a whole series of singular instances. The “movable”

label signals that you can move from the universal to these particulars; “distributive” signals that the property in question is distributed across them.

Examples: from “Every human is an animal,” you may descend to “Therefore, Sortes is an animal; therefore, Plato is an animal,” and so on for each human the term “human” supposits for in that context.

Immovable Supposition
Immovable supposition, also called merely confused supposition, is the contrasting subtype in which a common term still stands for all the individuals in its extension, but only disjunctively, so that descent to particular instances does not preserve the original truth conditions. The proposition treats the term’s many bearers as an undivided totality or range, and carving out one of them on its own can distort the logical shape of what is being asserted. In such cases, the term’s supposition is “confused” because it ranges over many, but “immovable” because you cannot safely move from the general statement to parallel singular ones.

Examples: in “Every human is an animal,” the term “animal” can be read as having immovable supposition for all animals, since you cannot validly infer that every human is this or that particular animal, even though “animal” broadly ranges over the entire animal domain.