

# Grammatical Categories

## Analyzing Words with Respect to How they Function

### Semasiological

- Shape
- Sound
- Spelling

### Onomasiological

- Meaning
- Concepts

### Grammatical

- How the words function
- Lexical/class categories

### Tests

#### Semantic

What concepts and entities does the category evoke?

#### Morphological

Which affixes (if any) are legitimate?

#### Syntactic

Which other words does it co-occur with, and in what order?

## Word Classes

**dog**  
**cat**

### Content words

Carry the semantic burden;  
less important syntactically.

Open class

*Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives,  
Adverbs*

**the**  
**a**

### Function words

Do much of the syntactic work;  
relatively lightweight semantically.

Closed class

**Prepositions**, determiners,  
*particles, qualifiers, degree words,  
pronouns, etc.*

## English Nouns

### Semantic

Person, place,  
or thing



**cats**

### Morphological

Takes plural and  
possessive suffixes



**milks**  
↑  
illegitimate plural

### Syntactic

Follows articles and  
adjectives, in that order



**A frog**  
**The frog**  
~~Big a frog~~  
~~Green the frog~~

Cats: colematt/iStock/Thinkstock; Milking Cow: blueringmedia/Getty Images; Frog/Milk: wenchiaawang/iStock/Thinkstock

## English Verbs

### Semantic

An action or state

### Morphological

Takes plural and possessive suffixes

**nod**

**nod**

(has, had) **nodd****ed**  
(past participle)

(is, was) **nodd****ing**  
(present participle)

**swim**

**swam**

**swum**

### Syntactic

Can follow an auxiliary verb

He **can** **nod** his head.

She **will** **know** that he  
is looking for his  
puppy.

## English Adjectives

### Semantic

A quality, attribute, or property (of a person, place or thing)

### Morphological

Takes comparative and superlative suffixes

**loud**

**loud****er**

**loud****est**

### Syntactic

Precedes nouns, follows degree word

The **loud** ringmaster.

The **very loud**  
ringmaster.

## English Adverbs

Semantic	Morphological	Syntactic
Modifies an action or state	Nothing	Follows a verb
Manner	(Though many of them end in -ly)	<b>They run quickly.</b>
Time		<b>Yesterday we went to the park.</b>
Location		<b>They nod vigorously.</b>
	<p>quickly</p> <p>quick</p> <p>quicker</p> <p>quickest</p> <p>very quick</p>	
	} adjectives	