

# General English for Engineering Students

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# Grammar Points

# Clauses

- ❑ **Clause:** a group of words that has a subject and a verb.
- ✓ I took the bus to school. (**independent**: expresses a complete idea)
- ✓ When I took the bus to school ... (**dependent/subordinate**: does not express a complete idea)
- ✓ Although I am busy ... (**dependent**)
- ❑ **Relative Clause**
- ✓ a clause that describes a noun or pronoun.
- ❖ A relative clause starts with **relative pronouns** such as **who** (people), **where** (place), **which** (things), **when** (time), **whom** (people), **that** (things and people), **why** (reason), ....

# Relative Clauses

- ✓ I have a **new** laptop. (adj)
  - ✓ I have a laptop **which is new**. (relative clause)
- 
1. **Defining relative clause:** gives us essential information to identify who or what we are speaking about; we cannot omit it.
- 
- ✓ She is the one **who sent me the message**.
  - ✓ This is the book **that I wanted to buy**.
  - ✓ The laptop **which is over there is mine**.
  - ✓ My sister **who is a nurse** is very kind.

# Relative Clauses

**Note:** in defining clauses, we can omit 'who', 'which', and 'that', if it is followed by a subject.

- ✓ The teacher **that we met** was very kind.
- ✓ The teacher **we met** was very kind.
  
- ❖ We don't usually omit 'who', 'which', and 'that' when they are followed by a verb:
  
- ✓ The teacher **that taught** us was very kind.

# Relative Clauses

2. **Non-defining relative clause:** adds more information about who or what we are speaking about; it is between commas; we can omit it.
- ✓ My car, **which is green**, is very expensive. (the main message is about the price not the color).
  - ✓ My shirt, **which I wear every day**, is white. (the main message is about color)

# Reduced Relative Clauses

□ There are two ways in which a relative clause is reduced:

1. If the relative clause contains **"to be verb"**, omit the subject pronoun (which; that; who) and the **"to be verb"**:

- ✓ Ali, **who was listening to music**, didn't hear the telephone ring.
- ✓ **Listening to music**, Ali didn't hear the telephone ring.
- ✓ Ali, **listening to music**, didn't hear the telephone ring.

# Reduced Relative Clauses

- ✓ The person **who is responsible for teaching us** is Ms. X.
  - ✓ The person **responsible for teaching us** is Ms. X.  
(reduced relative clause= relative phrase)
  - ✓ Carry the box **that is heavy**.
  - ✓ Carry the **heavy box**.
2. If there is **no "to be verb"** in the relative clause, it is possible to omit the **subject pronoun** (that, which, who) and **add -ing to the end of the verb**:



# Reduced Relative Clauses

- ✓ This is an English class **that consists of 30 students**.
- ✓ This is an English class **consisting of 30 students**.
- ✓ The girl **who cried in the kitchen** was my sister.
- ✓ The girl **crying in the kitchen** was my sister.

# Noun Modifiers

- ❖ In **noun + noun** structures, the **first noun** is normally **singular** in form and describes the second noun. This noun is called a noun **modifier**.
- A **car** factory (= a factory that produces cars)
- A **shoe** shop (= a shop that sells shoes)
- **Trouser** pockets (= pockets in trousers)
- **Glass** formula (= formula of glass)

# Parts of Speech

## 1. Nouns

- As subject of the sentence
- As object of the sentence
- After articles (e.g., the/a/an) and prepositions
- As modifiers before nouns (e.g., clothing manufacturers, car factory)

## 2. Adjectives

- To describe nouns
- To describe linking verbs

# Parts of Speech

- ☐ **To be verbs** (am, is, are, were, was, ...)
  - ✓ I am **tall**.
- ☐ **Verbs of senses** (smell, taste, sound, look, ...)
  - ✓ This flower smells **nice**.
- ☐ **Become, grow, get, turn, ...**
  - ✓ You never grow **old**.

## 3. Adverbs

- To describe **adjectives** (e.g., **very** beautiful)
- To describe **verbs** (e.g., walk **quickly**)
- To describe **adverbs** (e.g., **more or less** accidentally.)

# Parts of Speech

**Note:** Adverbs can go in the front, mid (between the subject and the main verb, or after the modal verb or first auxiliary verb), and end position of a sentence.

- ✓ **Tomorrow** I have to go shopping. (adverb at the **beginning** of the sentence)
- ✓ He **often** gets good grades. (adverb in the **middle** of the sentence)
- ✓ He speaks French **well**. (adverb at the **end** of the sentence)

# Parts of Speech

## 4. Verbs

- To describe **states** (e.g., smell, taste, am, is, are, ...)
- To describe **actions** (e.g., talk, walk, listen, ...)

# Passive Voice

## Functions

1. When the performer of an action is unimportant, or unknown:

✓ The exam **has been cancelled**.

2. To be impersonal in scientific and technical texts:

✓ The experiment **was done** at Isfahan University of Technology.

# Passive Voice

3. To move the most important information to the beginning of the sentence:

✓ Your questions **are** always **answered** by the teacher.

## ❖ Structure

❑ **Present simple tense:** to talk about habits, routines, general truths and scientific facts

✓ **Active:** (simple verb/ verb+ 's' or 'es' for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular): He **cleans** the house.

✓ **Passive** (am/is/are + p.p.): The house **is cleaned**.



# Passive Voice

- ❑ **Present continuous tense:** to talk about an ongoing action and future plans
  - ✓ **Active** (am/is/are + verb+ ing): He **is cleaning** the house.
  - ✓ **Passive** (am/is/are + being + p.p.): The house **is being cleaned**.
  
- ❑ **Past simple tense:** to talk about finished events in the past
  - ✓ **Active:** (verb+ 'd' or 'ed' / irregular verb): He **cleaned** the house.
  - ✓ **Passive** (were/was + p.p.): The house **was cleaned**.

# Passive Voice

- ❑ **Past continuous tense:** to talk about an ongoing action in the past
  - ✓ **Active:** (were/ was+ verb+ ing): He was cleaning the house.
  - ✓ **Passive:** (were/ was+ being + p.p.): The house was being cleaned.
  
- ❑ **Present perfect simple tense:** to talk about an action started in the past and continued to the present
  - ✓ **Active:** (have/ has+ p.p.): He has cleaned the house.
  - ✓ **Passive:** (have/ has+ been + p.p.): The house has been cleaned.

# Passive Voice

- ❑ **Past perfect simple tense:** to describe an action that happened before another in the past

**Active:** (had+ p.p.): He **had cleaned** the house.

**Passive** (had+ been + p.p.): The house **had been cleaned**.

- ❑ **Future simple tense:** to talk about sth that has not happened yet

**Active:** (will + simple verb): He **will clean** the house.

**Passive** (will+ be + p.p.): The house **will be cleaned**.

# Passive Voice

## ❑ Passive Modal:

**Active:** He **may clean** the house.

**Passive** (modal (may, can, should, must, ...)+ **be** + p.p.):  
The house **may be cleaned**.

## ❑ The Passive Form of Infinitives (**Present Tense**) **to be** + **past participle**

- ✓ I don't expect **to be invited** to the party.
- ✓ He is hoping **to be elected** president.

# Passive Voice

- ❑ The Passive Form of Infinitives (Past Tense)  
to have been + past participle
- ✓ She was happy to have been invited to the party.
- ✓ They were hoping to have been paid early.

# Parallel Structures

- ❑ When words or phrases that have the same grammatical function are connected by the **coordinating conjunctions** 'and', 'or', 'but', and 'nor'.
- ✓ She loves apples **and** bananas.
- ✓ She types slowly **but** accurately.
- ✓ Our main need is not food, **nor** money. It is education.
- ✓ I don't enjoy running **or** playing.

# Parallel Structures

❑ **Correlative conjunctions:** They join two elements together. The most common correlative conjunctions:

## 1. **Either ... or**

- ✓ Let's **either** go swimming **or** go shopping.
- ✓ I want to paint my room **either** pink **or** green.

## 2. **Both ... and**

- ✓ I **both** cleaned my room **and** did the dishes.
- ✓ I'd like to have **both** pizza **and** coffee.

# Parallel Structures

## 3. Neither ... nor

- ✓ I have **neither** the time **nor** the patience for cooking.
- ✓ She is **neither** listening **nor** taking notes.

## 4. Not only ... but also

- ✓ She is **not only** bright **but also** hard-working.
- ✓ She **not only** apologized **but also** sent me a present.



# Conditionals

❑ **Zero:** real and possible events; a general situation

If we **heat** water to 100 degrees centigrade, it **boils**.

❑ **First:** real and possible events; a particular situation

If I **have** free time, I **will go** to the party.

❑ **Second:** imaginary; present tense

If I **had** enough money, I **would buy** that book.

❑ **Third:** imaginary; past tense

If they **had invited** me, I **would have gone** there.

# Present and Past Participle Adjectives

- The **present participle** can act as an adjective with an **active meaning**. The noun it modifies performs an action:
  - ✓ It is a **confusing** problem. (the problem does sth: it confuses)
- The **past participle** can serve as an adjective with a **passive meaning**:
  - ✓ They are **confused** students. (the students are confused by sth)

# Using Gerunds as the Objects of Preposition

- ❑ A gerund is frequently used as the object of a preposition.
- ✓ She is interested **in** learning English.
- ✓ The teacher is responsible **for** teaching the students.

# Count and Non-Count Nouns

- A **count noun** may be preceded by 'an', 'a', or 'one' in the singular and it takes '-s' or '-es' in the plural.
- A **non-count noun** is not immediately preceded by 'a/an/one' and it has **no plural form**.

## ❑ Some common categories of non-count nouns:

1. **Whole groups** made up of similar items (**equipment, hardware, software, traffic, ...**)
2. **Fluids** (**water, oil, milk, ...**)
3. **Solids** (**iron, gold, silver, ...**)
4. **Gases** (**air, oxygen, nitrogen, ...**)

# Count and Non-Count Nouns

5. Particles (sugar, sand, rice, ...)
  6. Fields of study (Chemistry, engineering, History, ...)
  7. Natural events (weather, rain, snow, ...)
- **Note:** Some uncountable nouns can be used in the plural, when they express a specific meaning:
    - ✓ Heavy rains (multiple showers)
    - ✓ The waters of Atlantic Ocean (a specific body of water)
    - ✓ Ethnic foods (different kinds of food)

# Reading Strategies

# Skimming

❖ **Skimming:** reading a text quickly in order to get the general/main idea

1. Do not read everything; move your eyes quickly over the text
2. Read the **title**
3. Read the **headings** and **subheadings**
4. Read the **first** and **last lines** of each paragraph
5. Look at the **boldfaced**, **underlined** and *italic* words
6. Look at the **keywords** (the repeated words)
7. Look at the **tables**, **figures**, and **diagrams**

# Skimming

## ❖ Examples of Skimming Questions

1. The **main idea** of the passage revolves around ...
2. In paragraph x, the author **mainly** ...
3. Which of the following statements shows the **author's intention/purpose** in paragraph x?
4. Which of the following statements states the **main idea** of the text/paragraph x?
5. The **primary focus** of paragraph x is ...
6. Choose the **heading** that best matches paragraph x.



# Finding the Main Idea and Topic

- **Main idea:** a complete sentence that summarizes the whole paragraph or text; it includes the topic and what the author wants to say about it
- **Topic:** the general subject of a paragraph or text which is described with just a word or a phrase
- ✓ Read the **beginning** and **concluding** sentences
- ✓ Ask **questions** (who; what; when; where; ...)
- ✓ Read the **titles** and **subtitles**
- ✓ Look at the **tables** and **diagrams**

# Finding the Main Idea and Topic

- ✓ Look at the **underlined**; **boldfaced** and **italic** words
- ✓ **Highlight** or **underline** important information
- ✓ Write a **summary** or **rewrite** the text in your own words

# Scanning

**Scanning:** reading a text quickly to find **specific information** (**key words; specific words; names; or details**)

1. If the text is completely unknown to you, skim the whole text first to get the general idea
2. Read each question carefully
3. Find the keywords in the question (why, what, ...)
4. Read the text quickly to find the answers to the questions

# Scanning

## □ Examples of Scanning Questions

- Questions that ask about details (**number, name, date, what, when, where, ...**)
  - ✓ How many uses of laser were mentioned in the text? (keyword: **number**)
  - ✓ Who invented the convertor furnace? (**who**)
  - ✓ What percentage of electric power is generated by coal? (**percentage**)
  - ✓ What devices are designed by electrical and electronics engineers? (**what**)

# Making Inferences

- ❑ **Making inferences:** to draw a logical conclusion based on what is not explicitly stated
- ❑ **I failed the course.** (my grade was below 10)
- ❑ **I ate another sandwich.** (I have eaten at least one sandwich before).
  
- ❑ **Sample Inferencing Questions**
  - **Key words:** suggest, indicate, conclude, infer, imply, ...
  - ✓ The passage **suggests** which of the following about laser?
  - ✓ We can **conclude** from paragraph x that ...
  - ✓ Paragraph x **suggests** that ...
  - ✓ We can **infer** from paragraph x that ...
  - ✓ This sentence **implies** that ...

# Linking/Connecting Words

- ❑ Special words and phrases to link different ideas, clauses or sentences
- ✓ **Emphasis**: indeed; particularly; clearly; especially; absolutely; generally, ...
- ✓ **Addition**: also; too; in addition; moreover; not only ... but also; furthermore; additionally; and, ...
- ✓ **Contrast**: unlike; on the other hand; whereas; however; yet; but, although, ...

# Linking/Connecting Words

- ✓ **Result/ Conclusion**: therefore; in conclusion; to summarize; as a result; thus; hence, thereby, ...
- ✓ **Giving Examples**: for example; for instance; such as; like, ...
- ✓ **Explanation/ Reason**: because; since; due to; because of; the reason why, ...