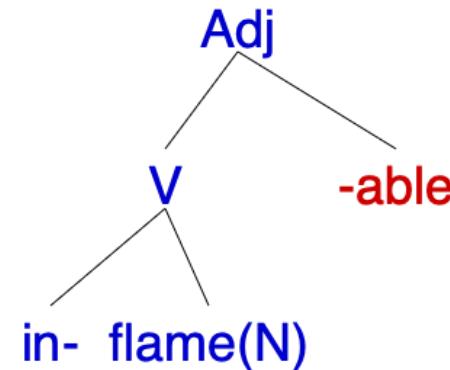
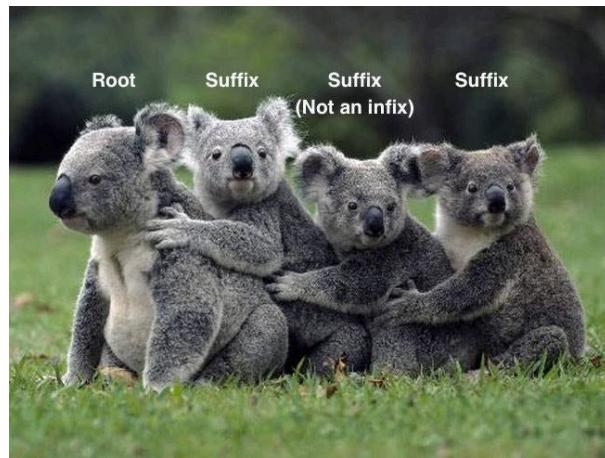




# Syntax I

Merlin Balkhash  
Department of Linguistics, Rutgers University  
2025/09/26 (updated: 2025-10-02)

# Previously on 201

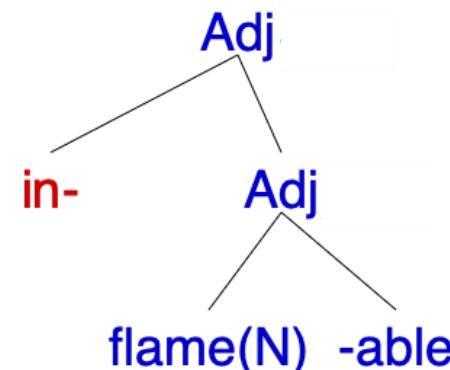


The firework never got soaked. It is [inflame]-able.

**compounding:** blackbird / black bird

**reduplication** partial vs. full

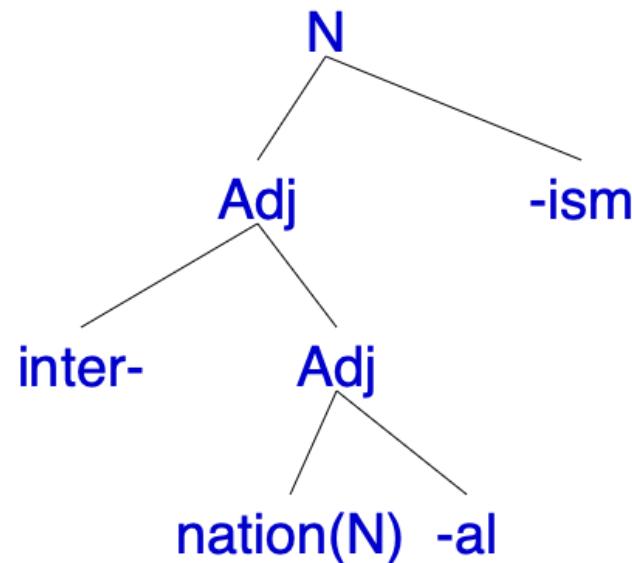
**alternation / suppletion / zero-derivation**



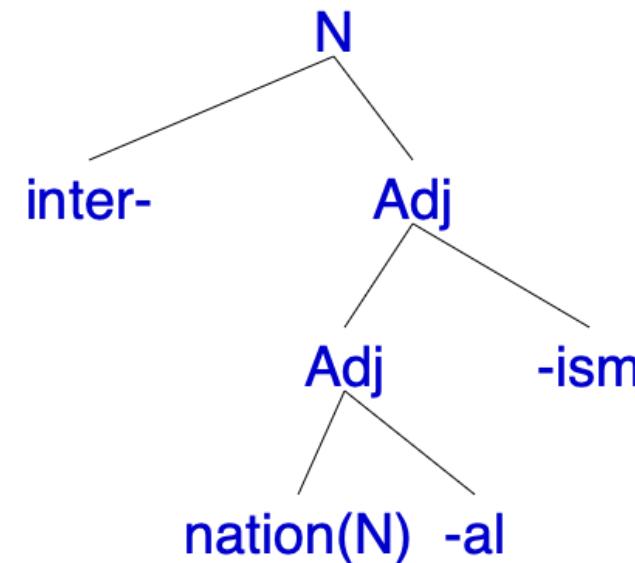
It seems we don't have this meaning in OED...

# Previously on 201

## INTER-NATION-AL-ISM

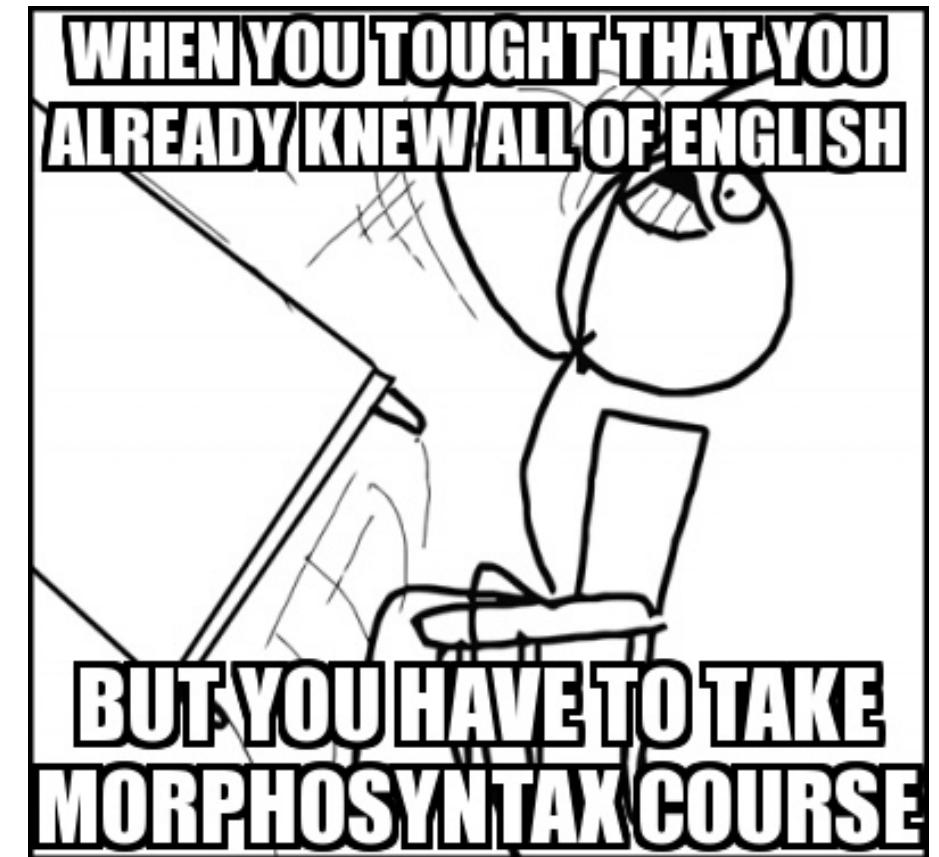


why it is this **one**,



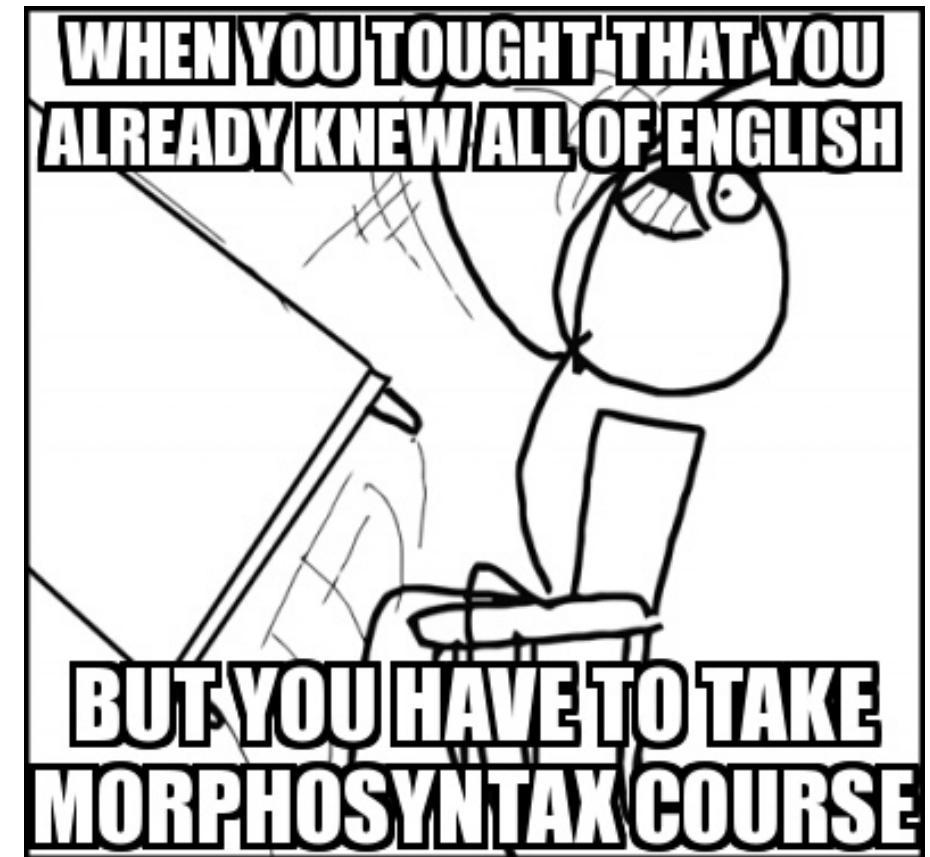
but **NOT** this one?

What is the **basic** unit in Morphology?



What is the **basic** unit in Morphology?

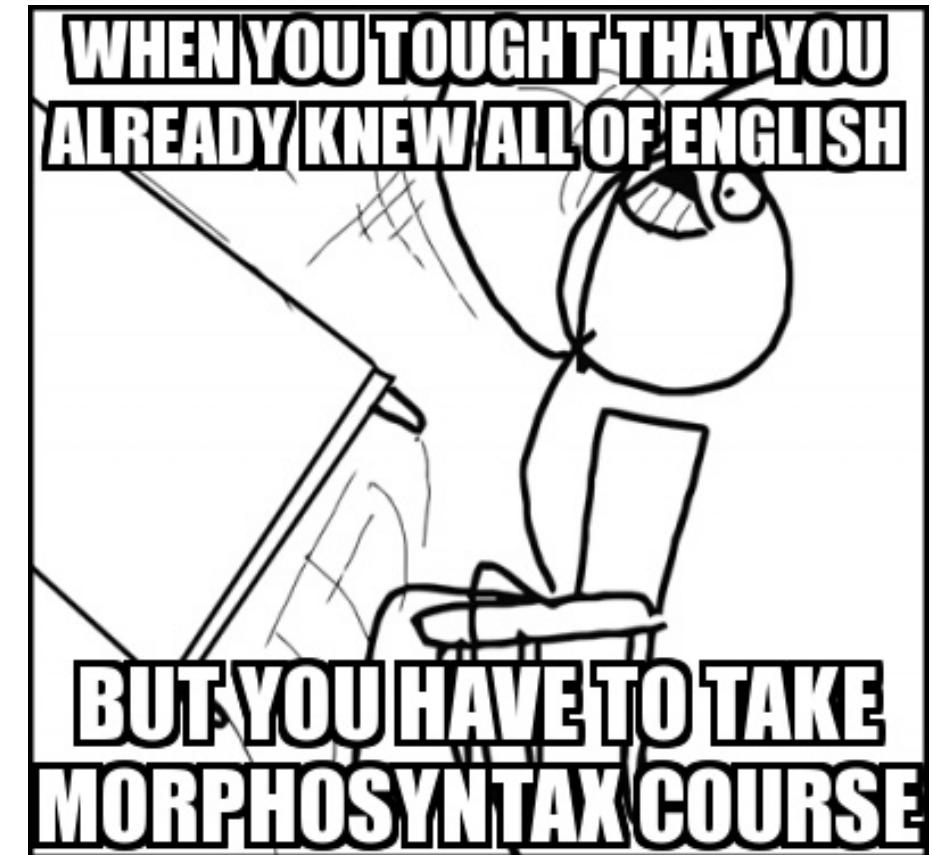
**MORPHEME**



What is the **basic** unit in Morphology?

**MORPHEME**

What happens if **larger** units were built?

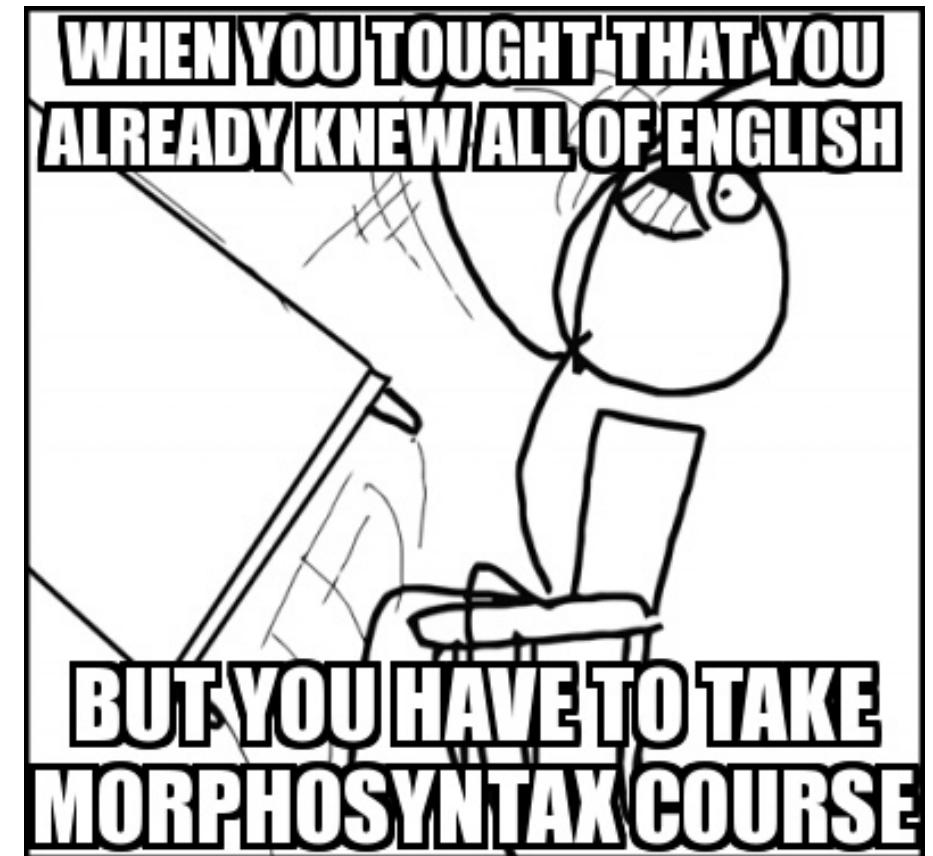


What is the **basic** unit in Morphology?

**MORPHEME**

What happens if **larger** units were built?

**SYNTAX**

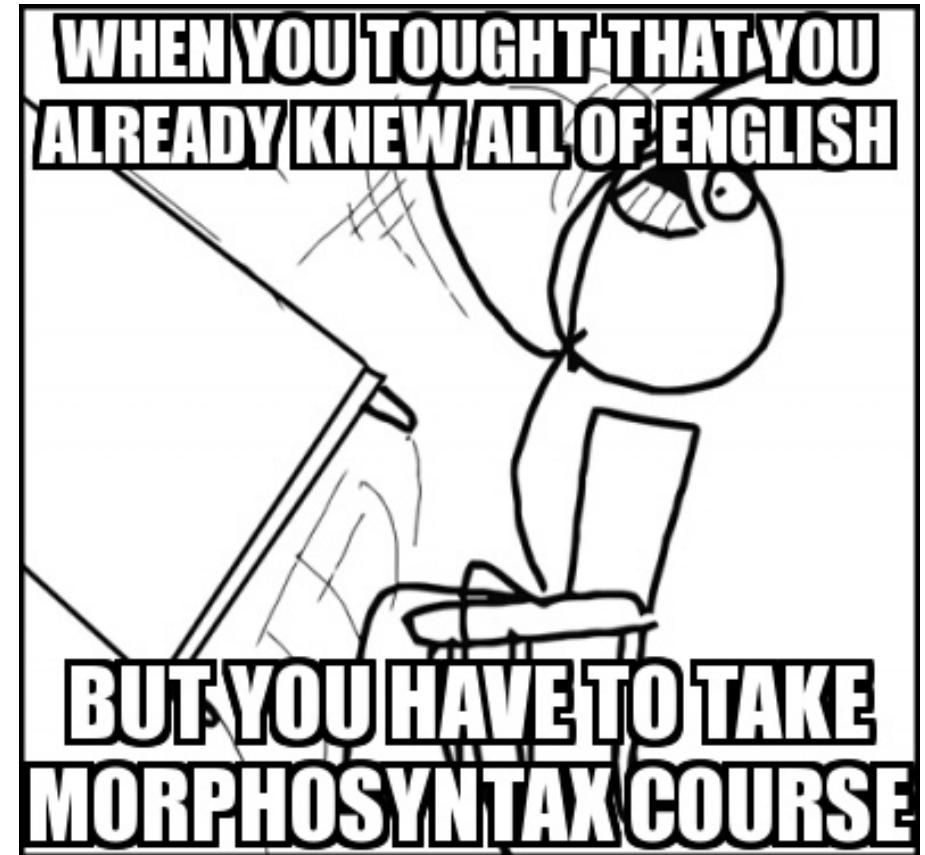


What is the **basic** unit in Morphology?

**MORPHEME**

What happens if **larger** units were built?

**SYNTAX**



**Morphology** cares about word structure

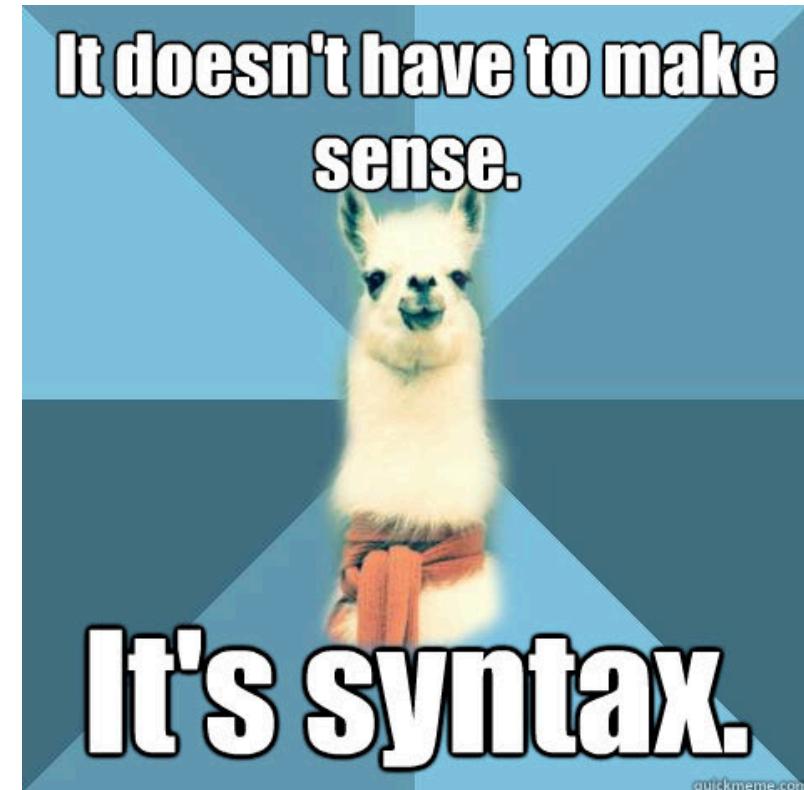
**Syntax** cares about sentence structure

# Constituents: basic structure in syntax

**constituent**: a group of words that **acts together** as a **unit**

- Consider the following sentences. What is the **subject** of each sentence?

1. *Francisco studies linguistics.*
2. *The tall boy studies linguistics.*
3. *The tall boy from New Jersey studies linguistics.*
4. *The tall boy named Francisco studies linguistics.*
5. *The tall boy that I met last week studies linguistics.*



a video on constituent

# Constituents: basic structure in syntax

**constituent:** a group of words that **acts together** as a **unit**

- Consider the following sentences. What is the **subject** of each sentence?

1. Francisco **studies linguistics.**
2. The tall boy **studies linguistics.**
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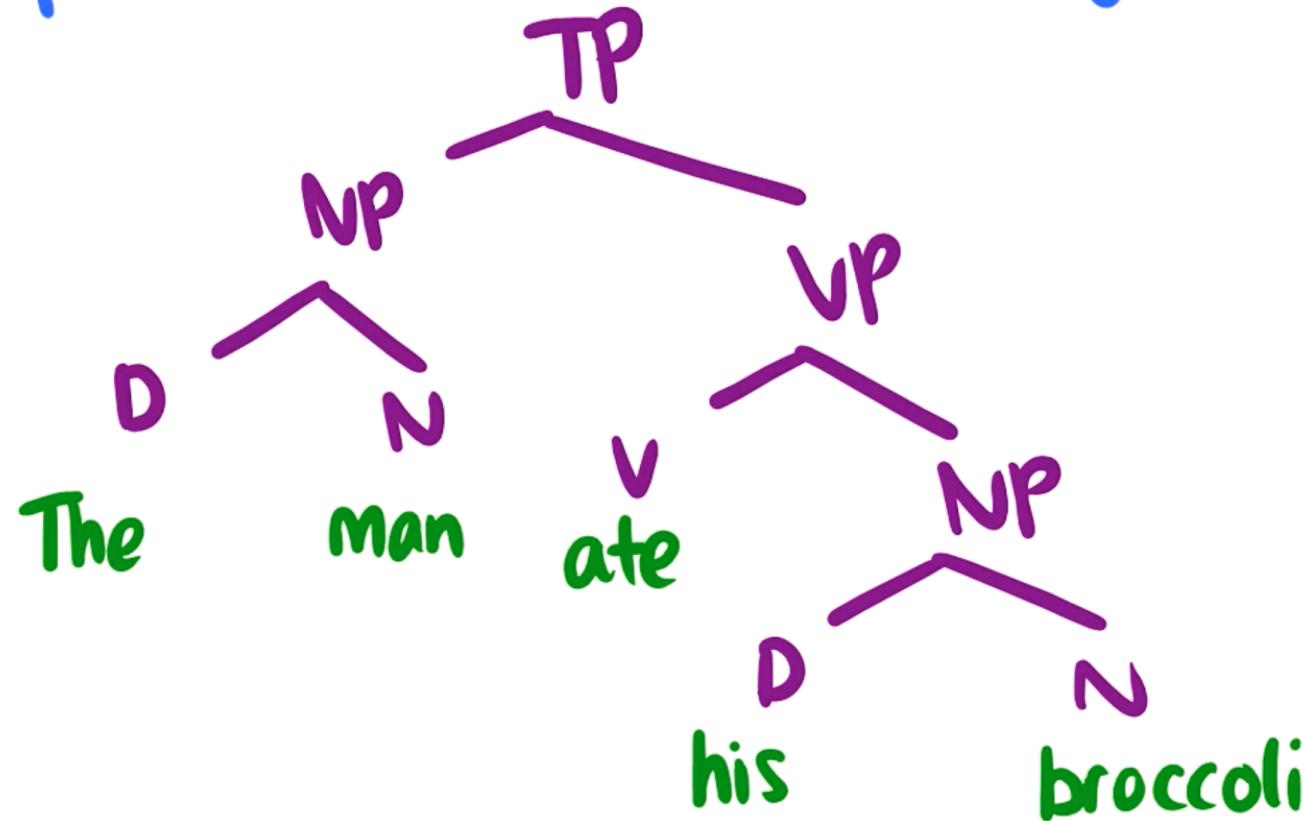
- SUBJECT can be **one** or **many** words, but they



a video on constituent

# Constituents

- A group of words that function together as a unit.

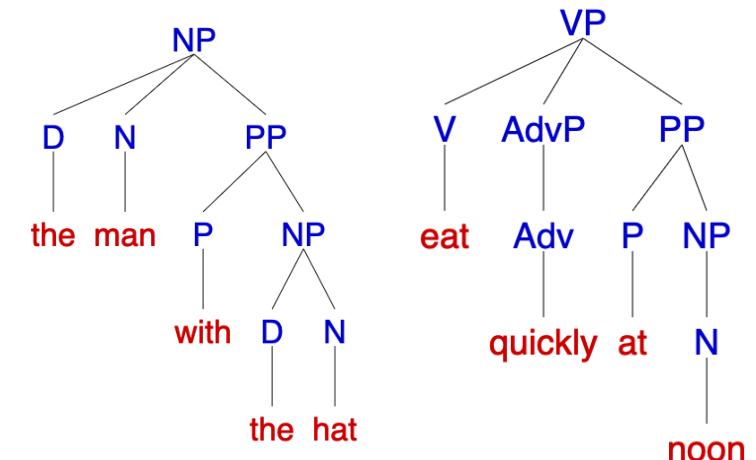


[TP[NP[D[The][N[man]]][VP[V[ate]][NP[D[his][N[broccoli]]]]]]]

# Phrases: types of constituents

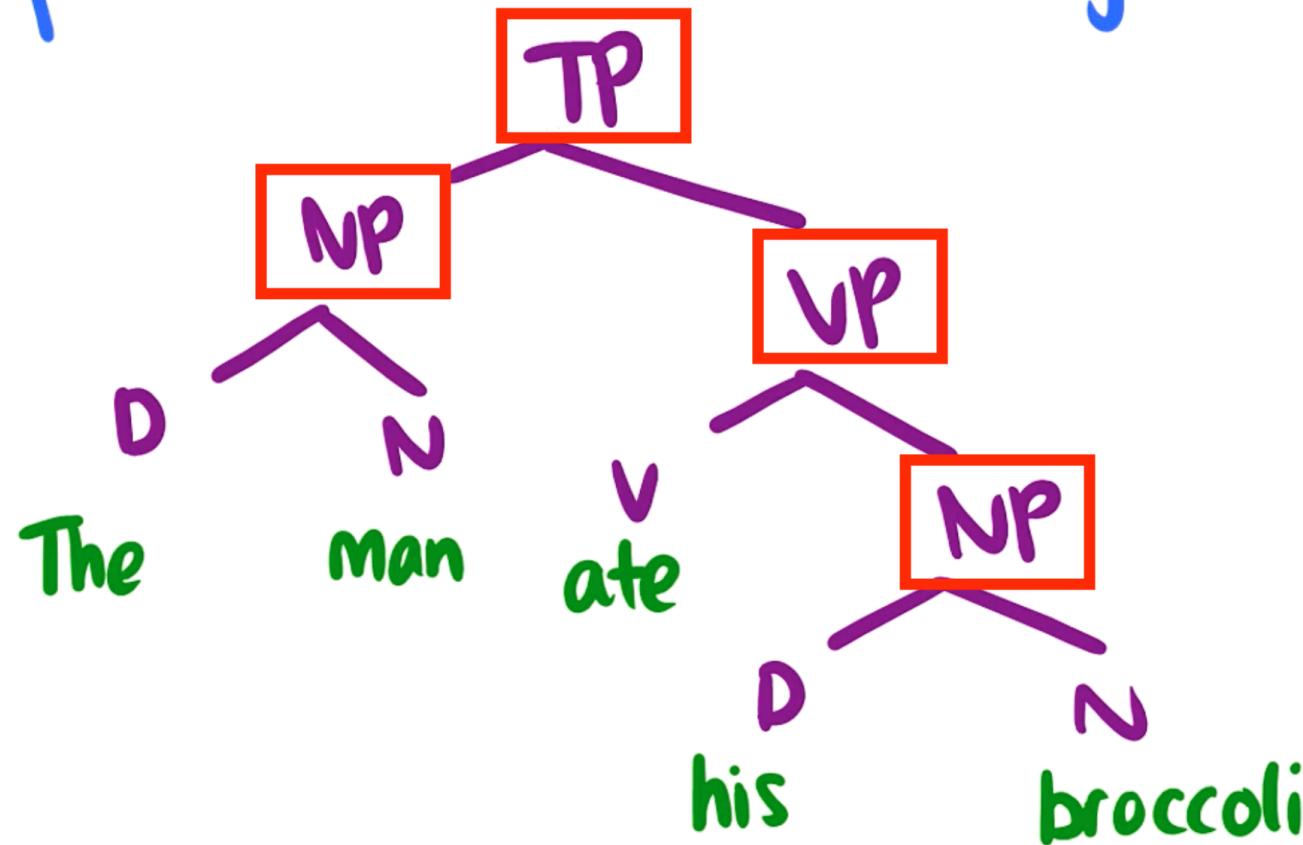
- Each phrase has a main word or **head**
- Phrases are named after the head word's **part of speech** (PoS):
  - **noun phrase (NP)**: man, the man, the happy man, the man with the hat
  - **prepositional phrase (PP)**: into the forest, by the author, for good luck
  - **verb phrase (VP)**: eats, eats pizza, eats quickly, eats pizza quickly at noon
  - **adjective phrase (AdjP)**: happy, ugly
  - **adverb phrase (AdvP)**: quickly, happily

- **one constituent can contain another**:
  - the man with the hat (**NP**) contains with the hat (**PP**), which contains the hat (**NP**)
  - eats quickly at noon (**VP**) contains quickly (**AdvP**) and at noon (**PP**)



# Constituents

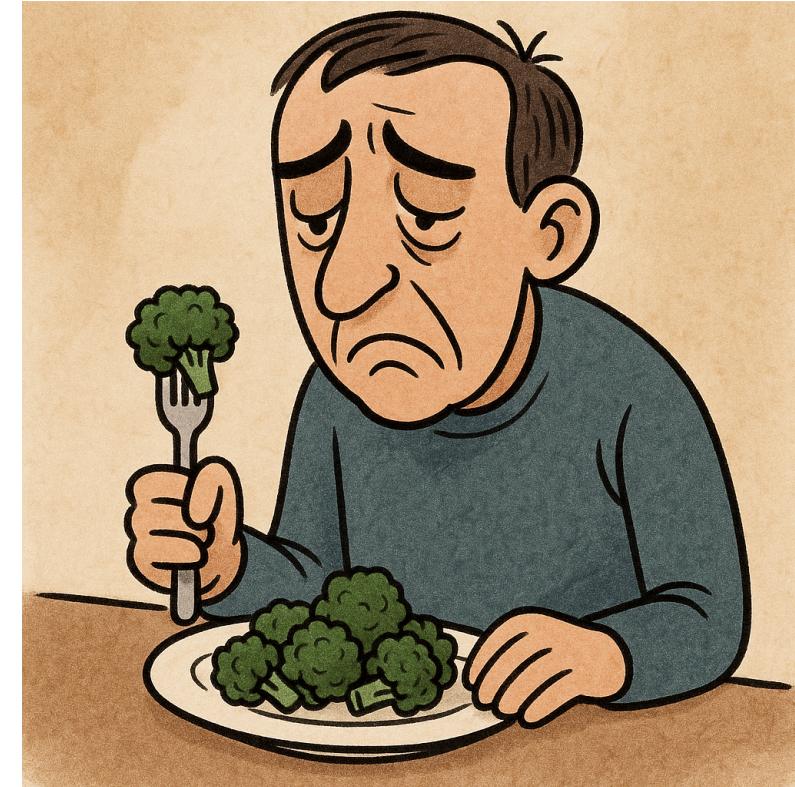
- A group of words that function together as a unit.



[TP[NP[D[The][N[man]]][VP[V[ate]][NP[D[his][N[broccoli]]]]]]]

# Constituency Tests

- There are four tests to **identify** whether a group of words IS a **constituent** or NOT:
  - Replacement (substitution) test
  - Movement test
  - Stand-alone test
  - Coordination test
- **These don't work 100% of the time**, and some tests work better with some sentences. Hence, you might have to try several

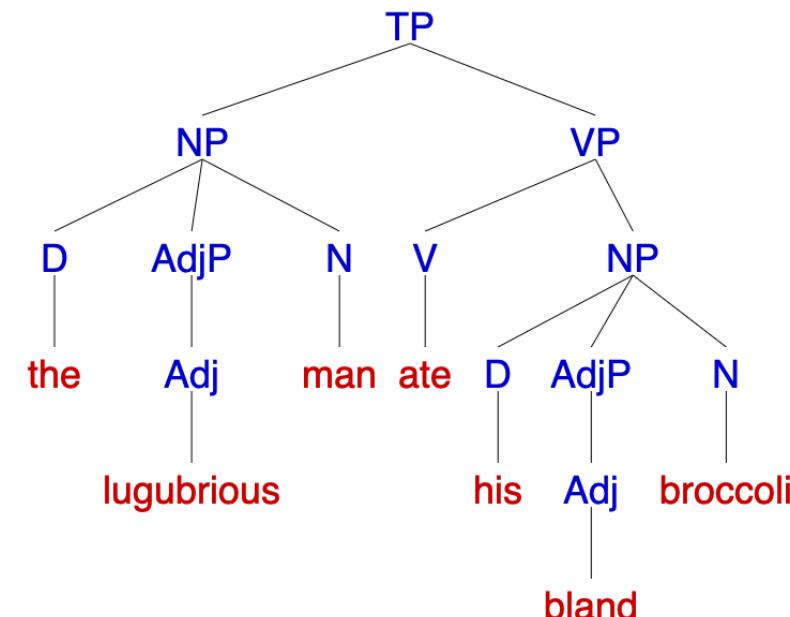


*[The lugubrious man] ate [his bland broccoli].*

# Replacement (Substitution) Test

*[The lugubrious man] ate [his bland broccoli].*

- **replacement**: replace a group of words with a **pro-form**. If it works, they are one constituent
- **pro-from**: pronoun or other generic expression like there, like that, do, do that, that way.
  - *[The lugubrious man] ate his bland broccoli*  
→ *[He] ate his bland broccoli.*
  - *The lugubrious man [ate his bland] broccoli*  
→ *The lugubrious man [???] broccoli.*
  - Try the replacement test with [bland broccoli], [the lugubrious] and [man ate]

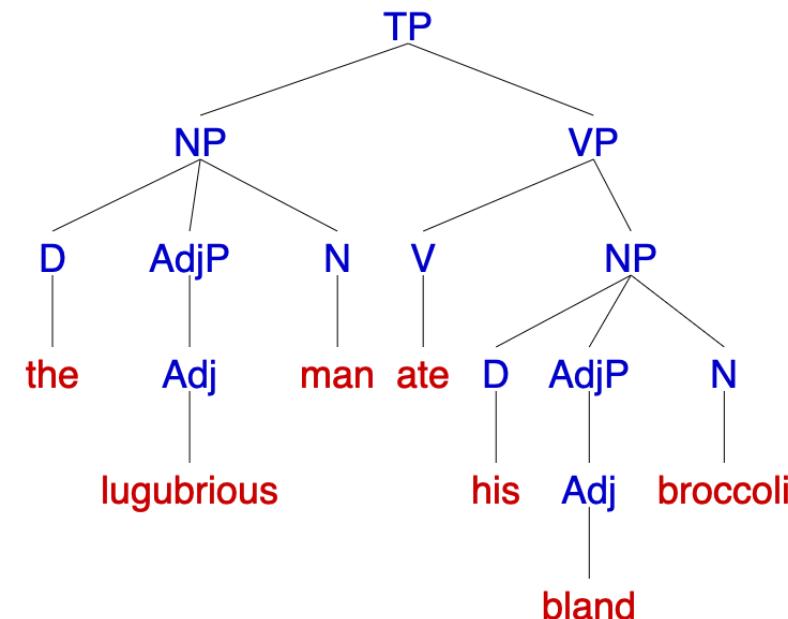


'The lugubrious man ate his bland broccoli.'

# Movement Test

**[The lugubrious man] ate [his bland broccoli].**

- **movement test:** move a group of words to a different part of the sentence
- You may have to add **extra** words to support this movement
  - → *The person who ate his bland broccoli is [the lugubrious man].*
  - → \* *Man who ate his bland broccoli is [the lugubrious].*
  - Try the movement test with [his bland broccoli], [his bland] and [man ate]



'The lugubrious man ate his bland broccoli.'

# Movement Test Bonus

**[The dog] ate [the sandwich] [today].**

**[Today] [the dog] ate [the sandwich].**

How do we know whether it was '**today**' moved or  
**'the dog ate the sandwich'**?

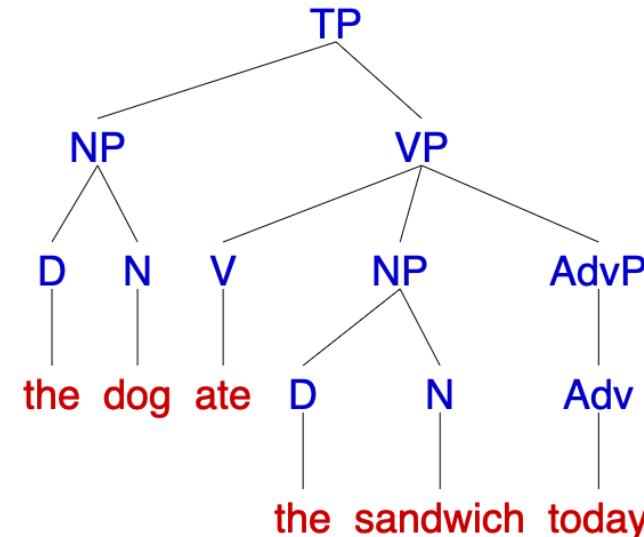


# Movement Test Bonus

**[The dog] ate [the sandwich] [today].**

**[Today] [the dog] ate [the sandwich].**

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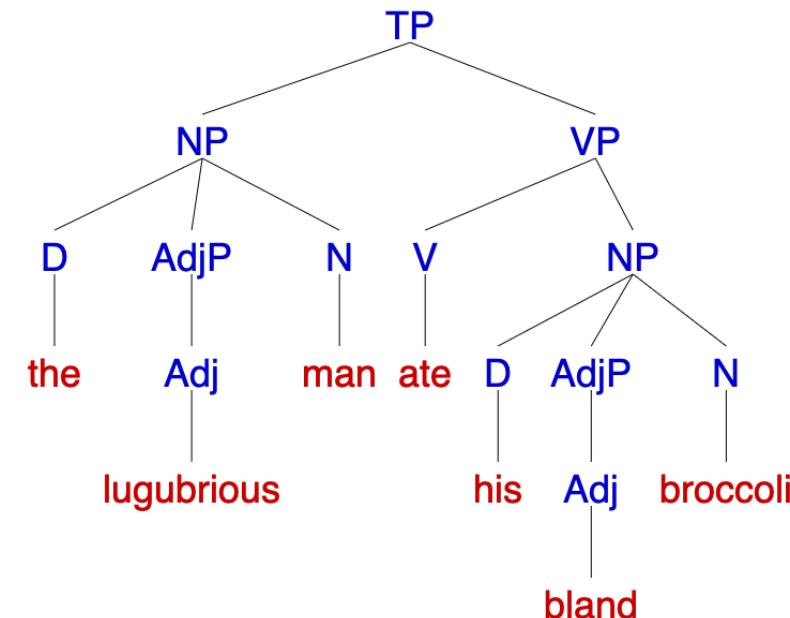


'The dog ate the sandwich today.'

# Stand Alone Test

**[The lugubrious man] ate [his bland broccoli].**

- **stand alone test:** come up with a question that can be answered by just saying the group of words you want to test **on its own**
  - → Who ate his bland broccoli?  
[the lugubrious man]!
  - Try the stand alone test with [his bland broccoli], [the lugubrious] or [man ate]?

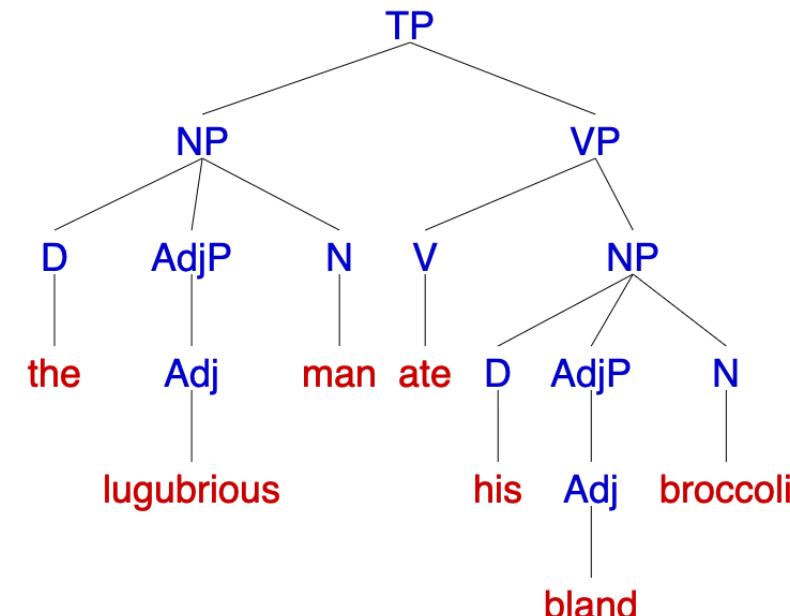


'The lugubrious man ate his bland broccoli.'

# Coordination Test

*[The lugubrious man] ate [his bland broccoli].*

- **coordination test:** coordinating conjunctions like **and** or **or** will always join two words or phrases of **the same type**
- If a group of words is a constituent, we are able to insert another phrase of the same type joined with **and** or **or**
  - → *[the lugubrious man] and [Rumpelstilzchen] ate their bland broccoli.*
  - Try the coordination test with *[his bland broccoli]*, *[man ate]* and *[his bland]*



'The lugubrious man ate his bland broccoli.'

# Practice



I thought this was common  
knowledge

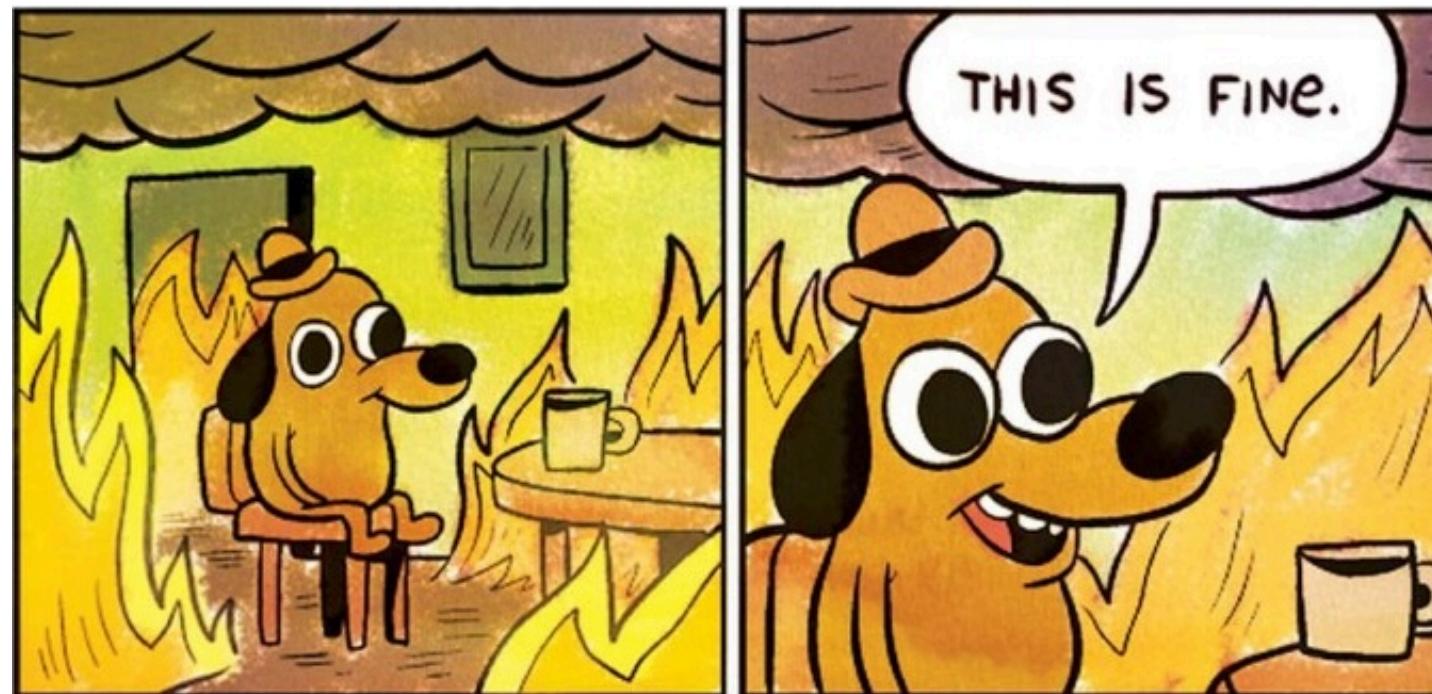
Use **constituency tests** to determine whether the underlined part is a **constituent** in each sentence:

1. The tragedy upset the entire family.
2. They hid in the cave.
3. The computer was very expensive.
4. The geese swam across the lake.
5. Mary gave a book to her sister.
6. Linda read a book about geology.

**HOMEWORK II** is due this Sunday

**HOMEWORK III** will be published during this weekend, you have one week to submit

**Syntax reading 2** by next Wednesday



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