

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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UNIT 1

QUESTIONS TAGS

A question tag is a short question that is put at the end of a statement.

Example: John is going to school, isn't he?

(*The underlined part is a question tag*)

PARTS OF A QUESTION TAG

1. Auxiliary verb (or be)
2. Subject pronoun

A.THE AUXILIARY VERB (OR BE)

The following are some of the rules on **the auxiliary verb**.

- a. If the statement is positive, the verb in the tag is **negative** and usually contracted.

Example

✓ He is reading a book, isn't he?

(note that the verb “**is**”, has become negative by taking “**not**” which is contacted)

- b. If the statement is negative, the verb in the tag is **positive**.

Example

✓ He isn't reading a book, is he?

(The verb ‘**is**’ is positive because it doesn’t have the word **not**).

- c. The auxiliary verb (or be) used in the tag matches the auxiliary verb (or be) in the statement.

Examples

- ✓ She can play chess, can't she?
- ✓ He is going home, isn't he?

NOTE: The underlined auxiliary verbs in the statements are the same as those used in the tags.

- d. If there is no auxiliary verb (or be) in the statement, we use **do (n't)** /**does(n't)** /**did(n't)** in the tag, depending on the tense and the subject of the sentence.

Examples

- ✓ You feel tired, don't you?
- ✓ He feels tired, doesn't he?
- ✓ They felt tired, didn't they?

B.THE SUBJECT PRONOUN

It's the pronoun matching the subject of the sentence that is used in the tag. The following are **some of the rules on subject pronoun:**

- a. If the subject of sentence is a pronoun, the same pronoun is used in the tag.

Example

- ✓ **He** is reading a book, isn't **he**?

- b. If the subject of the sentence is a noun (or a noun phrase), a pronoun which agrees with the noun (or noun phrase) is used in the tag. A noun phrase is a group of words containing a noun.

Examples

- ✓ **Prices** are coming down, aren't **they**? (**prices** is a plural noun therefore uses pronoun **they**)
- ✓ **The tall girl** in the garden is your sister, isn't she? (**The tall girl** is a noun phrase is represented by **she**)

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

1. Statements with words as ***neither, no(adjective), little, none, no one, nobody, nothing, hardly, hardly ever, rarely, seldom, scarcely, sparingly and barely*** are considered negatives and followed by positive tags.

Examples

- ✓ They invited nobody, did they?
- ✓ Nothing happened, did it?
- ✓ John hardly ever studies, does he?

2. If the subject of the sentence is ***anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, somebody, no one, none*** and ***neither***, the pronoun in the tag is ***they***.

Examples

- ✓ Nobody arrived, did they?
- ✓ Neither of them would complain, would they?

3. After imperatives (commands), whether positive or negative, the question tag is always, ***will you?***

Examples

- ✓ Open the window, will you?
- ✓ Don't open the window, will you?

4. If the statement starts with ***there is*** or ***there was***, the subject pronoun in the tag is also ***there***.

Examples

- ✓ There was a park, wasn't there?
- ✓ There isn't a problem, is there?

5. If the statement starts with ***I am***, the tag is ***aren't I?***

Example

- ✓ I am French, aren't I?

6. If the statement starts with **let's**, the tag is **shall we?**

Example

- ✓ let's play football, shall we?

7. If the verb – ‘**used to**’ is used in a sentence, the negative verb ‘**didn't**’ is used in a question tag

Example

- ✓ He used to come here, didn't he?

8. If the verb ‘**dare**’ and ‘**need**’ are used as main verbs in a sentence, the question tag is formed like this;

- ✓ He dares to oppose his father, doesn't he?
- ✓ She needs to come, doesn't she?

NOTE: **need** and **dare** are considered main verbs when followed by **to infinitive** but they are auxiliaries when they are **not** followed by **to infinitives**.

Examples

- ✓ You needn't come to the meeting, need you?
(need is followed by a verb without to)
- ✓ My father dare not call me names, dare he?
(dare is followed by a verb without to)

9. When the statement has a contraction, first determine the shortened auxiliary verb. Some of the contractions are as follows:

a. ‘**S**: this can stand for “**is**” or “**has**”

- It will be “**is**” if its followed by the verb in the present participle. (-ing form)

Example

- ✓ He's going home. = he is going home.

- It will be “**has**” if its followed by past participle.

Example

- ✓ He’s never seen a lion= He has never seen a lion

b. ‘d’: this can stand for **would** or **had**

- it will stand for “**would**” if its followed by **a bare infinitive (infinitive without to)** or **when it is followed by the perfect infinitive (have + past participle)**.

Examples

- ✓ I’d like some tea. = I would like some tea.
(the verb **like** is an infinitive or the original verb without to)

- ✓ I’d have gone if I had time. = I would have gone if I had time
(have plus past participle “**gone**” form the perfect infinitive)

- ‘**d** will also stand for “**would**” if used in statements that show preference.

Example

- ✓ I’d rather stay at home than go to a movie. = I would rather stay at home than go to a movie
- ‘**d** will stand for “**had**” if found in a statement that is in form of an advice or a warning.

Example

- ✓ You’d better be careful, if might be dangerous. = You had better be careful, it might be dangerous.
- “**d**” will also mean **had** when followed by a past participle. verbs ending in ed, d, nt or e

Example

- ✓ They’d gone home. (They had gone home): gone is the past participle.

UNIT 2

ORDER OF ADJECTIVES

When several adjectives are used together before a noun, it is important to put them in the recommended order. The following order is followed when multiple adjectives come before a noun.

D	determiner
O	opinion
S	size
A	age
S	shape
C	colour
O	origin
M	material
P	purpose

D O S A S C O M P

1. Determiner

Determiners are words that are used before a noun to show which particular example of the noun you are referring to, or are words that are used to introduce nouns.

Groups of determiners

- a. Articles: *A, An and The.*
- b. demonstrative determiners: *this, that, these, those*
- c. Possessive determiners: *my, your, his, our, them*
- d. distributive determiners: *each, neither, either, every*

Other determiners are *several, many, some* etc.

2. Opinion

Adjectives of opinion tell us what a person feels about something. They mostly describe the quality of something or someone. Examples are **good, bad, intelligent, beautiful, nice, lovely, strange, attractive, interesting, exciting, ugly, nice** etc.

3. Size

Adjectives of size describe how big or small something is. Examples are ***small, big, tall, medium, tiny, huge*** etc.

4. Age

These adjectives describe how old a person, place or thing is. Examples are ***old, young, new, ancient, twenty-year-old, modern, medieval, archaic*** etc.

5. Shape

These adjectives describe the shape of something. Examples are ***round, square, rectangular, oval*** etc.

6. Colour

These include the names of particular colours like ***green, red, blue, black*** etc. Properties of colour like ***transparent*** also fall under this group. Approximate colours like ***yellowish*** and ***reddish*** are all part of this group

7. Origin

These adjectives describe where something comes from. Examples are ***American, Malawian, Zambian.***

8. Material

These tell us what something is made of. Examples are ***leather, plastic, wooden*** etc.

9. Purpose

These tell us what something is made for.

Example

a fishing net

a sleeping bag

The underlined are adjectives of purpose. In most cases adjectives of purpose end with – ing

UNIT 3: TENSES

A tense is any form of the verb which shows the time at which an action happened. The following are the tenses in English:

PRESENT TENSE

Forms of the present tense

Simple present tense

It is called the present “simple” because its basic form consists of one word only—that is, it does not require an auxiliary verb to achieve its meaning. Most verbs in the present simple tense are in the same form as the infinitive verb. However, if it is in the third-person singular form, then it usually takes the ending -(e)s.

Uses

- i. expressing a constant, habitual or repeated action

Example

✓ Emily bakes wonderful cakes.

- ii. When expressing general truth.

Example

✓ Birds fly.

- iii. used for fixed timetables

Example

✓ The train leaves at 7am.

(This is a fixed timetable where the present tense is used to refer to indicate the future)

iv. used with stative verbs to express facts

examples of common stative verbs are *like, dislike, love, enjoy, hate, have, know, need, want believe* etc.

Example

- ✓ I believe in you.

Present continuous tense

It's created using the present participle (ing form) of the verb after present tense of an auxiliary verb "be". That's **Be (is, are, am) + ing**

uses

- i. used for action happening exactly now

Example

- ✓ I am going home.

- ii. used for events planned for the future.

It describes that which someone is planning or expecting to do. That is if we have already made a decision before speaking. The present continuous tense in this case is used with time markers **tomorrow, next year, later, tonight** etc. (not a specific point in the future)

Example

- ✓ She is running for president next year.

- iii. used for a repeated action, sometimes with annoyance.

Example

- ✓ She is always criticising other people!

iv. We can also use this tense for other kinds of temporary situations, even if the action isn't happening at this moment.

Example

✓ John is working in a bar until he finds a job in his field. (He might not be working now.)

v. We can use the present continuous for temporary or new habits. We often use this tense with expressions like '**these days**' or '**at the moment**'.

Examples

✓ He is eating a lot these days.

✓ She is swimming every morning. (she didn't use to do this)

✓ You are smoking too much.

Present perfect tense

Its formed by **has** or **have** plus **past participle**.

Uses

i. Shows an action that has just been completed but which still has current relevance.

Example

✓ The living room clock has stopped.

ii. expresses an idea that something began in the past and is still happening

Example

✓ We have kept this spare key under this rock ever since I left my key at school.

iii. The present perfect tells us about something that occurred at some indefinite period in the past.

Example

- she has been to Lilongwe. (no specific time is mentioned)

- iv.** it's used with an unfinished time word (*this month, this week, today, this year*). The period of time is still continuing.

Example

- ✓ I haven't seen her this **month**.

Present perfect continuous tense

formed by **has or have + been + ing**

uses

- i. to indicate an activity that is still considered incomplete

Example

- ✓ It has been raining since morning.

Note: this tense is mostly used with time words like **since, for, all morning, all day, all week** etc.

PAST SIMPLE TENSE

Forms of past tense

Simple past tense.

It is known as the past simple because it does not require any auxiliary verbs to complete its meaning; its structure is simply the past-tense form of the verb. The past simple tense only uses the auxiliary verb “**did**” when it is used in a question or becomes negative.

uses

- i. to indicates an action that started and ended in the past at a **particular time**.

Example

- ✓ I walked to school yesterday.

ii. used in polite requests

Example

✓ I wanted to talk to you.

Note: Adverbs denoting past are **ago, then, at that time, yesterday, last month, last year, in 2014 etc.**

Past continuous tense

Its structure is **subject + was/were + present participle. (-ing)**

uses

i. used when one event was interrupted by another action or event.

Example

✓ As they were sleeping, the phone rang.

ii. Used to show that a number of activities were taking place at the same time.

Example

✓ While Mr. Mtenje was sleeping, Mr. Banda was marking scripts.

Past perfect tense

its formed by **had + past participle (verbs ending in ed, d, nt, en,)**

uses

i. Shows two activities which took place in the past, one happened before the other.

Example

✓ He had already left when I arrived.

- ii. It indicates a continuation of an activity up to a certain time.

Example

- ✓ He had been in Lilongwe for twenty years by the time I joined him.

NB: If the word **before** or **after** has been used in the sentence, the perfect tense is often not necessary.

Example

Sam left before I got there. (*Before is already indicating which activity happened first*)

Past perfect tense mostly uses words like **when, after, once, until, as soon as** etc.

Past perfect continuous tense

Formed by **had + been+ ing**

uses

- i. Shows an activity that had not been completed before another activity took place.

Example

- ✓ We had been waiting for a long time when the bus finally came.

- ii. used to indicate causes of the past results

Example

- ✓ He had been feeling unwell so he lay down.

FUTURE TENSE

Forms of the future tense

Simple future tense

Its structure is **will + bare infinitive** (original form of the verb)

uses

- i. to predict something

Example

✓ I think it will rain today.

- ii. it's used in making promises.

Example

✓ I will definitely come to the party.

Future continuous tense

Its formed by **will or be going to + the auxiliary verb “be” + the present participle of the main verb.(ing)**

uses

- i. used to express an action that will be on going at a particular moment in the future.

Example

- ✓ At 4 pm tomorrow, I will be working.
- ✓ We are going to be buying our own house soon.
- ✓ I will be running 10 miles tomorrow.

Future perfect tense

Its formed by **will+ have+ past participle** (verbs ending in ed, d, n or nt)

uses

- i. expresses an activity which will have been completed by a certain time in future.

Example

- ✓ My sister will have finished form four by the time you return.

This tense is mostly used with “**by**”

Future perfect continuous tense

formed by **will + have + been = ing**

uses

It indicates an action which extends from the past through the present in the future.

Example

- ✓ By the time we arrive, He will have been waiting for many hours.

UNIT 4

MOOD

It's the way a verb is used to express a certain meaning by the speaker or writer.

TYPES MOODS

- a. indicative mood
- b. imperatives mood
- c. Subjunctive mood

THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

This refers to verbs that are used to describe hypothetical or non –real actions, events or situations.

Some specific uses of the subjunctive mood are:

1. it's used in expressing wishes

In this case the verb is moved one tense back

Example

Situation: It is Monday. I have to go to work.

(the verbs are in present tense)

wish: I wish it weren't Monday. I wish I didn't have to go to work. (the verbs have moved to past since it's a wish)

NOTE: You can also use **if only** instead of wish

Example

✓ If only I were rich, I would spend my whole life travelling.

Points to note

- i. **I wish/If only + past simple** are used to express a wish or regret about a current situation, by imagining its opposite.

Examples

- ✓ I wish (that) Mark knew about it.
- ✓ If only Mark knew about it! (Sadly, Mark doesn't know about it.)

- ii. **I wish/If only + would** are used for a future wish - something we would like to happen.

Examples

- ✓ If only Mark would come back! (I'm afraid he won't.)
- ✓ I wish you'd stop doing that. (You're annoying me.)

- iii. **I wish/If only + past perfect** are used for a past wish or regret.

Example

- ✓ I wish someone had told Mark about it.

- iv. **Were** is often used instead of **was** after **wish** and **If only**:

Example

- ✓ I wish Luke were here.

2. subjunctive mood is also used in impossible conditions

Example

- ✓ If I were you, I would tell the truth

3. Subjective mood (the past subjunctive) is also used in statements with words like suppose (that), I had rather(that), as if, as though and it's(high)(about) about time that. (These expressions use past tense form of the verbs)

Examples

- ✓ it's about(high) I went home.
- ✓ suppose the teacher caught us wasting our time.
- ✓ he ran as if his life depended on it.
- ✓ Don't treat me as if I were a child.
- ✓ He spoke as though he had been insulted.

UNIT 5

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

A conditional sentence is a statement in which one half expresses something which depends on the other half.

TYPES OF CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

ZERO CONDITIONAL

Talks about what is always true. It uses the **simple present tense** in both the main and subordinate clause

Example

- ✓ Water freezes if the temperature reaches zero degrees celcius

(NOTE: In this sentence, both the main and subordinate clause use simple present tense form of the verbs, and these are **reaches** and **freezes**).

FIRST CONDITIONAL

It uses ***if+ the simple present tense*** to create a condition, except that now we use the ***future simple tense*** (will + bare infinitive) to describe a possible result. The pattern is as follows:

i. Main clause (future simple tense) + Subordinate clause (simple present tense)

Example

Francis will learn French if he goes to Paris.

ii. Subordinate clause (simple present tense) + Main clause (simple future tense)

Example

If you study hard, you will learn more.

SECOND CONDITIONAL

It's used to talk about things that cannot happen or are unlikely to happen. **We use past simple tense after If clause**, followed by **would + bare infinitive** for the result of the condition. It has the following pattern:

- i. Main clause (would+ infinitive) + Subordinate clause (If+ simple past)

Example

Francis would learn English if he went to London.

- ii. Subordinate clause (if+ simple past tense) + Main clause (would + infinitive)

example

If Francis went to London, He would learn English.

THIRD CONDITIONAL

It is used to establish a hypothetical situation in the past, followed by a hypothetical outcome that did not really happen. It uses **the past perfect tense for the If conditional clause and would have + the past participle form of the verb for the hypothetical outcome**. The pattern is as follows:

- i. Main clause (would have + past participle) + Subordinate clause (if+ past perfect)

example

I would have gone home if I had known that you were not coming

- ii. Subordinate clause (if+ past perfect) + Main clause (would have+ past participle)

Example

If victor had married Hanna He would have been very happy.

Note: The main linking words for conditional clauses are if and unless, but words like as/so long as, when, as soon as, supposing and provided can also be used.

Examples

- ✓ I will call **as soon as** I have more information.
- ✓ **Unless** there is an emergency at work, I will be home on time.
- ✓ **When** I die, I will leave all my money to charity.

UNIT 6

PARTS OF SPEECH

Parts of speech are primary categories of words according to their functions in a sentence. English has seven main parts of speech. These are: *Noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition and conjunction.*

THE NOUN

Nouns are words that identify or name people, places, or things.

The following are the points that can help you to easily identify a noun.

A. A noun is preceded by determiners: Determiners are used to introduce a noun or noun phrase. They often behave similarly to **adjectives** in that they modify the noun they precede, but they differ in how they signal that a noun will follow.

Types of determiners

- i. Articles: *an, a, the* e.g. The book
- ii. Possessive determiners: *its, your, his, her* etc. e.g. your phone
- iii. Demonstrative determiners: *this, that, those, these*. e.g. These books
- iv. Interrogatives: which, what, whose etc.
- v. Quantifiers: *few, much, most, enough, little* etc. e.g. much experience
- vi. Distributives: *each, every, all* etc. e.g. each Desk
- vii. Numbers: *cardinals like zero one two, first, second* etc. Ordinals like first, second etc.
e.g. first person, one pen

B. A noun can function as a subject of the verb, direct or indirect object of the verb, object of a preposition and a complement of the verb.

Examples

- i. John is clever. [subject of the verb “is”]
- ii. Mary is a teacher. [complement of the verb “is”]
- iii. Mary killed a Lion. [direct object of the verb “killed”]

- iv. Vanessa went to town. [object of a preposition “to”]
- v. He gave Joshua a book. [indirect object of the verb “gave”]

C. To determine whether a word is a noun, try using it with the verb “**is**” or “**are**”. Notice that all the nouns listed in the examples below would make sense if used in this way:

- i. Amelia is young.
- ii. New York City is in New York.
- iii. bicycles are popular.
- iv. kiteboarding is fun.

D. A noun can be preceded by a descriptive word. [adjective].

Examples

- i. He is a good soldier. (good is an adjective)

E. A noun can be identified by asking the following questions.

- i. *a question introduced by what*

Example

- ✓ Peace is what we need in this country. [what do we need in this country? = peace]

- ii. *a question introduced by who*

Example

- The Leopard killed a man yesterday. [who did the Leopard kill? = a man]

GERUND [PART OF VERBAL NOUN]

It's a noun formed from the verb and ends in –ing. Just like other nouns, it can function as a subject of the sentence, object of the verb, complement of the verb and object of the preposition. A gerund can also answer the question “**what**”

Examples

- swimming is an excellent form of exercise. [Subject of the verb “is”]
- I am going to improve my health by running six miles per day. [object of a preposition “by”]
- I enjoy hiking in the mountains. [object of the verb “enjoy”]
- the best thing in life is spending time with loved ones. [complement of the verb “is”]

PRONOUN

It's a word that is used as a substitute for a noun.

CATEGORIES OF PRONOUNS

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns, are used to represent people in a sentence. In the examples bellows, the words **him, we and he** are examples of personal pronouns.

- i. As soon as John comes home, I am going to give him back his hat.
- ii. My team lost again. We really stink this year!
- iii. He spoke to the boss yesterday and already got her approval.

Reflexive pronouns

They are formed by adding “-self” (singular) or “-selves” (plural) to the end of my, your, our, him, her, it or them (as well as the indefinite pronoun one).

Examples

- i. I saw myself in the mirror.
- ii. She imagined herself on a tropical beach.

Intensive Pronouns

They are similar to reflexive pronouns in form, but, instead of functioning as the object of a verb, they serve to emphasize the subject’s role in the verb’s action.

Examples

- i. I checked over these documents myself.
- ii. The president himself will be in attendance.

Indefinite Pronouns

We use indefinite pronouns in place of a noun that is not being specified in the sentence.

Example

- i. Is everyone here?"
- ii. Many are coming to the show tonight.

Demonstrative Pronouns

They are used to indicate specific people or things and indicate whether they are singular or plural, or near or not near to the speaker. The most common are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. For example:

Examples

- i. This isn't mine. (singular, nearby)
- ii. Give me that. (singular, not near)

NOTE: Demonstrative pronouns will function as demonstrative determiners or adjectives when placed before a noun.

Examples

- ✓ She wants to photograph this. (demonstrative pronoun)
- ✓ She wants to photograph this painting. (demonstrative adjective)

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions, functioning either as the subject or object of such sentences. There are five primary interrogative pronouns: **who, whom, whose, which, and what.** **However, some interrogative pronouns can be used as adjectives when placed before a noun.**

Examples

- i. Who is coming to the party tonight? (pronoun)
- ii. whose computer is this? (adjective)

Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are used to connect relative clauses (also known as adjective clauses) to the main clause in a sentence. Examples are **Who, whom, which, and whose.**

Examples

- ✓ I helped the old man who lives down the road with his groceries.
- ✓ The computer, which belonged to my brother, is very slow

Reciprocal pronouns

We use reciprocal pronouns when two or more people both act as the subject of a verb, and both (or all) individually and equally receive the verb's action. They can be the object of either the verb itself or a preposition used to complete the verb's meaning. **There are two reciprocal pronouns—each other (traditionally used for two people) and one another (traditionally used for more than two people).** For example:

- ✓ Jake and I call each other every day.
- ✓ My neighbors and I spent a lot of time at each other's houses when we were kids.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRONOUNS

A. Just like nouns, pronouns can function as subject of the verb, object of the verb, [direct and indirect], object of a preposition and complement of the verb.

Examples

- i. He is very sick. [subject of the verb “is”]
- ii. I saw myself in the mirror. [direct object of the verb “saw”]
- iii. He gave me a book. [indirect object “gave”]
- iv. I brought the book for her. [object of the preposition “for”]

B. Some pronouns act as adjective if it comes before a noun.

Examples

- i. This is one of my favourites. [pronoun]
- ii. This book is one of my favouries. [adjective]

VERB

A verb is a word that expresses an action or a condition. It is an important part of every sentence hence no sentence is complete without one.

TYPES OF VERBS

A. Action verbs

They show what someone or something does or did. It indicates the action of a person or thing.

Example

- ✓ She wrote a poem.

B. Linking verbs

They join nouns or pronouns with words that identify or describe them. They connect a noun or a pronoun to a word that identifies or describes the noun or pronoun. **Common linking verbs: all forms of be: are, am, is, was, were**, etc.

Example

- ✓ Queen is the historian
- ✓ Elliot was ready
- ✓ I am tired

Other Linking verbs: *appear, become, feel, grow, look, remain, seem, smell, sound, stay, taste*
etc.

Example

- ✓ I feel terrible today.
- ✓ You sound tired.
- ✓ You look fabulous today.
- ✓ The boy remained calm.

Distinguishing between action verbs and linking verbs

Some verbs can be used as either linking or action verbs. To taste whether it is a linking or action verb, replace the verb with *is, am or are*. If the sentence still makes sense the verb is a linking one.

Examples

Linking: He looked very happy. [linking]

Action: He looked quickly to the right. [action]

C. Auxiliary verbs/helping verbs

They come before the main verb or action verbs, and expresses the meaning of the main verb. It should be noted that a main verb and one or more helping verbs form a verb phrase.

Examples of sentences with auxiliary verbs.

- ✓ He was leading an army. [*was* is an auxiliary]
- ✓ He had been leading an army. [*had* and *been* are auxiliaries]

Common auxiliary verbs

1. Forms of be: **am, is, are, was, were, is, being, been** etc.
2. Forms of have: **have, has, had** etc.
3. Forms of do: **do, does, did** etc.
4. Modal verbs: **can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, ought, need, dare** etc.

POSITION A VERB IN A SENTENCE

A. Verbs usually go immediately after subjects.

Example

- ✓ John broke the window. [**John** is the subject, **broke** is the verb]

B. In questions, the auxiliary verbs come before the subject where as the main verb goes after the subject.

Example

- ✓ Has John arrived? [Has is an auxiliary verb]

C. The only words that can go between the subject and the verb are adverbs. Examples are *usually, often, never, seldom, always and occasionally*.

Example

- ✓ She often visits her friends in Lilongwe

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that are used almost exclusively to modify nouns, as well as any phrase or part of speech functioning as a noun.

Examples

- ✓ John wears red glasses. (Red modifies the noun glasses.)
- ✓ A loud group of students passed by. (Loud modifies the noun phrase group of students.)
- ✓ Excellent writing is required for this job." (Excellent modifies the gerund writing.)

Questions asked by adjectives

- what kind? e.g. **expensive** books, **beautiful** clothes
- which one? e.g. **this** man, **that** man
- How many? e.g. how much? **few** cars, **little** sugar, **many** people

Characteristics of Adjectives.

1. They can come before or after a noun or a pronoun: **Attributive and predicative adjectives.**
 - a. Attributive adjectives. Attributive adjectives are adjectives that describe a characteristic (or attribute) of the noun that they qualify. They usually come before noun.

Example

- ✓ This is a beautiful dress.

- b. Predicative adjectives. Predicative adjectives, on the other hand, always appear after the noun they qualify, connected to them by a linking verb.

Example

- ✓ The dog was black. [this sentence, black is a predicative adjective. It follows dog, the noun that it modifies, and is connected to it by the linking verb was.]
- ✓ My mother looks tired.

2. Most adjectives can come after or modified by degree adverbs e.g. **very**, **quite**, **rather**, **too**, **fairly** etc.

Example

- ✓ I am on quite good terms with him. [**good** is an adjective, **quite** is an adverb]

3. Most adjective can have comparative and superlative forms.

Examples

- ✓ We have a bigger problem than inflation.
- ✓ This is the most beautiful house in Lilongwe.
- ✓ Our biggest problem is poverty.

4. Most adjectives are derived from nouns and can be recognised by their endings.

For example: -ous [glory= glorious], - ic [Hero – heroic], - ish, - able.

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE ON ATTRIBUTIVE AND PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVES

1. While adjectives usually modify nouns, they can also modify pronouns. This mostly occurs when adjectives are predicative.

Examples

- ✓ She is very nice.
- ✓ A few were late.

However, **Attributive adjectives** can also modify indefinite pronouns, as in:

- ✓ A happy few were able to attend the show.
- ✓ They were the lucky ones.

2. Proper nouns can also be used as proper adjectives to modify nouns.

Examples

- ✓ He writes in a Shakespearean style
- ✓ I love Italian food.

3. Two words can act as a compound adjective to modify a noun. Compound adjective are made up of multiple words, and, in various combinations, they can be composed of adjectives, nouns, quantifiers, participles, and adverbs. They always appear before the noun they modify, and they are usually joined together by a hyphen (or hyphens) to clarify that the words are working as a single modifying unit.

Examples

- ✓ She had bright, blue-green eyes.
- ✓ His orange-yellow skin looked very unhealthy.
- ✓ Look in the top-right corner of the screen.

4. Attributive adjectives come after the noun in “**terms**” borrowed from other languages.

Examples

- ✓ **In Legal and financial terms:** body politic, court-martial, pound sterling, accounts payable,
- ✓ **Important positions of individuals:** secretary-general, attorney general, princess royal

5. Attributive adjectives almost always appear after the modified word when that modified word is an indefinite pronoun like, *someone*, *anyone*, *nobody*, *anyone*, etc.

Examples

- ✓ I wish I could find somebody perfect for the job.
- ✓ We can give these jeans to anybody tall.
- ✓ Is anyone talented at math here?

6. When a superlative adjective is used attributively before a noun, we can use other attributive adjectives after a noun position for emphasis.

- Let's find the best hotel possible.
- She's the worst singer present.

[**Best** and **worst** are superlative adjectives used before nouns while **possible** and **present** are also adjectives being used for emphasis]

In addition, the attributive adjective can sometimes come before the noun when paired with a superlative, **as in:**

- ✓ We climbed the highest nearby mountain. [highest is a superlative adjective placed before another attributive adjective “nearby”]

7. Often, attributive adjectives ending in “-able/-ible” are placed after the word they modify.

Example

- ✓ It's the only time available.
- ✓ It's the only option imaginable.

8. Adjectives can also come after expressions of measurement.

Example

- ✓ He's only one year old.
- ✓ She's five feet tall.
- ✓ The river is five miles long.

9. Adjectives can also act as objects of fictive verbs. Factitive verbs are used to describe an action that results in a new condition or state of a person or thing.

Examples

- ✓ He makes her happy.
- ✓ I find horror films terrifying.

10. Predicative adjectives can also describe the direct object of non-linking verbs. In this case, such adjectives function as object complements.

Examples

- ✓ They painted the door red.
- ✓ All that training made me stronger.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

- An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun while an adverb modifies a verb, adjective and another adverb.
- Adjectives and adverbs also answer different questions. Adjective answer questions what kind? which one? how many? and how much? while an adverb answers questions about where when how in what way etc.

Examples

- ✓ The pack stopped short outside the forest. [short is an adverb because it modifies stopped and it tells us in what way the pack stopped]
- ✓ The pack made a short stop outside the forest. [short is an adjective because it tells us the kind of stop]

Note: Both Adjectives and adverbs have superlative forms but the two differ in terms of the words they modify.

Examples

- ✓ Jane is taller than sally. [adjective]
- ✓ Jane's uniform is more colourful than sally's. [adjective]
- ✓ Jane is cheering more quietly than sally. [Adverb]
- ✓ Sally jumped higher than Jane. [Adverb]

ADVERBS

Are words that modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

Examples

- ✓ I looked inside. [modifying a verb “looked”]
- ✓ The game was very exciting. [modifying an adjective “exciting”]
- ✓ They played extremely well. [modifying an adverb “extremely”]

Position of adverbs in a sentence

1. It can come before the subject (the front position). Most adverbs ending in -ly are used in this position.

Example

Carefully John drove the car past the broken bridge.

2. Mid position:

- a. An adverb can come before the main verb if no auxiliary verb is present

Examples

she always comes late to school.

- b. It can come after the auxiliary verb if a sentence has one.

Example

I will always support you.

3. End position: It will come after the verb.

Example

The meeting went well.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS ON ADVERBS

- When an adverb modifies an adjective, it regularly precedes the adjective. Most of these verbs are degree adverbs: **undoubtedly, extremely, truly, very, quite, pretty, somewhat, fairly** etc.

Example

- ✓ Lewis is extremely talented musician. [Extremely is an adverb, Talented is an adjective]

- Enough as an adverb is placed after an adjective.

Example

- ✓ He is not strong enough.

Note: Enough can also be used as a pronoun or an adjective.

Examples

- ✓ I have had enough food, thanks! [adjective]
- ✓ you've studied enough. [pronoun]

TYPES OF ADVERBS AND THEIR POSITIONS

Adverb of time

Adverbs of time tell us at what time (when) or for how long (duration) something happens or is the case. Adverbs of time are most often placed at the end of a sentence. **For example:**

- ✓ I'm going to the movies tomorrow. (When are you going? Tomorrow.)

However, we can sometimes place adverbs of time at the beginning of the sentence to put an extra emphasis on the time or duration being described. They are usually offset by a comma if appearing at the beginning of the sentence, although this is not always necessary.

For example:

- ✓ Now, I have to start the whole project again from scratch. (Emphasizes now in a sequence of events.)

Adverbs of Place

They tell us about an aspect of location associated with the action of a verb, specifying the direction, distance, movement, or position involved in the action. Adverbs of place generally appear immediately after the main verb in a sentence if it is intransitive, or else after the verb's object if it is transitive.

Example

- ✓ We were walking north. (intransitive—adverb follows the verb)
- ✓ He kicked the ball into the field. (transitive—adverb follows the object)

Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree are used to indicate the intensity, degree, or extent of the verb, adjective, or adverb they are modifying. They always appear before the adjective, verb, or other adverb they describe (except for the adverb enough).

Example

- ✓ She is very sorry for her bad behavior.

Adverb of frequency

Adverbs of frequency (sometimes called frequency adverbs) tell us how often something happens or is the case; they can describe verbs and adjectives, but they do not modify other adverbs. Adverbs of definite frequency modify verbs and generally appear at the beginning or end of the sentence. (The “-ly” adverbs come only at the end, though.) If appearing at the beginning of a sentence, they are usually offset by a comma.

Examples

- ✓ I run eight miles daily.
- ✓ Every year, our office holds a big raffle for charity.”

Adverb of purpose

Adverbs of purpose (sometimes called adverbs of reason) tell us why something happens or is the case. They can modify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. often use conjunctive adverbs to indicate a relationship of reason or purpose between two independent clauses. Some common conjunctive adverbs of purpose are thus, therefore, consequently, hence, and as a result etc.

Example

- ✓ Jen hadn't enjoyed the play; as a result, she didn't recommend it.

Adverb of manner

Adverbs of manner are used to tell us how something happens or is done. They can modify verbs, adjectives, or clauses of a sentence. Adverbs of manner are very often formed from adjectives by simply adding “-ly.”

Examples

- ✓ She sings beautifully. (**Beautifully** is an adverb of manner. It describes the verb “sing.” How does she sing? She sings beautifully.)

CONJUNCTIONS

These connect (connect) words or groups of words that are similar in forms.

For Example:

- ✓ phrase with phrase
- ✓ sentence with sentence
- ✓ noun with noun
- ✓ adjective with adjective

TYPES OF CONJUNCTIONS

A. Coordinating Conjunctions

The most common conjunctions are the coordinating conjunctions: **and, but, or, yet, for, so** and **nor**. We use coordinating conjunctions between

a. Individual words. For example:

- ✓ I like to run and swim.”

b. Phrases. For example

- ✓ The president has been praised for both his willingness to negotiate and his strength in defending his principles.”

c. Independent clauses. For example

- ✓ It was raining, so I took an umbrella.

USES OF COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

For

For is used to give a reason for something.

For example:

- ✓ I believe you, for you have never lied to me before.
- ✓ He didn't come to the party, for he felt sick.

And

And is used to add one element to another. It can join words, phrases, and entire independent clauses.

For example:

- ✓ James and Jack are coming to the party.
- ✓ He ran, swam, and played with the other children.

Nor

Nor is one of the most limited coordinating conjunctions. It's used to present an additional negative idea when a negative idea has already been stated.

For example:

- ✓ He doesn't like football, nor does he enjoy hockey.

But

But is used to present a contrast with previous information.

For example:

- ✓ I want to go shopping but I can't.

Or

Or is used to present alternative choices or options.

For example:

- ✓ We can go to the movies tonight, or we can just hang out at home.

Yet

Yet, like but, is used to present contrast. However, there is a subtle implication when we use yet that the information is surprising in light of what we already know.

For example:

- ✓ The movie was depressing yet uplifting at the same time.

So

So is generally only used to join two independent clauses, where the second clause is a result of the first.

For example:

- ✓ He was exhausted, so he went to bed early.

B. Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions connect a subordinate clause to an independent clause. Common examples of subordinating conjunctions are; *if, before, since, even though, as long as, as soon as, though, once provided, that, while, whenever* etc.

Example:

- ✓ Although it was raining, I didn't take an umbrella.
- ✓ Even though she didn't like pepperoni, she still ate the pizza.

C. Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of conjunctions that work together to indicate the relationship between two elements in a sentence. Some of the most common correlative conjunctions are:

- both ... and
- either ... or
- just as ... so
- neither ... nor
- not ... but
- not only ... but also
- whether ... or

FUNCTIONS OF CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Both ... and

We use **both ... and** when we want to put emphasis on two elements that are true in a sentence. We could also use the coordinating conjunction **and**, but it doesn't achieve the same emphatic effect.

Example

- ✓ This house is both large and cozy.

Either ... or

We use **either ... or** to present two options. Again, it emphasizes the fact that the choice is limited to only the two given options.

Example

- ✓ I want to paint the house either white or green.

Neither ... nor

We use **neither ... nor** to negate two options.

Example

- ✓ Neither James nor Mike enjoys playing basketball.

Not ... but

We use **not ... but** to express a contradiction, negating the first option while emphasizing the second.

Example

- ✓ He's not happy but thrilled!

Not only ... but Also

We use **not only ... but also** to emphasize an additional element in the sentence, especially when its occurrence seems contradictory or surprising in light of what we already know.

Example

- ✓ This house is not only large but also cozy." (The speaker believes that large houses are not usually cozy.)

Just as ... So

We use **just as ... so** to indicate that the two elements being joined are similar.

Example

- ✓ Just as I love films, so does my brother love sports.

whether ... or

We use **whether ... or** to express doubt between two possible options. Whether has the same meaning as **if** in this regard.

Example

- ✓ I don't know whether the white paint or the green paint is better

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are used to express the relationship of a noun or pronoun (or another grammatical element functioning as a noun) to the rest of the sentence. They are words that connect a noun, a noun phrases or a pronoun to other words in a sentence especially a verb another noun or an adjective.

Frequently used prepositions are **about, across, after, against, along, among, around at, before, behind, beneath, below, besides, beside, between, beyond, but**, etc.

POINTS TO NOTE

1. The word **to** is a very common preposition, used to express time, direction, and connection. **To** is also used, however, as a particle to introduce the infinitive form of verbs—e.g., to run, to play, to think, to be, etc.

For example:

- ✓ I often ride my bicycle **to** work.” (preposition of direction)
- ✓ I often ride my bicycle **to stay** healthy.” (infinitive)

Because they share the same introductory word, it's easy to mistake one for the other. Just remember that infinitives always use the word to with the base or bare form of a verb, while the preposition to is always followed by a noun, pronoun, or a grammatical element functioning as a noun.

2. Prepositions may come at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence followed by a noun or a pronoun or a noun modifier.

Example

- ✓ After the final play, they congratulated the manager.
- ✓ He ran quickly after the ball.

Stranded preposition

It's a preposition that occurs somewhere rather than being close to the object. These prepositions can be found

A. at the end of the sentence.

Example

- ✓ who do you work for? [question]

B. before a relative clause.

For example

- ✓ This is the job for which one needs special training.

NOTE: Some words used as preposition can also be used adverbs. When used as preposition, these words come before a noun or pronoun or noun modifier. However, when they are used as adverbs, these words will stand alone without an object

Example

- ✓ we stood before him. (preposition)
- ✓ I have seen him before. (adverb)

CATEGORIES OF PREPOSITIONS

Most prepositions have multiple usages and meanings. Generally speaking, prepositions can be divided into eight categories: *time, place, direction or movement, agency, instrument or device, reason or purpose, connection, and origin*. The following table highlights the most common prepositions and their categories:

Prepositions of place

A preposition of place describes where something is located in reference to something else. where something occurred or will occur. The most common prepositions of place are also **at, in, and on**.

Example

- ✓ Ben is planning on staying the night at a hotel.

Prepositions of time

A preposition of time describes when or for how long something occurred or will occur. The three most common prepositions of time are **at, in, and on**

Example

- ✓ Let's meet at noon.

Preposition of direction or movement

It describes how, where, or in what way something moves. Some prepositions are **to, from, over, under, along, around, across, though, into, out of, toward(s), away from, onto, off, up, down** etc.

Example

- ✓ He shot his arrow above the target.

Prepositions of agency

A preposition of agency describes a person or a thing that has caused or is causing something to occur. Sentences containing prepositions of agency are usually written in the passive voice and employ the prepositions **by** (for people) and **with** (for things).

Example

- ✓ The house was built by the three siblings. (passive)

Prepositions of instrument or device

A preposition of instrument or device is used when describing certain technologies, machines, or devices. These prepositions are **by**, **with**, and **on**. Typically, by refers to methods of transportation, whereas with and on describe the use of machines and other devices.

Example

- ✓ Aunt Patricia returned home by ferry.
- ✓ She opened the locked door with an old key.

Prepositions of reason or purpose

A preposition of reason or purpose describes why something has occurred or will occur. Common prepositions of reason or purpose include **for**, **though**, **because of**, **on account of** etc.

Example

- ✓ Everything I did was for you.

Prepositions of connection

A preposition of connection describes possession, relationships, or accompaniment. **of** is used for possession, **to** for relationships between people or things, and with **for** accompaniment.

Example

- ✓ The Statue of Liberty is located in New York Harbor.

Preposition of Origin

When we describe a person or thing's origin (such as nationality, hometown/state, ethnicity, the place where something was built or designed, etc.), we typically use the preposition **from** (and, to a lesser degree, **of**).

Example

- ✓ I met the most delightful couple from Italy.

UNIT 7

CLAUSES AND PHRASES

Clauses are groups of words that contain both a subject and a predicate. **The subject** of a clause or sentence is the noun (a person, place, or thing) that performs, controls, or is responsible for the action of a verb. **The predicate** is, essentially, everything in the sentence that follows the subject.

Example

Computers can process numbers very quickly [**computers** is the subject, **can process numbers very quickly**, is the **predicate**]

Phrases are groups of two or more words that work together to perform a single grammatical function in a sentence. Unlike clauses, phrases do not contain both a subject and a predicate (although they sometimes function as one or the other). Or A phrase is any group of two or more words that can occupy the same slot in a sentence as a single word.

Example

✓ My dad swims once a week. [The underlined part is a phrase]

Other Examples

Bruce laughed. (noun as subject)

My grandfather laughed. (noun phrase as subject)

The old man laughed. (noun phrase as subject)

CLAUSES

There are two types of clauses

- dependent clause
- independent clause

Independent clause (also known as a main clause) is a clause that forms a complete, independent thought. It does not require anything else to be considered complete, and so it can stand alone as a sentence.

Example

They like to stay in fancy hotels.

(This sentence makes sense on its own hence it is a clause)

Dependent clause (also called a subordinate clause) is a clause that relies on the information from an independent clause to form a complete, logical thought. As such, it cannot stand on its own to form a sentence. Dependent clauses are usually marked by dependent words, such as subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, or relative adverbs, which link them to independent clauses in a sentence.

Example

Whenever I travel, I like to stay in fancy hotels.

[*Whenever I travel doesn't make sense on its own]*

CATEGORIES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Noun clause
- adjective clause
- adverb clause

A. Noun clause

A noun clause is a type of dependent clause that is able to function grammatically like a noun in a sentence. As such, it serves to name a person, place, or thing. Because of this, noun clauses can perform all the roles that a normal noun would fill in a sentence: they can act as

the subject, a direct or indirect object, a predicate noun, an adjective complement, or the object of a preposition. Noun clauses most commonly begin with the words ***that, how, if, and the “wh-” words —what, whatever, where, wherever, when, whenever, why, which, whichever, who, whom, whoever, whomever, whether, and whatever***

FUNCTION OF NOUN CLAUSE

a. A subject of the verb

It's when a noun clause is at the beginning of the sentence.

Examples

✓ Wherever we decide to go is fine with me.

(subject of the verb **is**.)

✓ Which option is best remains to be seen.

(subject of the verb **remains**.)

✓ Whoever wants to go should sign up with their supervisor.

(subject of the phrasal verb **sign up**.)

b. As object of the verb.

Noun clause comes after the verb main verbs or action verbs.

Examples

✓ I will enjoy whatever we decide to do.

(object of the verb **enjoy**.)

✓ I'll send whoever is responsible a strongly worded letter.

(object of the verb **send**.)

c. Noun clause as a complement of the verb

It comes after a linking verb.

Example

- ✓ Japan is where I want to go most. (complement of **is**)
- ✓ The thing I wish for most is that people would all just get along. (Complement of the verb **is**.)

d. Object of a preposition

It comes after a preposition.

Example

- ✓ We are still amazed by what we know about animals.
(Object of the preposition **by**)
- ✓ They relied on what we had.
(object of the preposition **on**)

e. Noun clause in apposition to another noun

It is when a noun clause is preceded by a noun.

Example

The news that you stole the phone is true.
(noun in apposition to noun **news**)

Note: The most common feature of a noun clause is that it is separated by commas. Others are introduced by that, and in this case a comma is not needed.

f. noun clause as adjective complements

It comes after a predicative adjective.

Examples

- ✓ We were curious why they decided to leave. (*Why they decided to leave* is the complement of the adjective **curious**.)
- ✓ I'm thrilled that you are coming to visit! (*That you are coming to visit* is the complement of the adjective **thrilled**.)

g. As direct object of a gerund

It comes after a gerund.

Examples

Biologists report finding what was never seen before.

(object of **finding**)

B. ADJECTIVE CLAUSE

It is a subordinate clause that qualifies a noun or pronoun. It is also called a relative clause because it is introduced by either relative pronoun [**who, whom, which whose etc.**] or relative adverbs [**where, when or why**].

Examples

- ✓ I saw the person who delivers my mail in town yesterday
(qualifies **person**)
- ✓ The woman down the street, whose children are the same age as ours, invited us over for dinner next week.
(qualifies **the woman**)

Difference between a noun clause (noun in apposition to noun) and an adjective clause.

Adjective clauses use “**that**” which is a relative pronoun” and it can be replaced with “**which**”.

On the other hand, a noun clause uses “**that**” which is a conjunction and cannot be replaced with “**which**”

Examples

- ✓ I have a feeling that something is wrong. [Noun clause; words that follow “that” make sense on their own hence “**that**” is conjunction introducing a noun clause]
- ✓ The feeling that I had for her amounted to an obsession. [you can replace “**that**” with “**which**” and the sentence will still make sense]

C. ADVERB CLAUSE.

An adverbial clause, or adverb clause, is a group of words behaving as an adverb. Like all clauses, it always contains a subject and a predicate, and it is used, like a regular adverb, to modify adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

Example

- I went to the park today. (Today is an adverb that modifies the verb **went**.)
- went to the park before my parents woke up. (Before my parents woke up is an adverbial clause that also modifies the verb **went**.)

TYPES OF ADVERB CLAUSES

Adverb clause of time

An adverbial clause of time describes when or for how long something has occurred or will occur. Possible subordinating conjunctions include **when**, **whenever**, **while**, **before**, **after**, **since**, **until**, and **once**.

Example

- ✓ I will arrive when dinner is ready. (modifies the verb **will arrive**)
- ✓ I have loved you since the day I met you. (modifies **loved**)

Adverb clause of place

An adverbial clause of place describes where something has occurred or will occur. The most common subordinating conjunctions are **where, wherever, everywhere** etc.

Example

- ✓ My grandfather wants to go where his children live. (Modifies **go**)

Adverb clauses of reason or purpose

An adverbial clause of reason or purpose describes why something has occurred or will occur. Common subordinating conjunctions are **because, as, since, and so**. **Example**

- ✓ I admire you because you are an inspiration to many people.
(modifies **admire**)
- ✓ As it is raining, we probably shouldn't go to the park today.
(modifies **shouldn't go**)
- ✓ He went to his room so he could be alone.
(modifies **went**)

Adverb clauses of condition

describe the conditions necessary for specific actions or events to happen. This type of clause usually employs the subordinating conjunctions **if, unless, whether or not, in the event, and provided**.

Example

- ✓ Kate can't attend the school dance unless her parents allow it.
(Modifies **can't attend**)

Adverb clauses of contrast

An adverbial clause of contrast describes something that differs from or contrasts with an idea expressed in the main clause. Commonly used subordinating conjunctions include though, although, even though, whereas, and even if.

For Example

- ✓ I do this job even though I hate it.
(modifying do)

- ✓ Matt will go to college, even if it means taking out student loans.
(modifying will go)

Adverb clause of result

They indicate the result or consequence and is introduced by words like **so that, that** etc.

Example

She was tired that she slept. (modifies **tired**)

Adverbial clauses of comparison or manner

An adverbial clause of comparison or manner describes how or in what manner something occurred or will occur, to what degree something occurred or will occur, or how something compares to something else. Some of the most often used subordinating conjunctions are **like, as, as ... as, as if, the way, than** etc. For Example

- ✓ He sings like he wants to be a rock star.
(modifies **sings**)

- ✓ She looked excited, as if she could jump up and dance at any moment.
(modifies **excited**)

Adverb clause of concession

This clause shows the presence of some obstacles but these obstacles do not hinder the action expressed in the main clause its introduced by subordinating conjunctions like though although even though.

Examples

I enjoyed the day though it was clod.

(modifies **enjoyed**)

Although he was intelligent he failed all subjects.

(modifies **failed**)

PHRASES

There are four types of phrases that will be discussed:

- Preposition phrase
- infinitive phrase
- gerund phrase
- participial phrase

1. PREPOSITION PHRASE

Prepositional phrase is a group of words that begins with a preposition and end with its object.

They most commonly function **as adverbs**, but they can also **be adjective**.

a. As adverb phrase

It is when a prepositional phrase is used as an adverb.

Example

✓ We were playing football at the park.

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase **at the park** is an adverbial phrase, because it is modifying the verb **playing**.

- ✓ All of the employees were filled with excitement because they learned that they might get a raise.

(*The prepositional phrase **with excitement** modifies the adjective **filled** in this sentence.*)

b. As Adjectival prepositional phrase

It is when the prepositional phrases modify the nouns.

- ✓ The cat on the window sill was orange and had some white spots.
(*on the window* is qualifying **cat**)
- ✓ All the people on the boardwalk were wearing sunglasses.
(qualifying **people**)

2. INFINITIVE PHRASES

Infinitive phrases are groups of words that begin with a verb in the infinitive form (the base form of the verb preceded by the particle to). *Infinitive phrases can act as adverbial phrases if they modify a verb, adverb, or adjective. However, infinitives can also act as noun phrases and adjectival phrases.*

a. Infinitives used as nouns

when an infinitive is used as a noun it will perform the functions of the noun.

Example

- ✓ To get a job is my goal. [noun phrase subject of the verb is]
- ✓ I like to go on a walk a couple times a week. [Noun phrase object of the verb like,]
- ✓ Richard's great ambition is to climb Sapitwa. [Noun phrase complement of the verb is]

b. Infinitive used as an adjective phrase

It's when an infinitive is used to describe a noun.

Examples

- ✓ One of the best things to do if you get lost is to call for help. (qualifying things)
- ✓ He had plenty of money to spend foolishly (qualifying money)

c. Infinitive used as an adverb

It's when an infinitive phrase does the work of an adverb

Example

- ✓ The man brought his fishing gear to catch fish in the river.
(In this sentence, the infinitive phrase *to catch fish in the river* modifies the verb *brought*, so it is functioning adverbially).
- ✓ Patricia went to the mountains to go for a hike.
(Here, the infinitive phrase *to go for a hike* modifies the verb *went*, so it is also an adverbial phrase).

3. GERUND PHRASE

It consists of a gerund plus its modifiers. It acts as a noun, therefore does all the work performed by noun. The following examples illustrate the function of gerunds:

- ✓ Using his skills of writing made him famous [subject of the verb made]
- ✓ My goal is becoming a prolific writer. [complement of the verb is]
- ✓ The coach demonstrates scoring and defending goals.
[direct object of the verb demonstrates]
- ✓ I wanted to give using the bow and arrow a chance. [Indirect object of the verb give]
- ✓ He will focus on improving his writing skills. [object of a preposition]

4. PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

It consists of a participle (verbs ending in **-ing, d, ed, nt**, etc.) plus its modifiers and complements.

- ✓ Singing in the shower, John was oblivious to the doorbell ringing.
(I was singing) (qualifying John)

- ✓ James, hiding under the bed, was completely silent.
(James was hiding.) (qualifying James)

- ✓ My car, destroyed in the accident, was taken away by the mechanics.
(qualifying car)

- ✓ The boy walking along the road is a thief.

Note: When a participle phrase occurs in the initial position, it is usually separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma. For example:

- ✓ Running to the car, the boy welcomed his father home after three months away.

- ✓ Singing in the shower, John was oblivious to the doorbell ringing.

If the participle phrase occurs in the final position immediately after the noun that it modifies, it doesn't need a comma. For example:

- ✓ We looked for hours and finally found James hiding under the bed.

UNIT 6

COMPOSITION

LETTER WRITING

Formal/Business letter

It is a letter written to an organization or a person in his or her official position. A formal letter requires the following:

- Two addresses
- date
- salutation
- heading/title
- introduction
- body
- conclusion
- ending

THE LAY OUT OF A FORMAL LETTER

1. TWO ADDRESSES

- ✓ These are the addresses of the sender and the recipient of the letter.
- ✓ These addresses must be written in block style.

A. The sender's address

- This is written at the top right corner of the page.
- The name of the sender must not be included.
- A good sender's address is based on the background information part of the question.

Example

imagine you are a member of parliament...

Based on that part, the address can be like this:

Chibavi Constituency

Post Office Box 20

Mzuzu.

- Do not write everything in the upper case, instead just capitalise the first letters in the address.
- Everything must be written in full, that is do not abbreviate eg. P.O Box.
- The address may or may not be punctuated but always put a full stop at the end of origin.

Note: A full postal address must have the following:

- ✓ the actual place where the sender is or where the sender is at the time he or she is writing the letter.
- ✓ The box number
- ✓ The district of origin

B. The date

- ✓ It is written below the sender's address after skipping a line.
- ✓ It must begin with the day, month, and year.
- ✓ The month and year must be written in full.
- ✓ Always put a comma after the month.
- ✓ The first letter of the month must begin with a capital letter.
- ✓ The date ends with a full stop.
- ✓ It can be written without "th" "nd" or "rd". However, if these are used, do not put them on top of the number e.g 20th. Instead it should be 20th.

C. The recipient's address

- ✓ It's based on the instruction part of the question, and as such you may be provided with either the organization or position of the person to whom you are writing or both.

Example

- write a letter to the ministry of education
- write a letter to the district social welfare officer
- write a letter to the secretary in the ministry of Education.

NOTE: A full recipient's address is not provided, as such you should create one which should be relevant to what you have been given.

- ✓ A full postal address for the recipient will have
 - i. The position
 - ii. The organisation /office
 - iii. The box number
 - iv. District or place of destination
- ✓ The address should be aligned below the date on the left hand side of the page after skipping one line.
- ✓ Always put a full stop at the end of district of destination.
- ✓ If the sender's address was fully punctuated with commas, the same should apply to the recipient's address.
- ✓ Avoid writing in upper case, just capitalise first letters.

2. The salutation

- ✓ This is aligned from the left had side of the page below the recipient's address after skipping one line
- ✓ The salutation must always begin with Dear followed by Sir or Madam but not both e.g Dear Sir or Dear Madam not Dear Sir/Madam.
- ✓ Both "D" and "S" or "M" must be capitalised. Always put a comma after the salutation.

3. The heading/ Title

- ✓ This must always come below salutation after skipping a line.
- ✓ It must not be aligned from the left hand side of the page but start a bit inside.
- ✓ It must capture the topical issue in the question based on either the background information part or the instruction part.
- ✓ The title is supposed to be brief probably not exceeding 5 words.
- ✓ If the title is written in capital letters, it must not be underlined but if written in small letters, it must be underlined.

Note: The title must be relevant to the contents of the letter.

4. The introduction

- ✓ It is written below the heading after skipping a line and must start from the left hand margin.
- ✓ It supposed to state in brief the purpose of the letter and it is usually based on the background information part of both the background information part of the question and the instruction.

Note: In the introduction of a letter, avoid using “report” instead use “inform”. E. g *I would like to inform you*

5. Body

- ✓ This part comprises of several paragraphs. Usually a full length letter has either 4 to 5 paragraphs. These paragraphs can be on
 - i. Location
 - ii. causes or contributing factors
 - iii. effects. *Sometimes before effects, you bring another paragraph on the extent or how serious the problem is in terms of those affected.*
 - iv. solution
- ✓ All paragraphs must begin from the margin and always jump a line as you move from one paragraph to the other.
- ✓ Include 2 or 3 points to be raised and explained in the same paragraphs on causes, effects and solutions. Note that these points are on the same topical issues. What it means is that all points on causes for instance, must be put in one paragraph and not treated in separate paragraphs.
- ✓ You can expand or explain the point giving definitions, examples or illustrations, statistics and estimations.

NOTE: Make sure that any point raised must be expanded.

6. The conclusion

- ✓ This comprises of a short paragraph in which one usually requests for an immediate action and sometimes why this would be appropriate.

7. The ending

- ✓ This ends with “Yours faithfully”. “Yours” is must not have an apostrophe between “r” and “s”, and the Y should always be in capital letter. The “f” in “faithfully” must always be in small letters. E. g Yours faithfully.
- ✓ Put a comma after it and then a signature or initials below without jumping a line, and below the signature, write your full name, without skipping a line