

Nick Riches

Words

Definition

1. Symbols
2. Standalone
3. Minimal (cannot be split)

Word classes

The 'standard' definition

1. Meaning
 2. Form test
 3. Distribution test
- So which test?

Let's meet the word classes!

Ways to categorise word classes

Open versus closed-class words

Where are they found?

Word classes and language impairment

5 minute exercise

5 minute exercises

02 - Word Classes

Nick Riches

Newcastle University

October 4, 2019

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5 minute exercise

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Definition

‘minimal standalone symbolic unit’

MiSS

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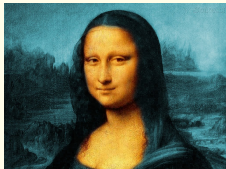
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1. Symbols

Symbols versus Icons



Symbols are characterised by an **arbitrary** relationship between form and meaning.

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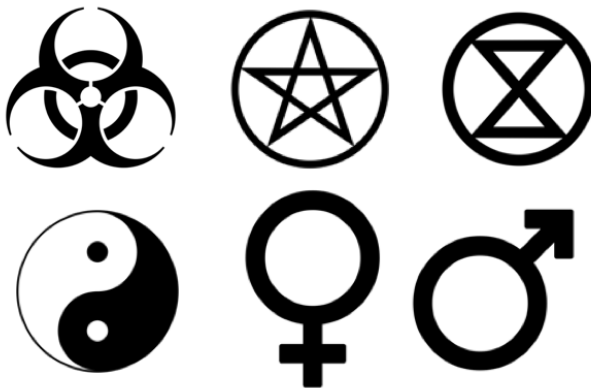
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2. Standalone

A: What was he doing? B: **Working**

A: How would you describe the experience? B: **Unbelievable**

A: How are you feeling? B: **Unhappy**

Shark!!!!!!! Swim!!!!!!!

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1. **Inactive** → *One sip of coffee and Charles changes from **in-** to **hyper-active**.
2. **Underconfident** → ?After eight pints, Angela changes from **under-** to **overconfident**.
3. Walk out → She **walked through** the door and **out** of my life.
4. Blackbird (species) → *She saw a **black** and a **white bird** in the tree

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The 'standard' definition

A verb is a DOING word

An adjective is a DESCRIBING word

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The 'standard' definition

1. The raging river tore through the valley
2. That film really sucks

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1. Meaning

(1) Meaning test

e.g. A verb is a 'doing' word

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2. Form test

e.g. we can make a verb progressive by adding -ing

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3. Distribution test

Distribution = where a word comes in a sentence

e.g. verbs come after subjects and before objects, e.g.

she **ate** the fish

she **likes** cheese.

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Ways to categorise word classes

1. Open versus closed class (Content versus function)
2. Where in the sentence are particular word classes found?

[link to table](#)

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Open Class

Closed Class



Open versus closed-class words



From *Robot* to *Mobot*

Recent nouns
(plus the exclamative *doh!*)



Robot
Karel Capek, 1920

Thought police - 1946

Loser - 1960

Spam, 1970 – Monty Python*

Email, 1982

Cyberspace, 1984

Doh!, 1985**

Internet, 1990 - 1995

Chav***, 1998

2,000

Brangelina, 2005

Mobot, 2012

* This sketch is regarded as the origin of the use of *spam* to describe unsolicited email

** This term was popularised by *the Simpsons*

*** This is actually derived from a Latin word for child. However, the current meaning dates from the late 1980s

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Where are they found?

Word classes which come inside the 'Noun Phrase'

$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{DET.} \\ \textit{the} \\ \textit{these} \\ \textit{some} \end{array} \right\}$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{ADV.} \\ \textit{really} \\ \textit{very} \\ \textit{totally} \end{array} \right\}$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{ADJ.} \\ \textit{lovely} \\ \textit{mean} \\ \textit{furry} \end{array} \right\}$ cats NOUN like fish

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Pronouns:

Stand in for entire Noun Phrase

I liked { *the marshmallow coated chocolate fudge cake* }
it

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Word classes which come inside 'the Verb Complex'

The cats $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{AUX.} \\ \text{are} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{ADV.} \\ \text{always} \\ \text{greedily} \\ \text{really} \end{array} \right\} \text{licking VERB the bowl.}$

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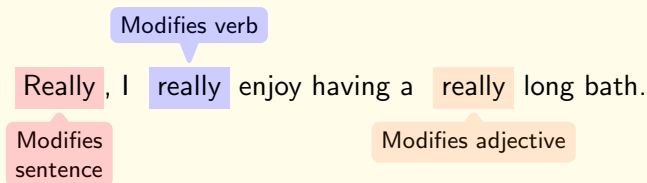
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Where are they found?

The three types of adverb.



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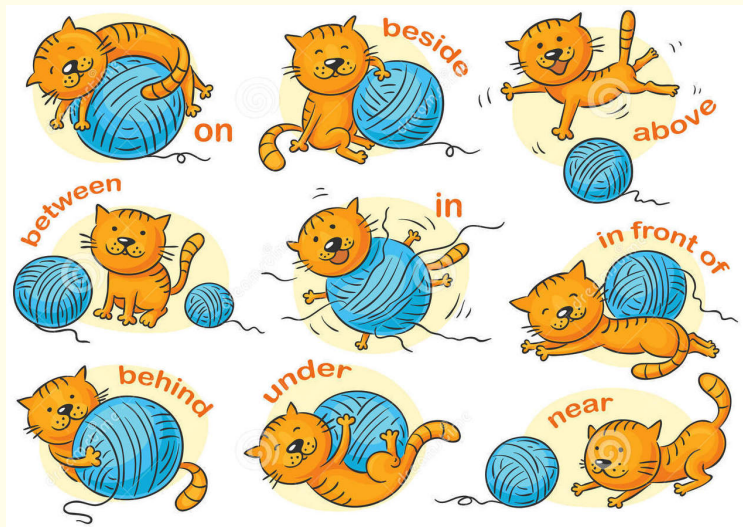
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Prepositions:



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Examples of prepositions

He's been living $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{with} [his\ pet\ dog] \\ \text{in} [a\ log\ cabin] \\ \text{in} [the\ wilds\ of\ Alaska] \\ \text{for} [many\ years] \end{array} \right\}$

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Children with language impairments

- ▶ Tend to miss out function words
- ▶ Have difficulties understanding prepositions (when used to express location), e.g. on, in
- ▶ Have reduced verb diversity, e.g. 'She did the food'

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What's unusual about the following sentence: 'That film was absolutely brilliant!?'

A student says 'I am going to a lection'. What does 'lection' mean, and how has this error arisen?