

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE SERIES

BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Foundations of English Syntax for Learners

Features

Comparison with Korean Grammar
AI-Driven Learning Prompts

Preface

Welcome to Basic English Grammar, a textbook designed for English learners with a basic English proficiency, and limited prior exposure to English grammar. This book aims to build a strong foundation in English grammar and punctuation, enabling learners to analyze how words form meaningful sentences, understand their relationships, and ultimately comprehend paragraphs and entire texts with confidence. By mastering these fundamentals, you will develop the skills to communicate clearly and engage with English across various contexts. This textbook is uniquely tailored to address two key aspects: the grammatical differences between English and Korean, and the use of AI agents to foster self-directed learning. English and Korean grammars differ significantly—English relies on word order and auxiliary verbs to convey meaning, while Korean often uses particles and verb endings. Understanding grammatical differences in both languages will help Korean learners navigate English grammar more effectively, avoiding common pitfalls like misplacing modifiers or omitting articles. Additionally, this book encourages self-directed learning through AI agents, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Grok, etc. which can provide personalized feedback and practice opportunities. These AI-driven resources adapt to your learning pace, offering exercises to reinforce grammar concepts, clarify punctuation rules, and enhance sentence analysis skills. By engaging with AI tools, you can practice independently, track your progress, and build confidence in applying grammar and punctuation in real-world contexts.

Grammar is the framework that organizes words into coherent sentences, ensuring clear communication while allowing creative expression. Punctuation, meanwhile, acts as a guide, providing cues for pauses, emphasis, or clarity—consider the difference between "We found gold coins and jewels" and "We found gold, coins, and jewels," where a comma alters the meaning. Through structured chapters, this textbook covers essential grammar concepts, punctuation rules, and their practical applications, helping you make deliberate sentence choices for clarity and impact. Our goal is to empower you to analyze sentence structures, understand their meanings, and lay the groundwork for comprehending longer texts. With clear explanations, examples, and AI-supported exercises, this book will guide you toward precise and engaging communication. Whether writing essays, reading articles, or conversing in English, mastering grammar and punctuation, with the aid of AI tools and an awareness of English-Korean grammatical contrasts, will equip you to express your ideas confidently and avoid misunderstandings. We invite you to embark on this journey to build a solid foundation in English grammar, leveraging the power of self-directed learning and cross-linguistic insights. Let's begin crafting clear, meaningful communication together

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PART I

Foundations of English Grammar

CHAPTER 1. Words: Parts of Speech (=Word Classes)

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Grammar Foundations Matter!



The foundations of grammar provide the essential framework for understanding how words and sentences work together to create clear and meaningful communication. These foundational rules include knowledge of parts of speech, sentence structure, word order, punctuation, and the use of modifiers and connectors. Mastering grammar allows learners to organize their thoughts accurately, build correct sentences, and express ideas with clarity across all language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without a solid grasp of these basics, language learning becomes confusing and inefficient, hindering effective communication and comprehension. Ultimately, a strong foundation in grammar empowers learners to use language confidently and precisely in any context

WORDS: PARTS OF SPEECH

What is a Word?

The fundamental building block of all language is the word. Words are classified into parts of speech based on their function in a sentence. It is important to recognize that a word's part of speech is determined not by the word itself but by its use in a sentence. **A single word can belong to multiple parts of speech depending on its context.** For example, the word "watch" can function as a noun or a verb according to the context:

Keep **watch**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

Noun: Matthew 24:42, adapted: watch refers to vigilance; Noun

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

Verb: Matthew 26:41

Thus, instead of asking, "**What part of speech is X?**", we should ask, "What part of speech is X in this sentence?" There are seven functional parts of speech: **nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions**. Some grammarians recognize an eighth part of speech, **interjections**, which are asides or commentaries that do not play a grammatical role in a sentence. Some modern grammars include determiners among the parts of speech. Determiners are words like **a, an, the, this, that, these, those, every, each, some, any, my, his, one, two**, etc., which determine or limit the meaning of the nouns that follow. In this book, as in many traditional grammars, all determiners except **a, an** and **the** are classed among adjectives.

As words are divided into different classes according to the work they do in sentences, it is clear that we cannot say to which part of speech a word belongs unless we see it used in a sentence.

They arrived soon **after**. (Adverb)

They arrived **after** us. (Preposition)

They arrived **after** we had left. (Conjunction)

Parts of Speech(=Word Classes)

Nouns

The word "noun" derives from the Latin word meaning "name." A noun is a word used to name a person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns can be classified in multiple ways: by semantic type (proper, common, abstract, collective, material), by grammatical behavior (countable, uncountable), and by their interaction with articles (indefinite, definite, zero).

Classification by Semantic Type

Nouns are divided into **five types** based on their **meaning and function**:

1. Proper Nouns

Name specific individuals, places, or entities and are typically **capitalized**.

Jesus said to them, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19)
(Jesus names a specific person)

2. Common Nouns

Name general categories of people, places, or things.

A teacher brings good things out of the heart (Matthew 12:35, adapted).
(teacher is a general role.)

Note: Common nouns can be modified by adjectives or articles, such as "the" (e.g., the city).

3. Abstract Nouns

Represent intangible concepts, emotions, or states.

You of little faith, why are you so afraid? (Matthew 8:26).
(faith is a concept.)

Note: Abstract nouns are often uncountable but can be countable in specific contexts (e.g., a hope).

4. Collective Nouns

Denote a group of individuals or things as a single unit.

The crowd shouted for Jesus (Matthew 21:9, adapted).
(crowd is a group of people)

Note: Collective nouns are countable as a unit but may take singular or plural verbs depending on context.

5. Material Nouns

Refer to substances or materials, typically uncountable.

They brought wine to the feast (John 2:9, adapted).
(wine is a substance)

Note: Material nouns denote mass rather than individual units, but can be countable when referring to types (e.g., “two wines” for varieties, rare in NIV).

Classification by Grammatical Behavior

Nouns can also be classified as countable or uncountable based on their ability to be counted or pluralized:

Countable Nouns: Can be counted as individual units, take singular/plural and pair with numbers or articles like a/an.

The disciple followed Jesus (John 1:37).
→ The disciples followed (Matthew 10:2).

Note: Countable nouns include many common nouns (e.g., disciple, city), some collective nouns (e.g., flock), and occasionally proper or abstract nouns in specific contexts.

Uncountable Nouns: Cannot be counted as discrete units, typically lack plural forms, and pair with quantifiers like some, much, or a little.

The master tasted the wine (John 2:9). (wine is a mass noun)

Note: Uncountable nouns include most material nouns (e.g., wine, bread), many abstract nouns (e.g., faith, peace), and some common nouns (e.g., dust, Luke 10:11).

Articles

Articles only interact with Nouns. There are three articles based on their countability and specificity: indefinite article (a, an), definite article (the), and zero article (no article).

1. Indefinite Article (a, an)

With Countable Nouns (Singular): Used to introduce a non-specific singular countable noun.

Jesus called a disciple to follow him (John 1:37, adapted).

(a disciple is non-specific)

Note: A is used before consonant sounds, an before vowel sounds (e.g., an apostle, John 13:16, adapted).

With Uncountable Nouns: Not used, as uncountable nouns lack a singular, countable form.

Wine was served (John 2:9, adapted, using zero article, correct).

2. Definite Article (the)

- With **Countable Nouns**: Used for specific singular or plural nouns.

The disciple followed Jesus (John 1:37).

(the disciple refers to a specific person, e.g., Simon)

Note: The specifies a particular instance.

- With **Uncountable Nouns**: Used for specific instances of uncountable nouns.

The wine was served at the feast (John 2:9).

(the wine refers to the specific wine at the wedding)

Note: The is used when the context makes the uncountable noun specific.

3. Zero Article

With **Countable Nouns** (Plural): Used for plural countable nouns in a general sense.

Disciples followed Jesus (John 6:66, adapted).

(disciples refers to followers in general)

Note: The zero article replaces a/an for plural countable nouns in non-specific contexts.

With **Uncountable Nouns**: Used for uncountable nouns in a general sense.

Faith moves mountains (Matthew 17:20, adapted).

(faith refers to the concept in general)

Note: Uncountable nouns often take the zero article in general statements.

Special Cases with Articles

Nouns That Shift: Some nouns can be countable or uncountable.

Bread was broken at the meal (Luke 24:30).

(Uncountable: bread as a substance)

A bread was multiplied (Matthew 14:19, adapted for loaf).

(Countable: a bread refers to a loaf)

Proper Nouns: Typically take the zero article unless part of a specific phrase.

Jesus entered Jerusalem (Matthew 21:10).

The Jerusalem temple was cleansed (John 2:15, adapted).

Quantifiers: Uncountable nouns pair with quantifiers like **some**, **much**.

Example:

Some wine was left (John 2:10, adapted).

Relations between Nouns and Articles

	Countable Nouns (Singular)	Countable Nouns (Plural)	Uncountable Nouns
Indefinite (a/an)	A disciple (John 1:37)	Not used (Disciples, John 6:66)	Not used (Wine, John 2:9)
Definite (the)	The disciple (John 1:37)	The disciples (Matthew 10:2)	The wine (John 2:9)
Zero Article	Not used (singular requires a/the)	Disciples followed (John 6:66)	Faith moves mountains (Matthew 17:20)

Verbs

A verb is traditionally defined as a word that expresses action or describes a state of being. Verbs are categorized into action verbs and linking verbs.

Jesus went throughout Galilee (Matthew 4:23).

He preached in their synagogues (Mark 1:39).

You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

He drove out demons (Mark 5:12, adapted).

Action verbs describe activities performed by the subject, while linking verbs describe the subject's state. The defining characteristic of verbs is their ability to express tense (present, past, future). Only verbs have tenses, with no exceptions. Verbs are either regular (forming past tense with "-ed") or irregular (forming past tense by changing vowels or other means).

Regular: preach → preached (Mark 1:39)

Irregular: go → went (Matthew 4:23)

Adjectives

Adjectives have two roles: noun modifiers (preceding nouns) and predicate adjectives (following linking verbs). Examples from the NIV Gospels include:

Noun Modifiers: the holy city (Matthew 4:5), a new command (John 13:34)

Predicate Adjectives: You are clean(John 13:10). He is worthy (Matthew 8:8).

The Pair Test for Modifying Adjectives: If a word can pair with a noun to form a grammatical phrase, it is an adjective.

In the holy city (Matthew 4:5): the city (valid) holy city (valid)

Adjectives are divided into determiners and descriptive adjectives. Determiners (e.g., the, this, my) precede descriptive adjectives (e.g., holy, new). For example, *the holy city* is correct, but *holy the city* is not. Subclasses of determiners include:

- **Articles:** the, a, an
- **Demonstratives:** this, that, these, those
- **Number words:** Cardinal(twelve, Matthew 10:2), Ordinal(first, Matthew 19:30)
- **Possessives:** my, your, etc.
- **Quantifiers:** many, few

Descriptive adjectives often have comparative (-er, more) and superlative (-est, most) forms:

great → greater → greatest (Matthew 18:4)

faithful → more faithful → most faithful (Luke 16:10)

Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. The most common use is modifying verbs.

Jesus went everywhere (Mark 1:45).

They followed him immediately (Matthew 4:20).

The Adverb Question Test: If a word answers questions like when, where, how, or how often, it is an adverb modifying the verb. The Adverb Movement Test: If a word can be moved to another position in the sentence, it is an adverb modifying the verb.

They followed him immediately (Matthew 4:20).

→When did they follow? (immediately)

→Immediately, they followed him. (Movable)

Adverbs modifying adjectives (e.g., **truly righteous**, John 7:24) or other adverbs (e.g., **very boldly**, Mark 15:43) are immobile and often act as **intensifiers**. The pair test helps distinguish them: if a word cannot modify a noun alone (e.g., truly man is ungrammatical), it is an adverb.

Pronouns

Pronouns are divided into five subclasses: personal, reflexive, indefinite, and demonstrative, interrogative.

1. Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns replace nouns. Third-person pronouns (e.g., he, she, they) replace specific nouns:

Examples:

Jesus called his disciples (Matthew 10:2). → He called them.

Peter and John followed (John 21:20). → They followed.

2. Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns (his) replace nouns, while possessive adjectives (his) modify nouns:

The kingdom is **God's**. → The kingdom is **his**. (Pronoun, Matthew 6:33)

God's kingdom is near. → **His** kingdom is near. (Adjective)

First-person (I, we) and second-person (you) pronouns represent the speaker or hearer:

I am the light of the world (John 8:12).

3. Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns end in -self or -selves (e.g., myself, herself, themselves) and refer back to a noun (antecedent) in the same sentence:

He cannot disown himself (John 13:38: himself refers to Peter).

Reflexive pronouns require an antecedent, so sentences like Jesus spoke to the disciples and myself are incorrect without an antecedent for myself.

4. Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to unspecified persons or things (e.g., anyone, something). They stand alone, unlike adjectives:

Many will come in my name (Mark 13:6). (Pronoun)

Many people will come (Mark 13:6). (Adjective)

5. Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those) stand alone, unlike their adjective counterparts:

This is my Son (Matthew 3:17). (Pronoun)

This man is my Son (Matthew 3:17). (Adjective)

6. Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are pronouns that are used to ask questions. The main English interrogative pronouns are **what**, **which**, **who**, **whom**, and **whose**.

Who is at the door?

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life (Psalm 27:1).

What is your favorite color?

Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words or groups of words.

1. Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.) join equal elements, remembered by the acronym FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So). Examples from the NIV Gospels include:

Jesus loves mercy and justice (Matthew 23:23, adapted).

They wanted mercy or grace (Luke 17:13, adapted).

Correlative conjunctions (e.g., both...and, either...or) are two-part conjunctions:

They had both faith and obedience (Luke 7:8, adapted).

Note: You can use prepositions to link nouns or pronouns into a sentence. Prepositions are followed by nouns. Conjunctions are different, because they can link whole clauses. Sometimes the same word can be both a preposition and a conjunction.

2. Subordinating conjunctions

Conjunctions that aren't coordinating conjunctions are called subordinating conjunctions. They link a subordinate (less important) clause to a main clause. The subordinate clause often gives a reason for something, says when something happens, or gives extra information.

Because

Joseph went to Bethlehem because he was of the family of David.

God became a human being when Jesus was born.

Prepositions

Prepositions (e.g., by, to, with) form prepositional phrases with a noun or pronoun object:

in the temple (Matthew 21:12, in = preposition, the temple = object)

From the Lord comes deliverance. (시편 3:8)

He held me by the hand.

Grammar Differences between English and Korean

English relies on **word order** and small **inflections** to identify parts of speech. Korean relies on **particles** and **conjugation**, with **freer word order** and **unique categories** (조사, 관형사, 수사).

1. Form-based Criteria (형태 기준)

English: Inflection is limited: plural -s, tense changes (go → went), adjective comparison (big → bigger → biggest). Articles (a, the) and prepositions (in, on) placed before nouns show relations. Word order helps determine the category.

book → books (noun plural)

He runs / He ran (verb tense inflection)

Korean: Verbs and adjectives are conjugated for tense, mood, politeness (가다 → 간다 → 갔다). Nouns are invariable, but they attach to particles to show roles (책이, 책을, 책에서). Classification often depends on whether a word can change form or not.

산 (“mountain”) = does not inflect

먹다 (“to eat”) → 먹는다, 먹었다 = variable

2. Function-based Criteria (기능 기준)

English: Word order is strict (SVO): subject-verb-object. Function determined largely by position.

John reads books. (subject-verb-object order is fixed)

Korean: Word order is more flexible (basic SOV) because particles mark roles.

철수가 책을 읽는다 = Subject marked by -가, object marked by -을.

Even if you swap → 책을 철수가 읽는다, meaning stays the same.

3. Meaning-based Criteria (의미 기준)

English: Traditionally 8 parts of speech (noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection). Determiners sometimes treated separately (this, some, my).

Korean: 9 parts of speech, including unique ones not in English:

- Particle (조사) → subject/object/topic markers (-이/가, -을/를, -은/는)
- Determiner (관형사) → modifies nouns but does not conjugate (새 책, 모든 사람)
- Numeral (수사) → quantity/order (하나, 둘, 첫째)

→ These categories have no exact one-to-one match in English.

Basic Punctuation: Capitalization, Period

The Capitalization

Sentences always begin with a capital letter. So a capital letter shows you where a new sentence starts.

We use capital letters for the names of people and places.

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

We use capital letters in the titles of books and films, but not for every word.

I read the Bible every day.

The names of days of the week and months always start with a capital letter, too.

On Sunday, Jesus preached in the synagogue.

Always use a capital letter when you use the word I to talk about yourself.

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

The Full Stop or Period: [•]

In contemporary written English full stops are used:

- To mark the end of a sentence that is a complete statement:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

- To mark the end of a group of words that don't form a conventional sentence, so as to emphasize a statement:

He is my Shepherd. My Shepherd. Wow. Praise the Lord.

- In some abbreviations, for example, etc., e.g., Jan., Feb., a.m., p.m.:

He showed mercy, grace, truth, etc.

NB. If an abbreviation with a full stop comes at the end of a sentence, you don't need to add another full stop:

He really loves his asides, anecdotes, incidental stories, etc.

- In America, after titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Dr.

Dr. Luke wrote the Gospel.

- In website and email addresses:

Visit the church website at www.biblechurch.org.

The full stop is the most fundamental of all the punctuation marks. Essentially, think of the full stop as the moment when you take a proper breath before moving on.

Summary & Exercises

Essential Content Overview: Definition of words and parts of speech; 3 criteria for identification (meaning: what it names; form: endings like -s; position: subject/object); word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.); English-Korean differences (e.g., Korean adjectives as verbs, no articles).

Self-Learning Prompts:

1. Explain the three criteria for identifying parts of speech in English (semantic, morphological, syntactic) with examples, and compare to Korean grammar (e.g., particles, word order).
2. List main word classes in English (nouns, verbs, etc.) with definitions, examples, and Korean contrasts (e.g., no articles, pronoun omission).
3. Analyze 'The dog runs fast,' identify parts of speech using criteria, translate to Korean, and highlight grammar differences.

Exercise 1: Noun Identification

Identify nouns in the sentence using meaning, form, and position.

- Sentence: The cat sleeps.
- Instructions: List nouns, explain: (a) Meaning, (b) Form, (c) Position.
- Answer:
- Noun: cat
- Meaning: Names an animal.
- Form: Singular, no verb ending.
- Position: Subject, after "the."

Exercise 2: Sorting Word Classes

Sort words into Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition.

- Words: book, run, big, slowly, in.
- Answer:

- Noun: book
- Verb: run
- Adjective: big
- Adverb: slowly
- Preposition: in

Exercise 3: Translate Sentences in Korean into English, and Vice Versa

Translate the given sentences (one Korean to English, one English to Korean) and identify one part of speech in each.

- Sentences:

1. Korean: "고양이가 잔다." (Goyangi-ga janda.)

2. English: "The dog eats."

- Instructions:

1. Translate each sentence.

2. Identify one part of speech (e.g., noun, verb) using meaning, form, position.

- Answer:

- 1. Korean to English:

- Translation: The cat sleeps.

- Part of Speech: Noun (cat, Meaning: animal, Form: singular, Position: subject).

- 2. English to Korean:

- Translation: 개가 밥을 먹어. (Gaega babeul meogeo.)

- Part of Speech: Verb (eats, Meaning: action, Form: present, Position: after subject).

- English-Korean Difference: Korean omits articles, uses particles (-가, -을); English requires articles ("the"), SVO order.

Homework With AI Agent

Confirm parts of speech understanding via quizzes.

Prompt 1: Quiz me on parts of speech. Give a sentence, ask me to label words, and correct with explanations.

Prompt 2: "Test me with 5 words, ask me to classify (noun, verb, etc.) using criteria, and compare to Korean grammar."

Prompt 3: "Provide a sentence, have me identify parts of speech, translate to Korean, and discuss differences (e.g., SVO to SOV). Retry if wrong."

