# The 8 parts of speech

# 1. Nouns

A noun is a word that **names person, place, concept, or object**. Basically, anything that names a “**thing”** is a noun, whether you’re talking about a basketball court, San Francisco, Cleopatra, or self-preservation.

# 2. Pronouns

Pronouns are the words you **substitute** for specific **nouns** when the reader or listener knows which specific noun you’re referring to.

You might say “Jennifer was supposed to be here at eight,” then follow it with “she’s always late; next time I’ll tell her to be here a half-hour earlier.”

Instead of saying Jennifer’s name three times in a row, you substituted she and her and your sentences remained grammatically correct.

# 3. Adjectives

Adjectives are the words that **describe nouns**. Think about your favorite movie. How would you describe it to a friend who’s never seen it?

You might say the movie was funny, engaging, well-written, or suspenseful. When you’re describing the movie with these words, you’re using adjectives. An adjective can go right before the noun it’s describing (I have a black dog), but it doesn’t have to. Sometimes, adjectives are at the end of a sentence (my dog is black).

# 4. Verbs

Verbs are words that **describe** specific **actions**, like running, winning, and being amazing.

Not all verbs refer to literal actions, though. Verbs that refer to feelings or states of being, like to love and to be, are known as **nonaction verbs**. Conversely, the verbs that do refer to literal actions are known as action verbs.

# 5. Adverbs

An adverb is a word that **describes** an **adjective**, a **verb**, or another **adverb**.

Here’s an example: I entered the room quietly. Quietly is describing how you entered (verb) the room.

Here’s another example: A cheetah is always faster than a lion. Always is describing how frequently a cheetah is faster (adjective) than a lion.

# 6. Prepositions

Prepositions tell you the **relationship between** the **other words** in a sentence.

Here’s an example: I left my bike leaning against the garage. In this sentence, against is the preposition because it tells us where I left my bike.

Here’s another example: She put the pizza in the oven. Without the preposition in, we don’t know where the pizza is.

# 7. Conjunctions

Conjunctions make it possible to build complex sentences that express multiple ideas.

I like marinara sauce. I like alfredo sauce. I don’t like puttanesca sauce. Each of these three sentences expresses a clear idea. There’s nothing wrong with listing your preferences like this, but it’s not the most efficient way to do it.

Consider instead: I like marinara sauce and alfredo sauce, but I don’t like puttanesca sauce.

In this sentence, and and but are the two conjunctions that link your ideas together.

# 8. Articles

A pear. The brick house. An exciting experience. These bolded words are known as articles.

Like nouns, articles come in two flavors: definite articles and indefinite articles. And just like the two types of nouns, the type of article you use depends on how specific you need to be about the thing you’re discussing.

A definite article describes one specific noun, like the and this. Example: Did you buy the car?

Now swap in an indefinite article: Did you buy a car?

See how the implication is gone and you’re asking a much more general question?