

Appendix 2 The Parts of Speech; Tenses and Forms of the Verb

Parts of Speech

Parts of Speech	The Work That Words Do in a Sentence
Verbs	Words that indicate action: what is done, or what was done, or what is said to be. The ship <i>sailed</i> .
Nouns	Names. Things. <i>Columbus</i> sailed in the <i>ship</i> .
Pronouns	Words used instead of nouns so that nouns need not be repeated. <i>He</i> sailed in <i>it</i> .
Adjectives	Words that describe or qualify nouns. The <i>tall</i> man sailed in the <i>big</i> ship.
Adverbs	Words that modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. They often end in <i>-ly</i> . The big ship <i>slowly</i> sailed past the <i>steeply</i> sloping cliffs.
Prepositions	Each preposition marks the relation between a noun or pronoun and some other word in the sentence. The ship sailed <i>past</i> the cliffs and <i>across</i> the sea <i>to</i> America.
Conjunctions	Words used to join the parts of a sentence, or make two sentences into one: and, but, so, because, as, since, while . The ship sailed to America <i>and</i> came straight back. The ship sailed to America <i>but</i> did not stay long. The ship sailed fast, <i>so</i> it got there quickly. The ship sailed slowly <i>because</i> (or <i>as</i> or <i>since</i>) the sails were torn. The people on the dock waved <i>while</i> the ship sailed away.
Gerund	A word ending in <i>-ing</i> that behaves in some ways like a noun and in some ways like a verb. She likes <i>using</i> a computer You can save electricity by <i>switching</i> off the lights.

Tenses and Forms of the Verb

This section describes, in very simple terms, the various forms of a verb.

For guidelines in their use in various sections and documents, see **The Correct Form of the Verb**, Chapter 18: *Problems of Style*, page 224.

Present

Describes what is happening at the moment:

1. The sun *shines*.
Chlorofluorocarbons *cause* ozone depletion.
2. The sun *is shining*.
Climate change *is developing* into a major global issue.

Past

Describes what happened in the past.

1. The sun *shone*.
The burning of fossil fuels *caused* carbon dioxide levels to rise.
2. The sun *was shining*.
By the end of the twentieth century, carbon dioxide levels *were causing* temperature levels to rise.
3. The sun *has shone*.
The burning of fossil fuels *has caused* levels of carbon dioxide to rise.
4. The sun *has been shining*.
Carbon dioxide levels *have been causing* concern for a long time.
5. The sun *had shone*.
By the 1950s, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere *had risen* to 315 ppm.
6. The sun *had been shining*.
By the end of the 20th century, carbon dioxide levels *had been rising* for a number of decades.

Future

Describes what is going to happen in the future.

1. The sun *will shine*.
Increased emission of greenhouse gases *will cause* a change in the global climate.
2. The sun *will be shining*.
By the middle of this century, the increased emission of greenhouse gases *will be causing* a global change in climate.
3. The sun *will have shone*.
By the middle of this century, carbon dioxide levels *will have risen* to twice the pre-industrial level.
4. The sun *will have been shining*.
By the middle of this century, carbon dioxide levels *will have been causing* concern for many decades.

Conditional

These express a condition and are sometimes needed in recommendations:

This result could imply that ...

The test equipment should be modified as shown.

Subjunctive

In technical writing, these are usually used only in recommendations.

It is recommended that the system be upgraded.

It is recommended that the manager assess the effects of the change.

Imperative

This form of the verb gives an instruction. This is the preferred form of the verb for a procedure or set of instructions.

Turn the power off.

Do not open Valve X before it cools to 18°C.