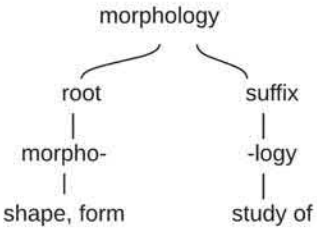




LYN STONE

LANGUAGE for Life

Where linguistics meets teaching







Foreword by John Hattie

A **David Fulton** Book

Language for Life

We all recognise how important first impressions are, something often formed by how well we speak and write. *Language for Life* shows how language can be mastered by children and how what they have learned can be carried throughout their lives.

This indispensable guidebook for teachers, arms pupils with the mental skill of thinking about language. This in turn helps children learn much more easily from the language around them. This book delivers explicit, step-by-step English language instruction via lessons in syntax, grammar, morphology, etymology and punctuation. *Language for Life* is a proven programme that is built upon years of experience. Lyn Stone's pragmatic and modern approach is supported by feedback from teachers and pupils who have attended her numerous classes and workshops.

Language for Life turns important research findings into evidence-based, effective classroom practice. This book helps teachers:

- learn more about language structure
- guide the development of skills enabling pupils to write accurately and in increasing volume
- support the emergence of clear and organised thinking for writing
- help pupils reach their full potential as readers and writers.

Brimming with vital information suitable for both basic and advanced-level students, this book is an essential tool for all teachers wishing to give their pupils the best preparation possible to meet the demands of the modern world. Photocopiable worksheets throughout the book put teachers in the position of linguistic expert, guiding pupils through an enriching journey of language discovery and creativity.

Lyn Stone is a linguist and literacy and language specialist. She is the Clinical Director of Lifelong Literacy and is currently based in Victoria, Australia.

This page intentionally left blank

Language for Life

Where linguistics meets teaching

Lyn Stone

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2016 L. Stone

The right of Lyn Stone to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. The purchase of this copyright material confers the right on the purchasing institution to photocopy pages that bear the photocopy icon and copyright line at the bottom of the page. No other parts of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Stone, Lyn, 1971– author.
Language for life: where linguistics meets teaching/Lyn Stone.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Language awareness. 2. Language awareness in children. 3. Applied linguistics—Study and teaching. 4. Language acquisition—Age factors. 5. Language acquisition—Research—Methodology. 6. Language and education. I. Title.
P120.L34S76 2016
401′.9—dc23
2015011717

ISBN: 978-1-138-89902-5 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-89930-8 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-70818-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Helvetica
by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon

For my friends

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

List of figures and tables *xii*
Acknowledgements *xv*
Foreword by John Hattie *xvii*
Introduction *xix*

Part I Grammar for Life **1**
Introduction 2
The Universals 8

1 Nouns 11
Noun facts 11
Activities 12
Nouns worksheet 17
Nouns worksheet notes 19

2 Determiners 20
Activities 22

3 Pronouns 23
Activities 24
Pronouns worksheet 28
Pronouns worksheet notes 29
Extension activities 30
Relative pronouns worksheet 32
Interrogative pronouns worksheet 33
Demonstrative pronouns 34
Indefinite pronouns worksheet 35

4 Verbs 37
Activities 39
Verbs worksheet 46
Verbs worksheet notes 49
Extension activities 49

5 Agreement 52
Activities 53
Agreement worksheet 58
Agreement worksheet notes 59
Extension activities 60

6 Tense 62
Verb facts 62
Activities 63
Tense worksheet 67
Parts of speech progress check 1 69

7 Adjectives 70
Adjective facts 70
Activities 73
Adjectives worksheet 76
Adjectives worksheet notes 78

8 Adverbs 79
Adverbs worksheet 84
Adverbs worksheet notes 87
Parts of speech progress check 2 88

9 Prepositions 89
Activities 90
Prepositions worksheet 95
Prepositions worksheet notes 99
Extension activity 9.1—Complex prepositions 101
Extension activity 9.2—Preposition environment 101

10 Conjunctions 102
Activities 103
Conjunctions worksheet 107
Parts of speech final progress check 110

11 Phrases 112
Activities 116
Phrases worksheet 124
Phrases worksheet notes 126

12 Clauses 129
Activities 131
Clauses worksheet 135
Clauses worksheet notes 137

Part II: Dictionaries 139

13 How to start using a dictionary 143
Discovering the dictionary parts 145
Dictionary worksheet 151
Dictionary worksheet notes 154

Part III: Morphology for Life 157

14 Prefixes 159
Prefixes worksheet 160
Prefixes worksheet notes 162
Conclusion 163

15 Suffixes 164
Activities 164
Suffixes worksheet 171
Suffixes worksheet notes 174

16 Root words 175
Activities 175
List of hybrid words from Greek and Latin morphemes 178
List of hybrid words from a mixture of languages 178
Portmanteau words 179
Root words worksheet 180
Root words worksheet notes 181

Part IV: Punctuation for Life 183

17 Punctuation activities 185
Activity 17.1—The terminators 188
The separators 190

The joiners 193
The indicators 194
Unusual punctuation marks 195

Part V: Information for teachers 197

18 Language and literacy 199
What is literacy? 199
Language in context 204

19 Language impairment 208
Dyslexia: a case study 209
Auditory processing disorder: a case study 215
Conclusion 216
Notes 217

20 Language change 218
Prescriptivism 218
Texting 224
Descriptivism 225
Note 225

21 Language myths 226
Myths about language as a whole 227
Myths about particular points of grammar 228

22 Redundancy 232

23 Figurative language 235
Simile 236
Metaphor 237
Personification 237
Hyperbole 238
Alliteration and assonance 238
Onomatopoeia 238
Idioms 239

24 The -ize have it 240

Part VI: Resources for everyone **243**

Appendix 1—Word cards 245
Appendix 2—Latin and Greek morphemes 246
Appendix 3—Mnemonics 274

Glossary *281*
Bibliography *285*
Index *287*

Figures and tables

Figures

0.1	Example sentence marked	4
0.2	*Grammar for Life* structure	6
1.1	Nouns example passage marked	19
2.1	Nouns and determiners example passage marked	22
3.1	Pronouns example sentence marked	29
3.2	Pronouns example passage marked	29
4.1	Subject-verb-object diagram	38
4.2	*The dog is running* basic diagram	40
4.3	*The dog is running* marked diagram	41
4.4	*The dog ate the bone*	42
4.5	*The dog feels happy*	43
4.6	*The dog has a kennel*	44
4.7	Example sentence with verb	49
4.8	Verbs example passage marked	51
5.1	Showing disagreement	56
5.2	Team singular	57
5.3	Team plural	57
6.1	Tense diagram	63
7.1	Determiner, adjective, noun, verb	70
7.2	Adjectives example sentence marked	78
7.3	Adjectives example passage marked	78
8.1	Adverbs example sentence marked	79
8.2	Adverbs example sentence marked	87
8.3	Adverbs example passage marked	87
9.1	How prepositions join words	89
9.2	Prepositions example sentence marked	99
9.3	Prepositions example passage marked	100
10.1	Conjunctions example passage marked	110
11.1	Simple Ken tree	113

11.2 Less simple Ken tree 114
11.3 Less simple Ken tree 2 114
11.4 Least simple Ken tree 115
11.5 Simple syntactic tree 117
11.6 Tree with phrases 118
11.7 Tree with determiner 119
11.8 Tree with adjective 120
11.9 Tree with adverb 121
11.10 Tree with preposition 122
11.11 Dragon sentence key 124
11.12 Dragon sentence with simple phrase structure 125
11.13 Dragon sentence key answered 126
11.14 Phrase structure tree expanded 1 127
11.15 Phrase structure tree expanded 2 128
11.16 Phrase structure tree expanded 3 128
12.1 Coordinate morphology diagram 132
12.2 Subordinate morphology diagram 133
13.1 Alphabet backwards card 143
14.1 Morphology diagram 157
15.1 Inflectional morphology diagram 165
15.2 Derivational morphology diagram 169
18.1 The literacy scale 200
18.2 Parts of a syllable 203
18.3 Nuclear knowledge diagram 206
18.4 Linear knowledge diagram 207
22.1 Doctor's scribble 233
23.1 Kanisza figure 235

Tables

0.1 Parts of speech 4
1.1 Common vs proper nouns 17
3.1 Pronouns 24
5.1 Agreement vs disagreement 53
5.2 Conjugating the verb *to study* 54
5.3 Conjugating the verb *to be* 55
5.4 Conjugating the verb *to be* 58
5.5 Conjugating the verb *to be* key 59

6.1	*To be*, past	67
6.2	*To be*, future	67
6.3	Parts of speech	69
7.1	Pronoun table	74
8.1	Parts of speech	88
9.1	Place prepositions list	91
9.2	Time prepositions list	92
10.1	Conjunctions	103
10.2	Subordinating conjunctions list	105
10.3	Common correlative conjunctions list	106
10.4	Parts of speech	111
12.1	Conjunctions	134
15.1	Irregular adjectives	168
15.2	Adjectives without -er/-est	168
15.3	Noun-forming suffixes	169
15.4	Adjective-forming suffixes	170
15.5	Verb-forming suffixes	170
15.6	Inflectional suffix example table	171
15.7	Noun-forming suffixes example table	171
15.8	Adjective-forming suffix example table	172
15.9	Verb-forming suffix example table	172
15.10	Inflectional suffixes key	174
17.1	Contractions	194
A.1	Word cards	245

Acknowledgements

There is always a linguist somewhere, willing to talk to you about language. None more so than Dick Hudson, Professor of Linguistics (Emeritus) at UCL, a man who has quietly and gently done more to promote the teaching of linguistics in schools than any other person alive. Despite being many years retired, he still found time to immediately answer any queries I sent him.

I must also thank the infinitely witty Anatoly Liberman, another scholar who never failed to answer my emails, be they calls for clarification or requests to poach his beautifully crafted sentences.

Writing my first book was, at times, an isolating experience. Not so this time round. My team of editors and consultants made themselves constantly available to me without complaint during the process. I am privileged to know such people. In alphabetical order, they are:

The gifted and interesting Bruce Bokor, who I met by chance through a kind friend. He has a rare talent for writing and for grasping information. Despite moving from one part of Thailand to another during the editing process, he sent timely and incredibly helpful notes on all the chapters in the book. He even assisted with the cover description, the bane of many an author's life and certainly a task synonymous with torture for me. I cannot bear to look at a final draft of a manuscript for some time after completing it. Writing 300 sparklingly positive words about it is almost impossible. Not with Bruce at hand, though. I am very lucky.

Chris Burdess, who was so very kind with *Spelling for Life*, once again provided invaluable advice for this book. Chris is one of those super-intelligent humans who exists on another level of cleverness altogether. He's also a cognitive scientist with a solid grounding in linguistics. We did our degrees together and he breezed through it. My favourite moment during the editing process was when he wrote 'Argh!' in response to something I got wrong. Love your work, Chris.

The human side of editing was personified in the equally intelligent Fiona Duffy—another linguist with academic aptitude coming out of her ears—and abundant in her critiques. Her beautifully handwritten and ever so gentle notes were a pleasure to read and I took *all* her advice.

Alphabetically last, but certainly not least, is Kenny Reay (aka Captain Pernickety). Not a linguist, but a molecular biologist and fellow Calvin and Hobbes enthusiast. How could I not take advice from him? His sharp mind picked up dozens of minute errors and seized on any opportunity to improve the text. All this was done rapidly and in the company of great silliness. My misuse of colons was referred to as 'colonic irritation', and his obsession with parenthetical commas 'continued unabated'. He was, and continues to be, a first-class conduit for procrastination.

Back in the last millennium, at a freezing cold boarding school, I was generally liked by my teachers for my academic ability, but not so much for my behaviour. I certainly wasn't as naughty as some fellow pupils, though, especially Shona Henderson, which makes it all the more pleasing to find that she is now my colleague and a leader in the field of education. She is a progressive educator whose grasp of pedagogy is expert. She has the ability to firmly help those around her achieve their potential. Her advice and support have been priceless to me. Our former housemistress would be turning in her grave if she were alive today, as the saying goes.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my kind and patient publishers, Routledge. Once again they have given me the opportunity to bring my works up to a higher standard and to a wider audience.

My family, to whom my last book was dedicated, have once again supported me in so many ways. My husband managed to retain his usual mildness even when I disappeared as a wife and partner in the final weeks of manuscript production. My lovely girls willingly learned a whole new set of chores so that I might be able to concentrate better. My sister and brother-in-law looked after the girls above and beyond the call of duty. My brother came all the way over from Scotland and became our 'manny' for six months so that I could get the book written. My big sister encouraged me and openly showed admiration, even though she's far more admirable than I am. And of course Mum and Dad, always there for me.

This book is dedicated to my friends, all of whom I'm proud to know. Their names appear in the example sentences throughout the book, which is a good way of getting them all to buy it. Because they're my friends, they'll know perfectly well I'm joking.

Foreword

John Hattie

Within our teaching roles there are many areas that require specific expertise. If we have this expertise, we typically demand (nicely) that everyone else should have it; if we do not have it, we typically claim that we (and others) can survive very well without it! Linguistic knowledge—a deeper knowing about language—is one form of expertise whose necessity in the teacher's arsenal is hotly debated. Why do I need to know linguistics to teach students about language, reading and writing? Surely it is about teaching the love of reading, the meaning, the story-telling, others argue. Yes, but the fundamentals of deeper love and understanding are the nature, accepted rules and beauty of language.

Spelling is a wonderful test of how much we need to know, as teachers, about linguistics. I spent some research time exploring the reasons why people cannot spell. There are twenty or so major reasons, but it requires some depth of linguistics know-how to understand these reasons (fricatives, semivowels, place assimilation, etc.). Our claim was that we could develop a computer-based assessment scheme to determine the profile and interactions of these twenty or so reasons a child may have for poor spelling. Then the programme would determine the appropriate 'what-next' for teachers to reduce their particular constellation of spelling problems; and retesting using the computer package could indicate the impact of these lessons. Our argument was that we could embed this depth of linguistics knowledge into the computer package—as it is unreasonable to expect all teachers to be expert at everything, such as in-depth knowedge of linguistics. Here was an opportunity to bring depth of knowledge into the classroom to augment teachers' other expertise. But there was little appetite to support the teaching of spelling; and others argued that teachers should all know the linguistics to help students to spell.

We published an article recently looking at the Matthew effect in reading—the good readers get better and the poor readers do not—an effect that applies to many millions of students. The conclusion was simple: if you do not attain the fundamentals of reading by about the age of eight, it is very hard to catch up after this. We know that children start school with massive differences in language. Some start with 3,000–4,000 words on entry, increasing to 5,000+

by the end of Year 2; but some start with fewer than 1,000—what chance of catching up without dedicated and expert attention to language? There are so many opportunities, and missed opportunities, to enrich a child's language. For example, Blaiklock (2013) observed 582 mothers walking with young children—65 per cent of the children were in forward-facing pushchairs, 14 per cent in parent-facing pushchairs, 10 per cent were being carried and 10 per cent were walking. Parents were observed to speak to their children twice as much when parent-facing than when forward-facing.

So the question is: how much do teachers need to know about language and linguistics? Lyn Stone has provided an answer to this question with another most worthwhile book. She highlights the major grammar topics, makes them interesting, and provides great examples for use in the classroom. This book provides the resources and directions for linguistic discovery to occur. She explores the parts of speech, conjunctions, clauses, subordinate clauses, prefixes and suffixes, root and portmanteau words, punctuation and more. This book is not about linguistic legislation, but about the beauty and bases of language. She paints language as our window into the world. She dispels many myths (e.g. it can be fine to split an infinitive) and she boldly goes where so few venture!

This is the book for every teacher who wants the optimal ways to instil the basis of a love of language. It shows the way and provides the building blocks to reading, to speaking, to thinking and to participating in our society. Learning these language skills early will make it so much easier to learn later—as it is via language that we communicate ideas, listen to others and survive in classrooms. Further, this book can be particularly powerful for high school teachers, many of whose students will encounter these building blocks for the first time. Lyn Stone brings wit, joie de vivre, and a remarkable depth of knowing to an often maligned subject and provides the tools to teach it effectively in the classroom.

Blaiklock, K. (2013) Talking with children when using prams while shopping. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal, 16*: 15–28.

Introduction

As the old joke goes, 'There are three types of people in this world: those who can count and those who can't.' I rank among those who can't. In response to the derision I sometimes receive from those in the *can* category, I say, 'Those are numbers. I do words.'

I have been thinking and talking about words as both an occupation and a preoccupation for over twenty-five years. When I talk to my pupils about words, I get the impression that they need to know certain things, and that if I teach them in a certain way, they are likely to remember and use those things in life.

This is how *Grammar for Life*, the first part of the book, came about. The main features of the book are:

- lessons for pupils
- knowledge for teachers
- resources for everyone

When I was teaching grammar, questions about morphology and punctuation inevitably arose. In response, I began compiling teaching materials from relevant resources, which I used to develop programmes of learning.

After testing these lessons and resources, I began to offer them as teacher-training workshops. It was then that I discovered another set of facts: teachers needed to attain a better knowledge of language, and if this knowledge was conveyed in a particular way, they were likely to remember and use that knowledge in their own teaching.

The lesson sections of this book (numbered 1–24) are supported by face-to-face and online courses as well as by a growing set of free YouTube videos.

This book is intended to be descriptive, while offering a range of essential facts about language and learning. I have tried not to be overly prescriptive, though I must declare my own intolerance towards certain linguistic phenomena. I have listed them below just to make the point that there is no such thing as a purely descriptive linguist:

- misuse and mis-teaching of the suffix -'s
- confusion over *your* and *you're*

- confusion over *their, they're* and *there*
- cute portmanteau words, especially for dogs (*labradoodle* and *spoodle* spring to mind)
- writing *definitely* as 'defiantly' or 'definately'
- using *extra-curricula* when *extra-curricular* is meant

My personal irritations aside, I am well aware that what I term *the misuse of language*, as listed above, is a failure of teaching that can be remedied.

There are doubtless other facets of language I find unacceptable at some level, but rather than sit and ruminate in an ivory tower, I set a goal to reach as many people as possible and facilitate both the teaching and learning of all aspects of language.

This is the essence of *Language for Life*.

Lyn Stone

Part I

Grammar for Life

Grammar for Life is the perfect name for a set of lessons on grammar, and these lessons live up to their name. Grammar is the key to how we use language in life, and the better the grammar, the better the life. Grammar is what makes language creative, allowing the highest form of intelligence.

Creative syntax combines words in novel ways and creative morphology combines word-blocks to make new words. Creative grammar permits the highest forms of verbal art: poetry, science, jokes, wise advice—as well as lies, nonsense and rabble-rousing. Grammar is probably the most important mental ability we have, and the one that distinguishes us most sharply from other animals. But, like any other ability, it doesn't come to us fully developed by Mother Nature. What grows naturally is just a small part of what adults need to function properly in the modern world. If you can't combine words or make new words comfortably, then life is limited.

How then can we help the next generation to the sophisticated grammar that modern society demands? This is where schools come in, and indeed the teaching of grammar has been one of the traditional functions of schools from the earliest days of literate society in the Middle East. In foreign languages, schools can teach children everything they need to know, at least at elementary levels; but in the native language, there's simply too much of it for schools to teach, item by item. Instead, schools can help by teaching children to talk about grammar, to think about it and to notice it. Armed with this mental skill, the skill of thinking about grammar, children can then learn much more easily from the language around them (and especially from their reading).

Unfortunately, all the English-speaking countries rejected the teaching

of grammar in the middle of the twentieth century, and are only just now starting to recognise its value again. So what can school teachers do about grammar, a subject that they themselves were never taught? This question is being asked throughout the Anglophone world, and in every country the answer is the same: teachers need imaginative and sensitive support from those who do know about grammar. They don't need a course in grammar; what they need is material that they themselves understand and that they can use immediately with a class. As every teacher knows, there's nothing like teaching something to deepen your own understanding of it. And of course at the same time, you're introducing the next generation to the fascinating world of grammar. What a privilege!

I congratulate Lyn Stone on building an excellent bridge between modern grammar and the primary classroom. The easy explanations, modelled analyses and classroom material should make it highly accessible to school teachers whose expertise lies elsewhere. Particularly important, in my opinion, are the very simple diagrams that she offers, for showing how the words in a sentence fit together to make a single unified meaning; syntax without diagrams is like geography without maps. Both teachers and pupils will appreciate these simple tools for exploring sentence structure; and maybe, in the long run, the children will even have these little diagrams in their minds in their more creative moments.

Richard A. Hudson, Emeritus Professor Linguistics,

Introduction

Why this section is particularly useful

Words help humans express their thoughts and ideas, and, like thoughts and ideas, words can cause complications.

The lessons in this book are by no means an exhaustive analysis of language and thought. They are intended as an introduction to grammar conventions.

We have lost so much of our formal teaching of grammar, both in schools and teachers' colleges, that the area is now somewhat murky and in some instances is even avoided. The purpose of this book is to assist in getting the teaching of grammar back on track.

Children come to school with many different ideas about grammar. Being understood in and understanding written language requires some knowledge of the jobs words do in sentences. These jobs are called the *parts of speech.* Too often, children know little more than the simplest definitions for a few parts of speech, e.g. 'Nouns are naming words . . . verbs are doing words'.

Since they each have a job to do, it is also a good idea to study how words relate to each other in sentences. In linguistics, the study of the parts of speech and their relationships is called syntax. It is within this branch of linguistics that students are encouraged to become linguistic detectives (Haegeman, 1991).

In this section of the book, we will begin by defining, using and exploring the relationships between:

- nouns, determiners and pronouns
- verbs

Then we will take a slightly more in-depth look at verbs and explore how they relate to nouns and how they show time by covering:

- agreement
- tense

Finally, we will cover the remaining major parts of speech:

- adjectives
- adverbs
- prepositions
- conjunctions

Each lesson consists of the analysis of a particular part of speech and builds on the preceding lesson. The overall goal is to give pupils a bigger and bigger picture of how language operates. The benefit to pupils is that they become more adept and confident as readers and writers.

This process of relating words to one another and seeing how they form a network took inspiration from R.A. Hudson's *Word Grammar* (2010). In my experience, people who have studied *Word Grammar* as part of other degrees, such as linguistics, teaching, speech pathology and psychology, often report great enjoyment of the subject. *Word Grammar* is fascinating and can be presented relatively simply. Pupils with whom I have conducted word-grammar-based lessons often provide similar positive feedback.

The syntax component of this book incorporates a simple set of marks, using a set of visual cues that identify the parts of speech and word relationships. This simple visual parsing is intended to serve as a form of scaffolding so that pupils quickly begin to recognise the various parts of speech. It is not intended to be slavishly memorised or tested. Indeed, as with any form of scaffolding, we are trying to move pupils beyond this system and into automaticity as quickly as possible.

Below is an example of a marked sentence. This sentence will be used throughout this part of the book.

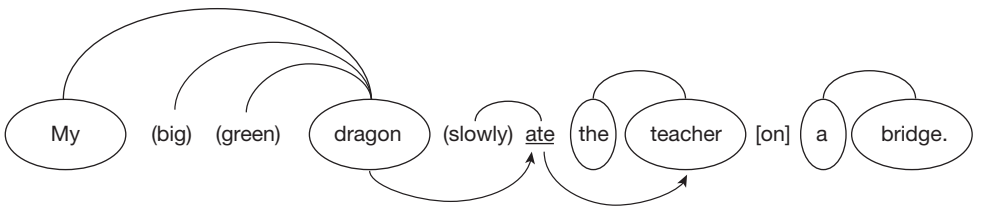


Figure 0.1 Example sentence marked

Table 0.1 Parts of speech

Parts of speech	*Examples*	*Function*	*Description*	*Notes*
Nouns (and determiners and pronouns)	town, rain, harmony, the, a, it, his, them	Universals	Together they form a complete thought and are the minimum requirement in any sentence.	When they appear together in sentences, they must *agree.*
Verbs	make, take, am, have, do			
Adjectives	charming, ill, miserable	Modifiers	They describe, intensify, limit or qualify other words.	Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify everything else.
Adverbs	funny, really, afraid, ever			
Prepositions	at, in, than	Relationship words	They carry within their meaning specific ways in which words relate to one another in sentences.	
Conjunctions	and, so, but			

This section looks at the definition of and relationships between six major parts of speech. The six parts of speech fall into the following three categories:

- universals
- modifiers
- relationship words

Lesson order

Determiners and pronouns are studied straight after nouns and are marked in the same way, since they signal the coming of nouns or take the place of nouns in sentences.

Once nouns and verbs have been discussed, agreement and tense are mentioned before the other parts of speech are discovered.

There are also categories into which many of the parts of speech can be divided (collective nouns, auxiliary verbs, demonstrative pronouns etc.), but the core lessons on the six major parts of speech are what we are dealing with in this book.

Beginners

If you're working with beginners, the concept of the parts of speech needs to be introduced. If you're working with pupils who have experience of the parts of speech, a brief introduction on the aims of the lessons is all that is required.

Example dialogue for beginners

Did you know that the words in our language all do jobs? For example, some words name things, some describe things, some show action? Can anyone think of any of the names we give to them? (NOUN, ADJECTIVE, PRONOUN, ETC.)

How do we know which names to give which words? (BECAUSE OF THE JOBS THEY DO WHEN WE SPEAK AND WRITE.)

The jobs that words do are called the parts of speech. Knowing the parts of speech will help you write and think more clearly.

By the end of these lessons, you will not only be able to name all the words in this example sentence:

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

You will also be able to show how they relate to one another.

The way you will show this is by using a simple set of marks. Each type of word has a particular mark. You will learn these as we go along. We will first use the example sentence. Then we will look at short passages. You will then create and mark your own example sentences.

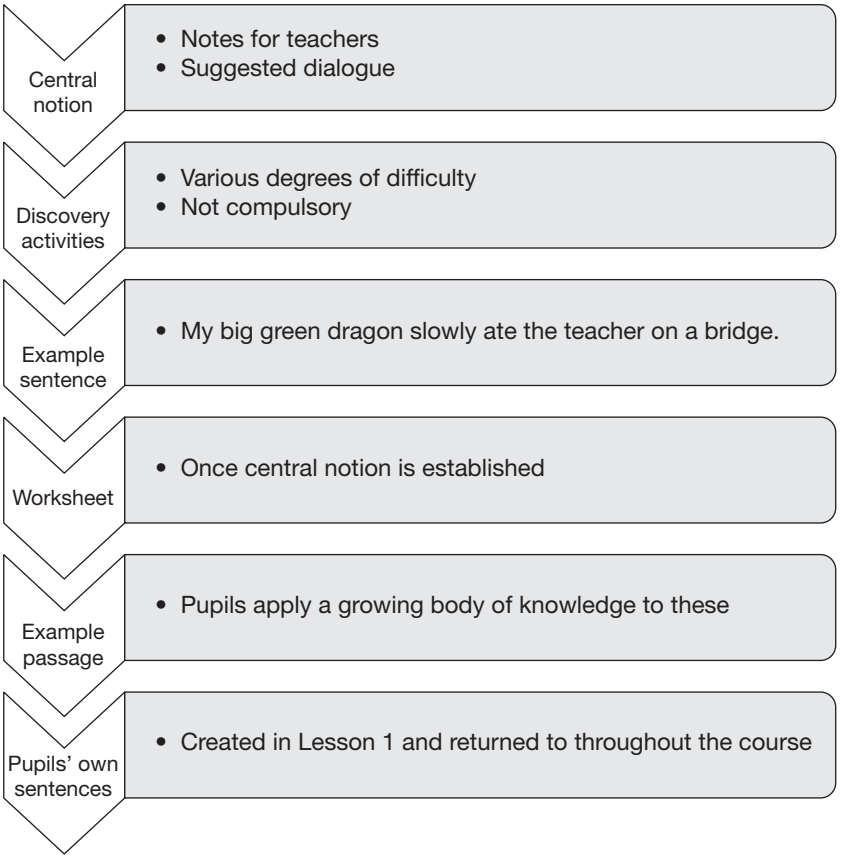


Figure 0.2 *Grammar for life* structure

Pacing

Each chapter has a central notion. This is the information that pupils need in order to continue through the programme. Teacher notes are also provided to assist with lesson planning.

Various discovery activities are offered in order to impart this central notion. The discovery activities are suggested ways in which pupils can master each concept. They provide a range of exercises before the worksheet is attempted. Some pupils may not have to complete all the activities before using the worksheet.

Once the central notion is established, pupils can attempt the worksheet. A key to each worksheet is provided for teachers.

Each lesson requires analysis of a passage. This can be done in pairs or groups, and the passage is intended to be discussed at length. Once a passage has been discussed, pupils return to their own sentences and perform the same analysis.

What isn't included

Interjections

Wow! Holy moly! Lawks-a-mussy! LOL! These have been deliberately omitted as they are neither generated by nor follow the same rules as the other parts of speech.

Lexical sub-categories

Interesting as vast lists of lexical sub-categories may be to anyone with the time and passion for further study, I felt I had to draw the line *somewhere*. Far be it from me to tell anybody precisely where to draw that line, but where I have stopped is where I deemed it fit—for various reasons.

This book does contain some lists, the most extensive of those being the list of morphemes I've compiled over the years. Teachers and pupils can use this resource as they see fit.

Tips on running the lessons

1 Select the discovery activity or activities you find most relevant.
2 In many cases, a suggested dialogue is offered, in a dialogue box (see 'Example dialogue for beginners' above).
3 Questions in the suggested dialogue are followed by typical answers (CAPITALS INSIDE BRACKETS) straight after the questions. If pupils don't give these answers, it's fine to simply give them the information.
4 Once the requisite discovery activities are done, distribute the relevant grammar worksheet and have your pupils complete the tasks within.
5 Extension activities are also provided. These delve further into language analysis and categorisation and are there for older or keener pupils. They are called extension activities because the subsequent parts of the course do not require knowledge of the information they present.

The Universals

In any human language, people talk about people and objects and what happens to them. There are classes of words that name things (nouns) and grammatically different classes of words that indicate actions or processes (verbs). This is natural. Communication could not take place without these principal elements, which is why I have called the section that deals with these two principal elements Universals.

Nouns are also closely linked to what linguists call *determiners.* The words traditionally known as the definite and indefinite articles (*the, a/an*) will be included as determiners in this analysis. Other words in that group are possessive pronouns, such as *my*, *his* and *our*, and demonstrative pronouns such as *this*, *that* and *those*. We will revisit these pronouns in the Pronouns lesson and will not shy away from including them in both classes, since their functions are so similar.

Any study of verbs will necessarily include a word or two about agreement and tense, as these concepts are the exclusive domain of verbs in English.

None of the following lessons is offered as an exhaustive linguistic analysis of English. They are merely written to ensure that knowledge gaps about word classes are filled with useful and hopefully interesting information.

The lessons in this section will cover:

- nouns
- determiners
- pronouns
- verbs
- agreement
- tense

This page intentionally left blank

1 Nouns

Definition

Nouns name people, places, things, feelings and ideas.

Etymology

Latin *nomen* ‘name’. This is why when you *nominate* someone, you say their *name*.

Marking

Nouns in our example sentences will be circled.

Teacher resources

- Laminated word cards (Appendix 1)
- Nouns worksheet

Noun facts

Compound nouns

Some nouns comprise two words (club sandwich, soda pop, Loch Ness). Two words for one part of speech can be confusing. It happens with verbs too, as we will soon see (*will see* in the preceding phrase constituted one verb).

This process of recombination of words to form new concepts is a common device in language. It saves us having to invent completely new words. German is particularly adept at this and actually goes as far as leaving

no spaces between words when new words are formed. The wonderful *Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz*, meaning 'the law concerning the delegation of duties for the supervision of cattle marking and the labelling of beef', has now been de-commissioned, since the Mad Cow no longer troubles the German government. It demonstrates the point quite well, though.

In English, compound nouns often begin as two separate nouns (*trick shot*). Sometimes, they start to lean towards each other by virtue of a hyphen (*trick-shot*) and indeed, if their adjacent borders are friendly to one another in sound and/or meaning, they often become one word (*trickshot* but not so much *dogs-expo*).

In fact, all compound words are formed in this way. Some sequences of words have a different meaning when brought together than when they are apart (*apart* is an example). This can cause confusion in some quarters and outrage in others. Take the words *every* and *day*. When they are adjacent in a sentence they mean 'on all days', but when together they mean 'ordinary'. Does anyone else feel a pang of righteous pique when they see signs like 'Breakfast served everyday'? Really? What do I have to do to get a special breakfast around here?

This is happening quite frequently these days with words like *every* and *any* and is a change that threatens to offend many, but change will continue nevertheless. Or is it never the less?

Compound words are used throughout the lessons and are treated as one word.

Activities

Activity 1.1—Pointing

Have pupils partner up and look around the room. Each pupil points to five things, telling their partner what these things are.

Ask pupils what part of speech they are using. (NOUN)

Activity 1.2—Heartfelt

Point to your heart and say, 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is happiness.'

Have pupils point to their hearts in turn and complete the sentence 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is . . .'

Ask pupils what part of speech they are using. (NOUN)

Watch out!

Pupils will try to squeeze adjectives in here, as it almost makes sense to say, 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is happy.'

Handle this by saying,

> You've got the right root word there, but let's see if happy really does the same job as the other nouns we mentioned. We can do this by testing the words in a sentence.
>
> Let's take a noun we're comfortable with, like *dragon*. Does the sentence *My dragon ate the teacher* make sense? (YES)
>
> Let's replace the noun *dragon* with this word *happy*. What is the sentence now? (MY HAPPY ATE THE TEACHER)
>
> Does this make sense? (NO)
>
> *Happy* is not a thing, *happy* describes a thing, which we'll deal with later. To turn the word *happy* into a thing, what do we have to add at the end? (THE SUFFIX '-NESS')
>
> We will do some more noun tests shortly.

Activity 1.3—Test sentences

Gather up your laminated word cards from Appendix 1 and place them in random order at the top of the board.

Write the three test sentences below and place each word in each of the three sentences, one by one. You will find that any noun will make sense in at least one of the sentences while none of the other words will.

Watch out!

Words can be homonyms, i.e. they can have two separate meanings and be two parts of speech. An example is *run*, as in *We run* (verb) and *We are ready for the run* (noun).

If your pupils point this out, they are to be congratulated for their observation. At this stage, though, if *run* does come up as being ambiguous, ask your pupils to wait until later in the programme before a full explanation is revealed. The goal here is to let pupils figure out what homonyms are by themselves.

The three test sentences are as follows:

1 This is the _____.
2 (The) _____ seems fine.
3 The teacher's _____ is okay.

Important note: when using test sentence 2, always use the word *the* at the beginning unless you are testing a proper noun, otherwise, pronouns will also fit.

Test sentence suggested dialogue

I have fifteen example words here. By the time we finish this course, we will have worked out together exactly what jobs these words do and how they can be connected to each other in sentences. Knowing this will help you be a stronger reader and writer.

Let's go through the words now and see if they make sense in these sentences. If they don't, then we can be pretty sure they're not nouns. This is a good test for later on, when you are looking at all the parts of speech together.

Take the word cards and put each word in the three test sentences. If a word makes sense in at least one sentence, move it to the right of the board. If the word doesn't make sense in any sentence, move it to the left.

You should end up with three words on the right (*James*, *cat* and *idea*) and twelve words on the left.

Activity 1.4—Noun classes

Nouns can be put into groups on the basis of what they name. Here are some common groups.

Proper nouns

These are the specific names for people, places and things. They always start with a capital letter.

- names of people: Johnny, Stephen, Cecily
- names of places: Loch Lomond, Lake Eyre, Lake Tahoe
- names of days and months: Friday, Christmas Eve, March
- titles of books, films and shows: Burmese Days, Ordinary People, Friends, Cats
- brand names: Microsoft, Universal Pictures, Firefox

Note: We also capitalise the following kinds of words:

- the first word of a sentence, even if it's not a noun
- the word *I*

Q. Why do you think we do this?

In German, all nouns are capitalised. A few centuries ago we also used to do this in English, but this practice fell away and now only proper nouns and titles are capitalised.

Worksheet: Guide pupils to write some proper nouns of their own

Common nouns

These are used to name things within a general group but are not the specific *name* of these things. For example, *country* names a type of place generally and is a common noun. *India* names a specific place in the group *country* and is a proper noun.

Worksheet: Guide pupils to write some common nouns of their own and to compare those to proper nouns.

Countable nouns

These nouns are a subset of common nouns. As the name suggests, they name something that can be counted and therefore can take a singular or a plural form.

Mass nouns

In contrast with countable nouns, mass nouns name things that cannot be counted, such as *justice* or *freedom*.

Worksheet: Guide pupils to write some mass nouns and compare them to countable nouns.

Abstract nouns

When we talked about what we were feeling in our hearts, we were using abstract nouns. These are things you can't see, and include feelings, thoughts and ideas.

Worksheet: Guide pupils to write some abstract nouns of their own.

Collective nouns

These name groups of related things. Most of the collective nouns in English name groups of animals, but some also apply to people:

- a *parliament* of owls
- a *mob* of kangaroos
- a *conspiracy* of lemurs
- a *bevy* of beauties

Nouns worksheet

1 Circle the nouns in the example sentence.

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

2 Write the definition.

A noun is

_____

_____

3 Write some examples of common nouns and proper nouns.

Common nouns

_____ _____ _____

Proper nouns

people _____ _____ _____

places _____ _____ _____

4 Fill in the blanks in the table below to match the first example

Table 1.1 Common vs proper nouns

Common noun	*Proper noun*
planet	Jupiter
country	
	Hogwart's
car	
	Kermit

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

5 Write some examples of the following types of nouns.

Countable nouns

_____ _____ _____

Mass nouns

_____ _____ _____

Abstract nouns

feelings _____ _____ _____

ideas _____ _____ _____

Collective nouns

_____

_____

_____

6 Use five of your nouns in sentences and circle them.

a _____

b _____

c _____

d _____

e _____

7 Circle the nouns.

At the party the Mayor of London spoke to the happy Olympians. 'You have made your country proud. Let us raise our glasses.'

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Nouns worksheet notes

Definition

A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing, feeling or idea.
Noun examples:

Person: *Chloe*, *Sasha*, *Imogen*, *Mrs Chips*
Place: *Motherwell*, *Moonee Ponds*, *Fresno*
Thing: *bear*, *coffee*, *keys*
Feeling: *happiness*, *envy*, *joy*
Idea: *love*, *peace*, *harmony*

Example passage: The example passage should look like this, with each noun circled:

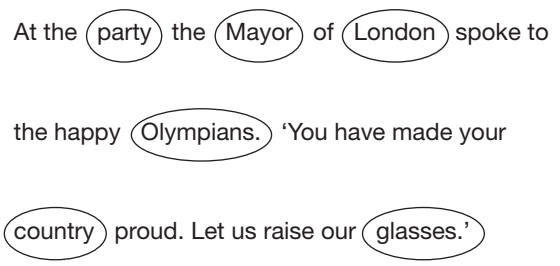


Figure 1.1 Nouns example passage marked

Pupil sentences

The self-generated sentences on this first worksheet will be returned to in future lessons, so please ensure they are as neat and grammatical as possible.

2 Determiners

Definition

A word class that precedes adjectives and limits a noun. The definite and indefinite articles (*a* and *the*) are the most commonly recognised determiners.

Etymology

Latin *determinare* ‘to limit, define, confine, designate’

Marking

Determiners in our example sentences will also be circled, since their relationship to nouns is so close.

Sometimes a determiner is separated from a noun by a line break. In this instance, we draw a line from the determiner to the end of the line, then a dot to act as an anchor point, a dot at the beginning of the next line, and we continue the drawn line until it reaches its destination word. (See Figure 2.1 Nouns and determiners example passage marked.)

Other words that are connected to one another but separated by a line break will be marked in this way from now on.

Teacher notes

Nouns, being linguistic principals, can have quite an entourage. In some cases they have advance troops, sent ahead to signal their arrival and to announce certain limiting things about them. The words in this set are called *determiners*.

Though somewhat descriptive, determiners are distinct from adjectives like *big* or *green* in that they limit their noun by telling us whether it is:

- singular or plural (*this*/*these*)
- definite or indefinite (*the*/*a*)
- belonging to someone or something (*my, your, their*)

Determiners fall into certain categories, including:

- articles (*the*, *a*, *an*)
- demonstratives (*this*, *that*, *these*)
- quantifiers (*one*, *more*, *many*)
- possessives (*my*, *your*, *their*)

There is much scope for argument regarding determiners. Some would call them pronouns, some would call them adjectives. Some say they are not a word class at all but are structural rather than functional words.

Which arguments are acceptable to you is a personal decision. This lesson is an indication of where I sit on the subject, but hearing arguments about it is both welcome and pleasing.

What we can agree on about determiners is that they usually come before adjectives in grammatical sentences:

The mad cyclist posted a parcel.

We cannot say:

**Mad the cyclist posted a parcel.*[1]

Also, certain nouns don't need determiners at all. These are:

- Nouns referring to generic things:

  Biologists enjoy life.

- Nouns referring to a single group of things:

  She teaches children, which has a different sense from *She teaches the children.*

- Proper nouns:

  Tony shucked the oysters, not **the Tony shucked the oysters*. (Putting articles before proper nouns denotes a special kind of egotism: *The Todd is happy.*)

Activities

Activity 2.1—Determiners in the example sentence

Review the example sentence *My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge*. Discuss the role of *my*, *the* and *a*. The ideas you are looking for are that they refer to the nouns being singular or plural, definite or indefinite, belonging to someone or something, etc.

Words that give us this type of information are called determiners. We are also going to circle them.

> As you can see, the word *my* is separated from its noun by the two words *big* and *green.* They also tell us more about the noun, but in a way that we will look at a little later. To show that *my* is *dragon*'s determiner, draw a line from *my* to *dragon*, jumping over the two words *big* and *green*.
>
> When a determiner and a noun are combined, we have what's called a **noun phrase**. We will do more work on phrases later on.

Activity 2.2—Return to worksheet

Have pupils return to the *nouns* worksheet and circle the determiners in the example passage and in their own sentences. The example passage will now look like this:

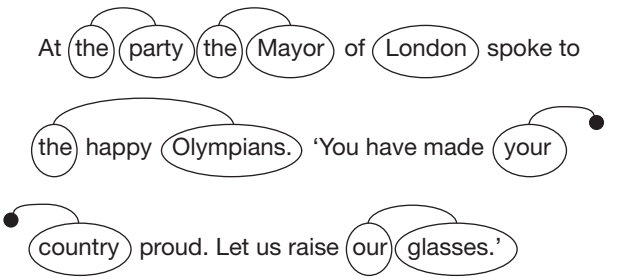


Figure 2.1 Nouns and determiners example passage marked

Please note that some determiners are connected to nouns on the next line. This will happen more and more, and with other parts of speech, as the course goes on. Instruct your pupils to make a black dot at the end of the line and one at the beginning of the next line to anchor the line across these breaks.

3 Pronouns

Definition

Pronouns are words that make us think of nouns. They stand in for nouns and usually have a noun preceding them, called a 'referent'.

Etymology

Pro- 'in place of' + *nomen* 'name'

Marking

Pronouns in our example sentences will also be circled, since their relationship to nouns and determiners is so close.

Teacher resources

- Pronouns worksheet
- Laminated word cards
- Pronouns example passage

While common nouns are plentiful in English and proper nouns are limited only by human imagination, pronouns constitute a relatively small set. Linguists refer to pronouns as a 'closed class'. No new pronouns are being made, whereas new nouns are being invented all the time.

For your information, the table below lists the English pronouns and indicates what class of pronoun they belong to. This table can be used to guide pupils through the extension activities if needed.

Table 3.1 Pronouns

Class	*Pronoun*
Personal	I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they, them
Possessive	my, mine, your, yours, his, hers, her, its, our, ours, their, theirs
Reflexive	myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves
Relative	who, whom*, which, whose, when, where
Interrogative	who, whom, what, which, whose, when, where, how
Demonstrative	this, these, that, those
Indefinite	any, each, every, none, no, one, some
Reciprocal	each other, one another
Compound	anybody, anyone, anything, anywhere, everybody, everyone, everything, everywhere, nobody, no one, nothing, nowhere, somebody, someone, something, somewhere

* *whom*: This word is still very much in use in formal language, but is almost obsolete in informal speech. It is good to understand it, but its use is no longer mandatory.

Activities

Activity 3.1—Replacement

In the last lesson we looked at words that name things. What part of speech are they? (NOUNS)

In this lesson, we're going to look at words that stand for or make us think of nouns.

Look at the words in the example sentence and tell me if there are any words that you could replace with a noun. (*MY* COULD BE REPLACED WITH SOMEONE'S NAME)

Underneath the word *my,* write your name. You'd have to change your name a bit to make the sentence make sense though. How would you change it? (BY ADDING THE SUFFIX -'*S*)

When you change a word like this so that it agrees with the other parts of the sentence, that's called changing a word's *form*. We do that automatically in speech from the time we're very young.

The word *my* stands for a noun. This kind of word is called a pronoun. Let's write the definition on the worksheet.

Definition: A pronoun is a word that stands for a noun.

Activity 3.2—Marking

We're going to mark pronouns in sentences in the same way that we mark nouns. How do we do this? (BY CIRCLING THEM)

Why are we marking them the same as nouns? (BECAUSE PRONOUNS STAND FOR NOUNS)

Look carefully at the words in the example passage on the worksheet. Tell me the nouns, and then tell me if there are any other words in the sentences that those nouns could replace.

This poem is about a family and the day that they move house. It doesn't have the word *family* in it, but there are words that make us think of the family and of the author of the poem. What words? (WE, I)

Words that make us think of nouns in this way are called pronouns. Now circle all the nouns, determiners and pronouns in the passage.

Activity 3.3—A world without pronouns

There is another thing you should know about why we use pronouns.

Imagine a world with no pronouns. In this poem, every time the family or the author is mentioned, those words would have to be written in full. For example, take the first line:

Today we're moving,

How would we say that line without pronouns? (TODAY THE FAMILY IS MOVING)

Now let's write out the whole poem taking out the pronouns and putting *the family*, *the house* or *the author* in their place. How does it read now?

Today the family is moving,
The family is moving today,
The family is nearly out,
The family is nearly away,
The house is empty,
The family is in the family's car,
There's the new house
And here the family is.
The new house is dirty, the new house is damp, the new house is smelly, the new house is black,
The author is scared, the author wants to go back.

Note: The word *there* in the text can also be classed as a pronoun, but it would have to be replaced with a whole phrase, such as 'in that place'. We don't expect pupils to spot this themselves.

Activity 3.4—Pupil sentences without pronouns

Have students revisit the sentences they wrote for the noun lesson. This time have them write the sentences again using pronouns in place of the nouns. Have them circle the pronouns in their sentences. There will be a total of five sentences.

Activity 3.5—Test sentences

Write the four test sentences below.

1 He is washing a dog.
2 I saw the horses.
3 They went out.
4 It is bright red.

Place your laminated noun cards on the board.

> In the first sentence, *He is washing a dog*, can anyone tell me if I could take out a word and replace it with a word on one of the noun cards? (YES, YOU COULD REPLACE *HE* WITH *JAMES* AND YOU COULD REPLACE *DOG* WITH *CAT*)
>
> That's right, you could swap one noun for another, such as *cat* for *dog*, or you could take out the word *he* and put someone's name there, because the word *he* is meant to make you think of someone. What kind of word makes you think of a noun? (A PRONOUN)
>
> From now on, whenever we find a word that can stand in for or replace any type of noun, we're going to call it a pronoun.

Repeat this process with the other noun cards and the remaining test sentences.

Activity 3.6—Tricky pronouns

There are some pronouns that fall into the grey area between determiners and pronouns. They are words like *each, many, some, other* and *few.* They often precede nouns:

- each horse
- many apples
- some books
- other children
- few sentences

Discuss with your pupils how they would explain these words and what they have in common.

Pronouns worksheet

1 Circle the pronoun(s) in the example sentence.
2 Underneath any pronouns, write the noun that they refer to, if known.

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

3 Write the definition of a pronoun.

_____

_____

4 Circle the nouns and their determiners in the following poem.

Circle the pronouns.

Rewrite the poem, replacing all the pronouns with nouns.

Today we're moving,	_____
We're moving today,	_____
We're nearly out,	_____
We're nearly away,	_____
The house is empty,	_____
We're in our car,	_____
There's the new house	_____
And here we are,	_____
It's dirty, it's damp, it's smelly, it's black,	_____
I am scared, I want to go back.	_____

5 Rewrite your sentences from the nouns lesson, this time using pronouns in place of the nouns.

a _____

b _____

c _____

d _____

e _____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Pronouns worksheet notes

Example sentence:

The example sentence should look like this, with each pupil's name as the first word:

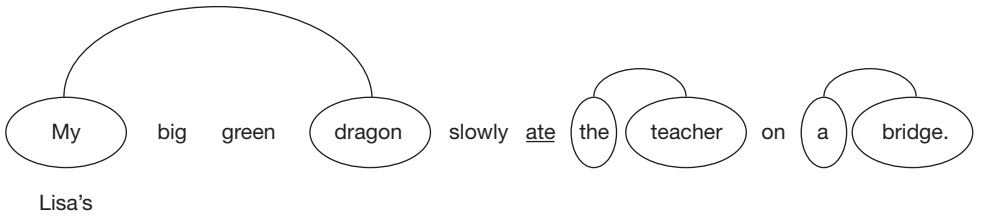


Figure 3.1 Pronouns example sentence marked

The example passage should look like this:

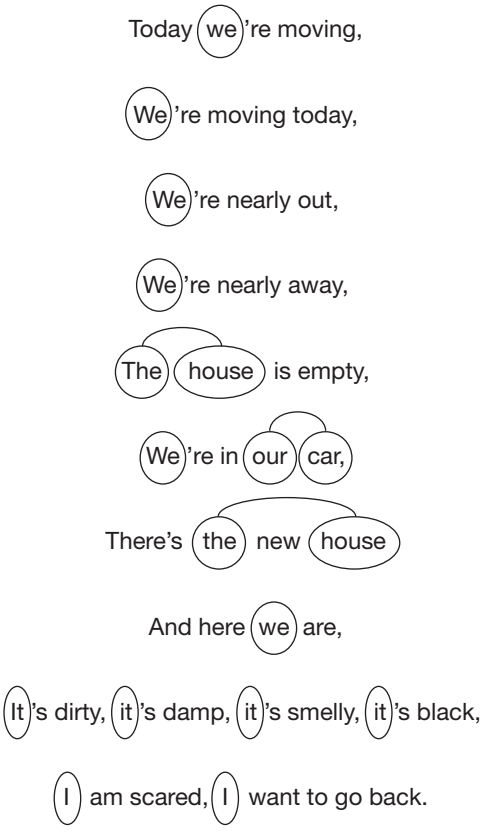


Figure 3.2 Pronouns example passage marked

Extension activities

These extension activities are for pupils wishing to do further work on pronouns. There are several different types of pronoun. The list below identifies the major categories. The list gives each pronoun a name and a function and some examples. Extension pupils can use this list to determine what kinds of pronouns appear in the example passages from now on.

Personal pronouns

These refer to:

- the speaker(s): *I, me, we, us*
- the person or people being spoken to: *you*
- or the person/people being spoken about: *he, him, she, her, it, they, them*

Note: *you* was originally the second person plural. The singular was *thou*/*thee*. *Thou*/*thee* is still sometimes used in parts of Yorkshire. Some English dialects change the form of the second person plural to *youse.* This happens in many non-standard versions of English spoken in parts of Australia, Scotland, Ireland, the USA and England. Another American version of this is *y'all*.

Discuss the different uses of personal pronouns and the kinds of sentences they appear in.

Possessive pronouns

These pronouns match the personal pronouns and stand in for a noun or noun phrase (we will come to phrases shortly):

my, mine, your, yours, his, hers, her, its, our, ours, their, theirs

Note: There is no apostrophe at the end of any of the possessive pronouns. This helps to remind us of the difference between *its,* as in:

Its blanket was soaked.

and the contraction *it's,* as in:

It's a nice day.

Why do you think people have problems differentiating between the two?

Reflexive pronouns

These are the personal pronouns plus the suffix *-self* or *-selves.*

myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves

Sometimes people use reflexive pronouns in a non-standard way to try to appear more formal, polite or courteous. *And for yourself, Madam?* or *Please forward the document to myself.* Other languages do have alternative, more formal pronouns (French: *tu*/*vous*, German: *du*/*Sie*), but usually for second person pronouns only.

More information about this can be found in the Language Myths lesson.

Relative pronouns worksheet

These include:

who, whom, which, whose, when, where

These pronouns show the connection between a noun and the rest of the sentence.

The word *that* can also be used in this way and people often interchange it with *which.* However, there can be a difference. Consider the meaning of the sentences below.

The pig, *which* is black, slept soundly in the sty.
The pig *that* is black slept soundly in the sty.

The first sentence implies that there is only one pig and that, incidentally, it is black, whereas the second sentence implies that there is more than one pig, but only the black one slept soundly in the sty.

See if you can think of some more sentences where *which* and *that* imply this subtle difference.

_____

_____

_____

Here are some more examples of sentences containing relative pronouns. Write a second sentence using the same pronoun beneath each one.

The Canadian *who* married my friend has excellent teeth.

_____

The dancer to *whom* these shoes belong has a performance tonight.

_____

The showjumper *whose* dog stole the bread is very sorry.

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Interrogative pronouns worksheet

These pronouns are often referred to as question words (to *interrogate* is to question someone):

who, whom, what, which, whose, when, where, how

We have seen some of these words categorised as relative pronouns above, but the way in which they are used differs. While relative pronouns simply show relationship, interrogative pronouns are used to form questions.

They can also introduce another part of a sentence to form a different kind of question:

Andy wondered *who* played the solo.
Joanna is trying to find out *whose* mess this is.
Caitlin asked Ory *what* he said.

Think of some more examples of interrogative pronouns forming the introduction to the second part of the sentence.

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Demonstrative pronouns

These interesting words take singular or plural form depending on the following noun:

this/*these*: this town/these things
that/*those*: that mistake/those shoes

'Demonstrative pronouns could also fall into the determiners category since they signal a noun.' Discuss.



Indefinite pronouns worksheet

These pronouns do not make particular reference to an identifiable person or thing.

all, any, each, every, none, no, one, some

Use each one in an example sentence to see how this might be true.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Reciprocal pronouns

These pronouns show mutual action and are limited to:

each other, one another

Are they interchangeable or do they differ slightly in meaning?

Compound pronouns

These pronouns are formed using the indefinite pronouns *any, every, no* and *some,* plus the endings *-body, -one, -thing, -where*.

anybody, anyone, anything, anywhere, everybody, everyone, everything, everywhere, nobody, no one, nothing, nowhere, somebody, someone, something, somewhere

In some dialects, the ending *-how* is also acceptable, but is not generally recognised as a standard form of English, except the word *somehow*:

anyhow, nohow

Which do you find more acceptable and why do you think *every* is missing from this list?

His/her/their

The pronouns *he* and *she* are gender specific. What happens when the subject doesn't reveal the gender? Consider:

A person could break his/her neck on that step.

Which pronoun do you choose?

A person could break his neck on the that step.
A person could break her neck on that step.

Some writers choose *their*, though this is considered less formal, some choose one gender and stick with it in whatever they are writing, and others alternate between the genders.

What's your preference?

4 Verbs

> ‘When I have previously taught verbs I have fallen into the trap of defining them as “action words” with my pupils. Your explanation of them has made me better understand verbs. Thanks!’
>
> Primary school teacher after completing *Grammar for Life Online*

When searching for a list of verb types, it is not hard to get the feeling that the list might never end. The following lessons, however, will be limited to a study of:

- transitive verbs
- intransitive verbs
- auxiliary verbs
- past tense
- present tense
- future tense

Definition

Verbs are words that, for the most part, tell us about actions, states of being and states of having.

As further food for thought, there are three possible realms of experience that human consciousness can be reduced to:

- being: am, is, look, smell, appear, seem
- doing: surf, dive, ski
- having: have, possess, own

In broad terms, every verb reflects one of the three so it is not enough to stop at the ‘doing’ definition of a verb. We could instead define them as ‘be, do, have’ words.

Of course, grammar wouldn't be grammar if it didn't have grey areas. Consider the word *interests* in the sentence *Neuroscience interests Carol.* Though some might say that this is a 'do' word, others contend that it is not. A call for exceptions like these is duly made in the extension activities at the end of the chapter.

Etymology

Latin *verbum* 'word', possibly from Sanskrit *vrata* 'command, vow'

Compound verbs

We often use supplementary words to help verbs express tense. Verbs made up of a chain of words are called compound verbs. In the sentence

Emma has been helping people all her life.

has been helping is a compound verb. There will be more information on this in the chapter on tense.

Marking

Verbs in our example sentences will be underlined. The line is joined with an arrow to the noun that performs the action and/or is affected by the action. Together they form the subject, verb and object. The marking below serves to illustrate the transfer of energy from the subject, through the verb to the object.

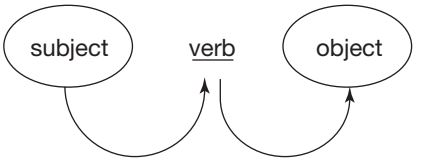


Figure 4.1 Subject–verb–object diagram

Activities

Activity 4.1—Complete my thought

We know what parts of speech name things or make us think of names of things. What are they called? (NOUNS AND PRONOUNS)

But when we communicate, we also need to talk about other things. We don't live in a world where we just go around naming things.

For example, tell me what's wrong with my communication if I just say this:

The dog.

Is that a complete thought? (NO)

Why not? (THERE ISN'T ENOUGH INFORMATION)

How would you make *The dog* into a complete thought? (BY TALKING ABOUT WHAT THE DOG IS DOING, WHAT THE DOG IS LIKE OR WHAT THE DOG HAS)

Let's see if we can complete the thought by talking about what the dog is doing.

Have the pupils come up with ideas and then use the following example from the verbs worksheet:

The dog is running.

We've added some words in order to complete our thought. We now know not only that there is a dog, but also what it is doing. What word or words show what it is doing? (IS RUNNING)

Those words are doing a different job from the nouns and pronouns. What are they doing? (THEY ARE SHOWING THE ACTION OF THE DOG)

What do you call a word that shows action? (A VERB)

Activity 4.2—Discovering compound verbs

Suggested dialogue

In the dog sentence, there are two words that make up the verb. What two words? (IS RUNNING)

This is called a compound verb. *Is* and *running* go together as partners.

We aren't talking about two random verbs like *know* and *stare*, squashed together. When we talk about compound verbs, we have what is called a main verb and an auxiliary verb. There is a small set of auxiliary verbs, which we call a closed set. The set of possible main verbs in our language is endless, as you can keep on inventing new words for all our experiences. This type of set is called an open set.

We are going to mark the verb in this sentence by underlining *is running* with one line because they make up one verb.

Which one do you think might be the auxiliary verb? (IS)

The word *is* here certainly doesn't carry the sense of the verb. It's the word *running* that gives us the clear picture.

What does *is* tell us here? (THAT THE ACTION IS TAKING PLACE IN THE PRESENT)

We also need to mark the noun and its determiner.

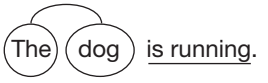


Figure 4.2 *The dog is running* basic diagram

Worksheet: There is a table of auxiliary verbs on the worksheet. Use it to discuss their role in altering the sense of a main verb.

Activity 4.3—Subject and verb

We then need to show how all the words fit together to make a complete thought. How do you think we should do that?

Have the pupils come up with ideas about how to show the relationship between the noun and the verb.

A simple way to show how the noun and the verb relate to each other is to use an arrow. Is the dog doing the running? (YES)

If the noun is doing the action, this is called the subject of the sentence. We show how the subject is connected to the verb by drawing an arrow from the noun to the verb.

Let's circle the noun and its determiner and put a line under the verb. Now draw an arrow from the noun to the verb that runs under the words (subscript).

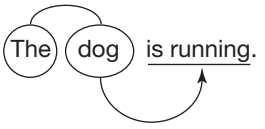


Figure 4.3 ***The dog is running*** **marked diagram**

Activity 4.4—Subject–verb–object

We often have sentences with two nouns or pronouns—one that is doing the action and one that is being affected by the action. Here is an example:

The dog ate the bone.

Let's mark the nouns and underline the verb.

What is the subject of the sentence? (THE DOG)
What is the dog being, doing or having? (IT IS EATING, A DOING VERB)
Draw an arrow from *dog* to *ate* under the words to connect them.
But there is another noun here. What is it? (BONE)
How is it connected to the dog and the action of eating? (THE BONE IS BEING EATEN BY THE DOG)

When a word is affected by the verb in this way, it is called the object of the sentence. To mark the object of the sentence, we draw an arrow from the verb to the object noun or pronoun. The arrow starts off where the subject arrow ends, thus showing us that the subject is also connected to the object. It's a bit like a transfer of energy from one noun to the next through the verb.

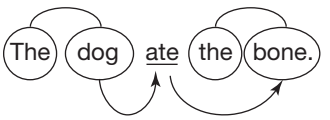


Figure 4.4 ***The dog ate the bone***

Activity 4.5—State of being

Now let's look at this dog again. See what you can tell me about the verb in this sentence:

The dog feels happy.

What is the noun? (THE DOG)
Is this sentence a complete thought? (YES)
So what word is the verb? (FEELS)

Watch out!

Often, you will get the response *feels happy*. Correct this by saying:

> You're half right. One of those words is the verb, but the other is actually doing the different job of giving more information about the dog. Which word? (HAPPY)
>
> This is a word called an *adjective*. More on that later. However, the word we're now left with is what? (FEELS)
>
> In this sentence, the word *feels* is a verb. But is it showing an action of the dog? (NO, THE DOG IS NOT DOING ANYTHING, IT IS *BEING* SOMETHING)
>
> Rather than showing an action, the verb *feels* shows what we call a state of being. That's another job that verbs do, so to complete our definition, we must now say that verbs can show action or state of being.

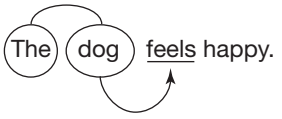


Figure 4.5 ***The dog feels happy***

Activity 4.6—Being vs doing

Here is a list of some *being* verbs:

is, feels, smells, sounds, tastes, looks, appears, seems

Many of these verbs have more than one meaning: a *being* meaning and a *doing* meaning. For example:

Richard smells his roses.

is very different from

Richard smells funny.

Which is the doing verb and which is the being verb? (SENTENCE 1 HAS THE DOING VERB AND SENTENCE 2 HAS THE BEING VERB)

Take the list of being verbs above and write out some sentences showing the be/do contrast.

Activity 4.7—Having

There is one additional kind of verb that neither shows an action nor a state of being. Consider this sentence:

The dog has a kennel.

What is the subject? (THE DOG)
And the verb? (HAS)
Does it have an object? (YES, *KENNEL*)
Is the dog doing something? (NO)
Is the dog being something? (NO)
So what is the verb expressing here? (HAVING/POSSESSION)

Let's think of some other verbs that express this idea.

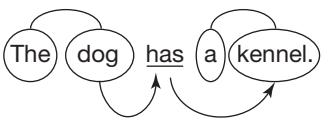


Figure 4.6 ***The dog has a kennel***

A list of possible *having* verbs:

possess, own, retain, hold, exhibit, keep, lack (the opposite of *have* in this sense, but still not expressing an action or state of being).

Activity 4.8—Implied subjects

Sometimes you can communicate a complete thought without mentioning a noun or pronoun. Consider these examples:

Pass the salt. (subject *you*)
See you tomorrow. (subject *I*)
Wish you were here. (subject *I*/*we*)

Such examples usually occur in informal language.

Have your pupils think of some more implied subjects and reflect on the formality/informality of the utterances in which implied subjects occur.

Verbs worksheet

Compound verbs

1 Circle the nouns/pronouns and determiners in the sentences below.

Graham is singing.

Adam was whistling.

Michael used to work in a shopping centre.

2 Now underline the verb and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb.

Auxiliary verbs

3 Take the main verb *explode* and add it to the following auxiliary verbs.

can _____

is _____

has _____

may _____

might _____

must _____

ought to _____

shall _____

should _____

used to _____

will _____

would _____

How did you have to change the form of *explode* to fit some of the auxiliary verbs?
Consider also the slightly different meanings given to *explode* as you change the auxiliary verb.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Subject–verb–object

4 Circle the nouns/pronouns and determiners in the sentences below.

Suzie is babysitting a cat.

Gillian loves her sister.

Fiona renovated her house.

5 Now underline the verb and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and from the verb to the object.

6 Complete these sentences:

Verbs have a s_____ , which is a n_____ or a p_____. Verbs can also have an o_____, which is also a n_____ or a p_____.

State of being

7 Circle the nouns/pronouns and determiners in the sentences below.

8 In the sentences below, underline the verb and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb.

Rick seems restless.

Marty looks healthy.

Beth sounds Irish.

9 Complete this sentence:

Verbs also show s_____ of b_____.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Having

10 Circle the nouns/pronouns and determiners in the sentences below.

John has a hairdryer.

Danny owns a surfboard.

Carol shows an interest in science.

11 Now underline the verb and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and from the verb to the object.

Implied subjects

12 What are the implied subjects in the following sentences? Discuss them with the class.

Stop the bus.

Take that back!

Have suitcase. Will travel.

Example sentence and your sentences

13 Circle the nouns, pronouns and determiners in the example sentence.

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

14 Now underline the verb and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb.

15 Go back to your sentences you created earlier and mark the verbs, subjects and objects.

Verbs example passage

Mark the following passage:

Young children work harder than most adults.
They don't have jobs. They don't have
other people to care for, but
they do have a mighty task.
They must learn their language so that
they can be understood by
everyone around them.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Verbs worksheet notes

The cloze sentences read like this:

Verbs have a subject, which is a noun or pronoun. They can also have an object, which is also a noun or pronoun.

Verbs also show state of being.

The example sentence now looks like this:

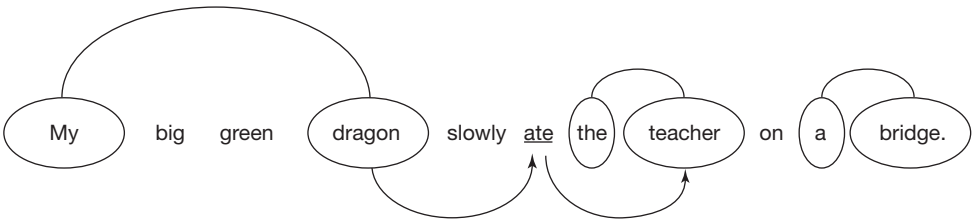


Figure 4.7 Example sentence with verb

Extension activities

Intransitive verbs

As further verb study, have pupils read the information below, think of examples and discuss.

> When the arrow starts at a noun and continues past the verb to another noun, the verb is called 'transitive'. When the arrow starts at a noun and stops at the verb, the verb is called 'intransitive'. This comes from the Latin in- meaning not and trans- meaning across. The energy from the subject is not carried across to anything else by the verb.

In dictionaries, this is what is meant by *vi.* and *vt.* in the section that tells you what part of speech a word is.

Many verbs can be both transitive and intransitive. For example:

The dog is running.
The dog is running the country.

In the first sentence, the dog is doing the action of going fast on his legs. In the second sentence, the dog is doing something connected with the governing of a country. The verb in the first sentence is intransitive and the verb in the second is transitive.

The verbs listed below are some examples of intransitive verbs. Some of them can be used transitively as well. That is, some can take an object in certain contexts. For instance, *escape* in *We will escape tomorrow* is intransitive, but in *I escaped his attention* the verb is now transitive, *attention* being the object of the verb *escape*.

act, adapt, admit, answer, attack, bat, be, bite, camp, cheat, clash, crawl, dance, detract, dabble, do, elope, emigrate, erupt, escape, expand, explode, fade, fall, fast, fidget, flit, float, fly, frolic, gallop, glow, grow, jump, kneel, lead, lean, leap, learn, left, limp, listen, march, mourn, move, panic, party, pause, peep, pose, pounce, pout, pray, preen, read, recline, relax, relent, rise, roll, run, rush, sail, scream, shake, shout, sigh, sit, skip, slide, smell, snarl, soak, spin, spit, sprint, squeak, stagger, stand, swim, swing, twist, wade, walk, wander, wave, whirl, wiggle, work, yell

State of being verbs

Q. What do many of the *being* verbs have in common?
A. They often have something to do with the senses.

This is what the marked passage should look like:

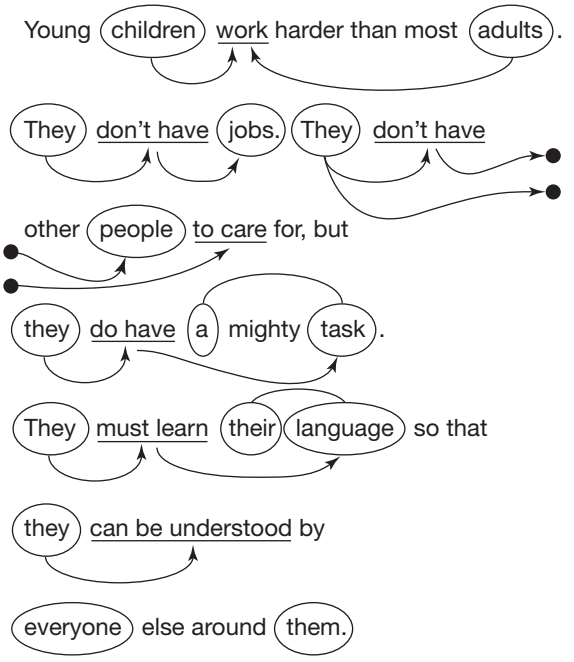


Figure 4.8 Verbs example passage marked

5 Agreement

> *Everyone has things that they hide.*
>
> Not Chad Kroeger in *Believe it or Not*

Now that we have The Universals, i.e. subjects and their verbs (subjects can be pronouns too!), we have to make sure that they agree with one another. This chapter gives some practice in doing just that.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an understanding that, when editing written work, subject–verb agreement is an important checkpoint.

When asked how pupils could improve their written assignments, teachers invariably placed lack of subject–verb agreement high on their agendas. The focus of the lessons in this chapter will be to identify problem areas and build an understanding of how to construct sentences with a grammatically correct correspondence between verbs and their subjects.

The lessons in this chapter do the following things:

- define and demonstrate the term *agreement*
- explore the concept of number and person
- show how to conjugate verbs in accord with their number and person
- list common situations where subject–verb disagreement occurs
- discuss the subtle usages of group words (*team*, *congress*, *parliament*, etc.) in the hope of encouraging debate in the classroom about whether to treat them as singular or plural
- provide extension work including compound subjects and objects

Activities

Activity 5.1—Agree vs disagree

For subjects to have good relationships with their verbs, there has to be something called *agreement*. It's a bit like life. People work better together if they agree. Sentences work better if their subjects and verbs agree.

The agreement vs disagreement table below shows just how awkward sentences can sound if the subject and verb disagree.

Look at your own sentences and see if you can make the subject and the verb disagree. How awkward does it feel?

Table 5.1 Agreement vs disagreement

Agreement	*Disagreement*
1. Marie studies in the evenings.	Marie study in the evenings.
2. I am happy.	I are happy.
3. Eric and Michelle look forward to lunch.	Eric and Michelle looks forward to lunch.

Activity 5.2—Number and person

With subject–verb agreement, there are two major features to look out for:

- number: whether the subject is singular or plural
- person: whether the subject is the speaker(s) (*I*/*we*), those spoken to (*you*) or those spoken about (*he, she, it, they*)

Consider sentence 1:

Marie studies in the evenings.

The subject is singular (one person) and we are speaking *about* her. Let's break the verb *study* into its number and person choices using a table. In grammar, this is called *conjugating* a verb.

Table 5.2 Conjugating the verb *to study*

	to study			
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker	I	study	we	study
Second: spoken to	you	study	you	study
Third: spoken about	he/she/it	studies	they	study

So we are speaking about a singular noun in the third person. That's how you say it like a grammarian. It's actually quite simple.

The third person singular verb for *study* is *studies*. So your subject and your verb will agree if they are written in the third person singular. Any other person or number would result in the verb being *study*, which for the third person, is ungrammatical.

**He study.*
**She study.*
**It study.*
**Karen study.*

In English, most verbs remain the same despite the number or person they refer to. It is only the third person singular that you have to watch out for.

Activity 5.3—Conjugating the verb to be

Let's take a look at sentence 2.

I am happy.

The word *am* is the first person singular of the verb *to be*. This is an irregular verb and, as such, is conjugated differently from a regular one.

This time, we have a partially filled conjugation table. Let's fill in the rest.

Table 5.3 Conjugating the verb *to be*

	to be			
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker	I		we	
Second: spoken to	you		you	
Third: spoken about	he/she/it		they	

In the sentence *I am happy*, the subject is the singular speaker *I*, rather than a speaker within a group *we*.

So what is the number? (SINGULAR)

And what is the person? (FIRST)

So what is the verb? (AM)

Why is there disagreement in the sentence *I are happy*? (FIRST PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN WITH SECOND PERSON VERB)

Nobody makes such obvious mistakes in writing very often, but now that you know what agreement is, we can take a look at why disagreement sometimes occurs.

Activity 5.4—The noun closest to the verb

We most commonly make agreement mistakes when the subject is separated from the verb by other words. The further apart they are, the more difficult it can be to remember to make them agree. It makes it even harder when the word just before the verb looks like the subject but isn't.

Here is an example:

**The list of items are on the fridge.*

Here, the verb is agreeing with the word just before it, plural *items*, instead of its actual subject, singular *list*. This is a common mistake. Take away the plural noun *items,* which is not the subject of the sentence, and you have:

**The list are on the fridge.*

In standard linguistics texts, sentences preceded by an asterisk are flagged as ungrammatical. We will use this notation throughout the book.

After this has been explained, pupils should be directed to the worksheet to circle the correct verb. They may have to perform the extra step of removing the non-subject nouns to make sure the verbs agree.

Figure 5.1 shows how marking subjects and verbs can show disagreement, even when the nearest noun differs in number from the verb.

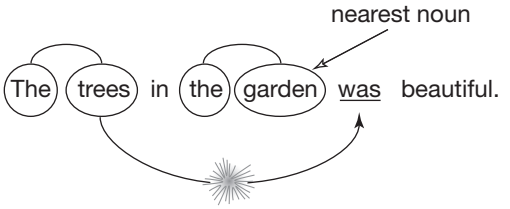


Figure 5.1 Showing disagreement

To make the subject and the verb agree, we must change the verb, marking it like this:

The trees in the garden ~~was~~ were beautiful.

Activity 5.5—Group words

The subject can be singular or plural depending on the meaning of the sentence. This happens with group words like *team* and *nation*, and even the word *group* itself.

Let's look at some examples.

The word *team* means two or more people working together. When you have words that mean two or more people or things together, you have to decide whether you are talking about the people in the team, or the team itself.

For instance, if you were talking about your team in comparison with other teams you would count *team* as a singular noun:

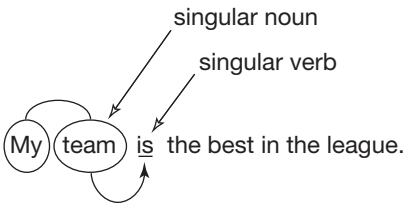


Figure 5.2 Team singular

But if the individuals in a team were being spoken about, you would count *team* as a plural noun:

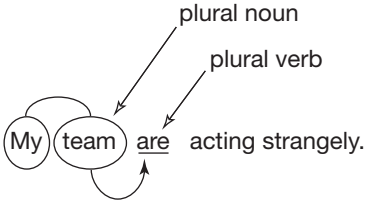


Figure 5.3 Team plural

It's a subtle difference. On your worksheet there is an opportunity for you to use some more group words that behave like this.

Here are some to choose from:

alliance, assembly, assortment, band, bunch, bundle, choir, club, cluster, clutch, coalition, collection, compendium, compilation, confederacy, congress, council, corpus, crew, crowd, ensemble, federation, gathering, horde, host, knot, league, line-up, mass, multitude, mob, partnership, pool, posse, set, side, squad, throng, troop, union

Agreement worksheet

1 Conjugate the verb ‘to be’.

Table 5.4 Conjugating the verb *to be*

		to be		
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker				
Second: spoken to				
Third: spoken about				

2 Circle the subject and underline the verb in the following sentences. Check for agreement and correct any mistakes.

a The list of items are on the fridge.

b The bag of sweets is missing.

c The owners of the dog is happy.

d The books I gave my friend was interesting.

e Wolves and my dog eat meat.

f Under the bridges sail a leaky boat.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Agreement worksheet notes

1 The verb table should look like this:

Table 5.5 Conjugating the verb *to be* key

		to be		
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker	I	am	we	are
Second: spoken to	you	are	you	are
Third: spoken about	he/she/it	is	they	are

2 The sentences should be marked and corrected like this:

a The (list) of items <u>are</u> on the fridge.
The list of items <u>is</u> on the fridge.

b The (bag) of sweets <u>is</u> missing.

c The (owners) of the dog <u>is</u> happy.
The owners of the dog <u>are</u> happy.

d The (books) I <u>gave</u> my friend <u>was</u> interesting.
The books I <u>gave</u> my friend <u>were</u> interesting.

e (Wolves and my dog) <u>eat</u> meat.

f Under the bridges <u>sail</u> a leaky (boat.)
Under the bridges <u>sails</u> a leaky boat.

Extension activities

Indefinite pronouns

There are some pronouns that can make you think of more than one person but are treated like singular nouns. These are called *indefinite pronouns*. They refer to people or things without saying exactly who or what they are. For example:

Everybody is included.
**Everybody are included.*

Everything was perfect.
**Everything were perfect.*

When you use the pronouns *everybody* or *everything*, you don't think of an individual, but a group of people, so you should use a singular verb.

Compound subjects

When the subject of a sentence contains two or more nouns, things can get quite tricky. The general rule is: when the nouns are joined by the word *and*, they are treated as plural. Compare:

Kerry and Ed were laughing.
**Kerry and Ed was laughing.*

Here, two people, Kerry and Ed, function as individuals in a group, as in the *team* example above.

When the nouns are joined with words other than *and*, such as *or*, something different happens:

Either Kerry or Ed was laughing.
**Either Kerry or Ed were laughing.*

The people in this sentence are now treated as individuals. Either Kerry *was* laughing or Ed *was* laughing. Not both.

Watch out!

When one of the nouns of the subject is singular and the other is plural, it can create a problem. Which verb would you choose here?

The Jenkin boys or Monica are/is coming to visit.

There are good arguments for both verbs. In cases like this, though, it's best to rewrite the sentence:

Either the Jenkin boys are coming to visit, or Monica is.

Compound subject/ambiguous object

Consider the sentence:

Peter and I are going to train our dogs.

Does this mean that Peter and I jointly own some dogs or does it mean that we are each going to train a dog that we own individually?

How would you rewrite the sentence to show each proposition more clearly?

I? Me?

Which pronoun to use is sometimes very tricky when you have to choose between *I* and *me*. Consider the following dialogue:

'Who's there?'
'Me!'

There are those who would argue that the correct response is the pronoun *I.* If you tease it all out by lengthening the contraction and putting in the implied verb you would have:

'Who is there?'
'I am there.'

This view, however, is not often echoed in informal speech. It is not uncommon to hear the following:

Me and Sid drove to the seaside.

What is the more formal version of this sentence?

6 Tense

Definition

When you're speaking about an event, verbs show how two things are related:

- the time of speaking
- when the event took place

Etymology

Latin *tensus* 'stretched'

Verb facts

Verbs show time by changing their form. Verbs are the only words in English that have this characteristic. This is called *tense*.

Switching tense in writing is a common error. This is not the same thing as expressing a different tense when appropriate. Contrast these two sentences:

If Beth flew to Paris on Monday, her daughter will be visiting her tonight.
**Patrick called the bank manager and asks him for a loan.*

It is very easy to get caught up in the sheer genius of a narrative and forget at which point on the timeline you started. This is what we are trying to avoid with these lessons.

We will introduce the concept of verbs showing tense with some simple past, present and future exercises. We will then move on to the subtleties, those being the differences in meaning that present tense verbs can express:

- things that are happening now: *Christine is at home with her boys.*
- things that are always true: *Dogs bark.*
- habitual action: *Kenny reads Calvin and Hobbes on Sundays.*

The activities in this chapter will help pupils understand these concepts.

What this chapter will not do

Defining and naming the tenses with smaller and smaller brushstrokes is not the aim of this chapter. Separating the imperfect from the pluperfect may be useful when learning another language, but the distinction is already internalised by native speakers of English. Grasping tense does not require such exhaustive analysis.

We are merely concerned with the establishment of a common language that you and your pupils can share when discussing literature or when editing written work.

Activities

Activity 6.1—Definition

Show or project the timeline and discuss the three basic tenses: past, present and future.

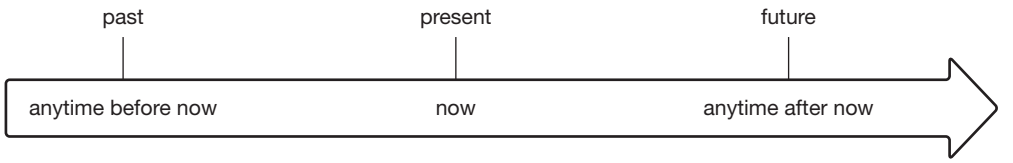


Figure 6.1 Tense diagram

Activity 6.2—Present tense and truth

The present tense shows various things. Consider the sentence:

The dog is on the bed.

Where on the timeline would that sentence go? (IT'S HAPPENING NOW, SO IN THE 'PRESENT' SECTION)

What if I said:

The flowers bloom in spring.

I'm not necessarily talking about the flowers blooming right now, but I'm not talking about the past and if I was talking about the future, what would I say? (THE FLOWERS WILL BLOOM IN SPRING)

So what do I actually mean when I use a present tense verb here? (THAT THE FLOWERS BLOOM EVERY SPRING)

That's right. The present tense can also be used to talk about things that are always true. Here are some more examples:

We start life as babies.
Breakfast is a very important meal.
Rabbits dig burrows.

Write a present tense sentence that shows how something is always true.

Activity 6.3—Habitual action

Consider the statement:

Stevie brushes his Bengal cat every day.

I'm using a present tense verb again but the meaning is slightly different. Unlike the constant reality of how we start life, breakfast being important or rabbits digging burrows, Stevie's brushing a Bengal cat each day is subject to change. It might not be true in twenty years when Stevie has one of those hairless cats. But I'm still using a present tense verb. What is this verb showing? (HABITUAL ACTION)

When we want to talk about things we do on a regular basis, we also use the present tense. Here are some more examples:

Hugh watches the football on Saturdays.
Clive goes diving at the weekend.
Caroline practises the piano every night.

Write three sentences using present tense verbs that show habitual action.

Activity 6.4—Example sentence review

Have pupils look over their example sentences and determine whether any present tense verbs are showing:

a things that are happening now
b things that are always true
c habitual action

Have pupils share their suggestions with the class and debate whether they are correct about what the verbs are showing.

Activity 6.5—Past tense

Past tense verbs show things that happened in the past. We change the form of a verb to express past usually by adding the suffix *-ed*. For example:

hum	*hummed*
walk	*walked*
land	*landed*

A lot of our small, common verbs don't do this. They are called irregular verbs. *To be* is an irregular verb. In your worksheet, when you conjugated this in the past tense, did you add *-ed* to *be*? (NO)

What other irregular verbs do you know of?

Brainstorm some irregular verbs—*do*, *have*, *run*, *give*, etc.—and show their past tense forms.

Have pupils find regular and irregular past tense verbs from their example sentences.

Activity 6.6—Future tense

The future tense is used to express that something will be or will happen in the future. The word *will* is often used with a compound verb to show future tense. For example:

My cat will be three tomorrow.
Our car will be fixed next week.
Christmas will come early this year.

You can also use other compound verbs to show future tense, such as:

- *is going to* + verb
- *might* + verb
- *shall* + verb
- *may* + verb.

Each one says a slightly different thing. Let's use each in our dragon sentence.

Substitute each compound verb and discuss the shades of meaning of each.

Tense worksheet

1 Conjugate the verb ‘to be’ in the past tense.

Table 6.1 *To be*, past

	to be (past)			
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker	I		we	
Second: spoken to	you		you	
Third: spoken about	he/she/it		they	

2 Conjugate the verb ‘to be’ in the future tense.

Table 6.2 *To be*, future

	to be (future)			
Number	*Singular*	*Verb*	*Plural*	*Verb*
Person				
First: speaker	I		we	
Second: spoken to	you		you	
Third: spoken about	he/she/it		they	

3 Write a sentence using a present tense verb that shows how something is always true:

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



4 Write a sentence using a present tense verb that shows habitual action:

_____

_____

5 Look over your example sentences and find any present tense verbs. Are they

a happening now?
b always true?
c habitual?

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Parts of speech progress check 1

One-third of the lessons on parts of speech are now complete. Your pupils are familiar with subjects, verbs and objects. Now to discover words that modify them. These are adjectives and adverbs.

The major difference between the two is that adjectives work exclusively with nouns, whereas adverbs do not work with nouns, but modify verbs, adjectives and even other adverbs.

Table 6.3 Parts of speech

Parts of speech	*Examples*	*Function*	*Description*	*Notes*
Nouns (and determiners and pronouns)	town, rain, harmony, it, his, them	Universals	Together they form a complete thought and are the minimum requirement in any sentence.	When they appear together in sentences, they must *agree.*
Verbs	make, take, am, have, do			
Adjectives	charming, ill, miserable	Modifiers	They describe, intensify, limit or qualify other words.	Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify everything else.
Adverbs	funny, really, afraid, ever			
Prepositions	at, in, than	Relationship words	They carry within their meaning specific ways in which words relate to one another in sentences.	
Conjunctions	and, so, but			

7 Adjectives

Definition

Adjectives describe, modify and give more information about nouns.

Etymology

Latin *ad-* 'towards' + *jacere* 'to throw' (to form *adject* 'added')

Mark

Adjectives in our example sentences will be placed in brackets with a superscript line going to the noun(s) they modify. Now our sentences are beginning to look like this:

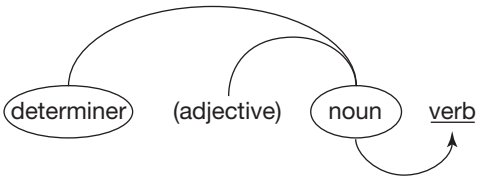


Figure 7.1 Determiner, adjective, noun, verb

Teacher resources

- worksheet
- laminated word cards.

Adjective facts

There are layers of facts about adjectives. Most people know 1 and perhaps even 2 below, but 3–7 are facts not as widely known, nor as broadly discussed. The information below is intended for your knowledge as a teacher. It can also

be used in lessons, should you want your pupils to study adjectives in greater detail.

1 Adjectives are describing words.

2 Adjectives describe nouns.

Laura is a beautiful person.
Laura is beautiful.
Beautiful Laura.

3 All adjectives can describe pronouns after the verb *be*:

Craig is mysterious.
Alfie was ashamed.
Denzil will be surprised.

4 An adjective can be modified to express comparative and superlative by adding *-er* and *-est* or *more* and *most*. We return to this and discuss it in greater detail in the lesson on suffixes.

Pete is taller than Matt.
Duncan tells the tallest tales.
Samantha finds writing more entertaining than housework.
Gill is the most accomplished teacher.

5 Adjectives can directly follow the word *not*.

Holidays are not stressful.
Amanda is not angry.

6 Most adjectives can be modified with emphatic words like *very* and *extremely*:

Peter is very confused.
Tara is extremely reassuring.

although some can't:

**Patrick wore a very rubber hat.*
**An extremely easterly wind blew.*
**The dinosaur was very dead.*

7 Some adjectives cannot be used before a noun.

Carra was aglow.
**An aglow girl.*

These are called predicative-only adjectives and often begin with *a-*. Some other predicative-only adjectives are:

ablaze, abreast, adrift, afloat, afraid, aghast, alert, alike, alone, aloof, ashamed, asleep, awake, aware

It is a matter for your judgement as to how many aspects of this word class you wish to cover. Activities for adjective classes 1–7 are there for your convenience.

Compound adjectives

These are not the same as two adjectives modifying the same noun, such as *big* and *green* in the example sentence. Rather, compound adjectives function together as a whole, which is greater than the sum of its parts. They are often joined by a hyphen for clarity. Compare:

Christine saw a man-eating crocodile.
Christine saw a man eating crocodile.

Numbers and nouns are also often hyphenated and function like adjectives:

Andrew works a ten-hour day.
Yvette needs a six-week holiday.

We will revisit this concept in the punctuation lesson.

Activities

Activity 7.1—Discovering adjectives

Now we have enough parts of speech to construct fully expressive sentences. What are those parts of speech called? (NOUNS, PRONOUNS AND VERBS)

Let's use some of the nouns, pronouns and verbs we had in our previous worksheets to make some more sentences.

Have pupils come up with about five sentences using nouns, pronouns and verbs only. Write them on the board. They will look something like these:

Shelley swims.
My dragon ate Daryl.
George runs a restaurant.

The point you are trying to make is that using only nouns, pronouns and verbs is fairly limiting.

Let's take this sentence:

My dragon ate the teacher.

Let's see what information we have so far:

Who or what are we talking about? (A DRAGON AND A TEACHER)

We know what the subject, *dragon*, is doing to the object, *teacher*, because we have what part of speech in the sentence?' (A VERB, ATE)

But in our example sentence:

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

we know more about what the noun, *dragon*, looks like because of two other words. Which words? (BIG AND GREEN)

We can really colour our sentences using descriptive words like these. Does anyone know what part of speech they are? (ADJECTIVES)

That's right. They're adjectives. It is often said that adjectives are describing words, but we're going to use a grammatical term that will help us later on. It's the word *modify*. To modify something is to change it in some way. It goes a little further than just describing. Let's go to the adjectives worksheet and write the definition. What do you think it should say? (ADJECTIVES MODIFY NOUNS)

If they modify nouns, could they also modify pronouns? Let's see.

Activity 7.2—Adjectives and pronouns

Take some of the pronouns from the pronoun lesson and try to place *big* or *green* before them.

The pronoun table again:

Table 7.1 Pronoun table

Class	*Pronoun*
Personal	I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they, them
Possessive	my, mine, your, yours, his, hers, her, its, our, ours, their, theirs
Reflexive	myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves
Relative	who, whom, which, whose, when, where
Interrogative	who, whom, what, which, whose, when, where, how
Demonstrative	this, these, that, those
Indefinite	any, each, every, none, no, one, some
Reciprocal	each other, one another
Compound	anybody, anyone, anything, anywhere, everybody, everyone, everything, everywhere, nobody, no one, nothing, nowhere, somebody, someone, something, somewhere

For example:

**My big it.*
**The green her.*

You will discover that pronouns can be used with adjectives if the sentences are constructed a certain way:

It was big.
She was green.

Activity 7.3—Test for adjectives

Gather your laminated word cards and construct the following sentences.

1 The _____ statue stood in the park.
2 The mouse was very _____.

The words that make sense in both these sentences are adjectives. The words *small* and *shiny* work in both sentences, but a word like *afraid* only works in sentence 2.

Activity 7.4—Marking the example sentence

We are going to mark adjectives by putting brackets around them and drawing a line going from and above the adjective to the word or words it is modifying.

Let's mark our example sentence. Which word is *big* and *green* modifying? (DRAGON)

So draw a line from big to dragon and green to dragon, going above the writing.

Don't forget to mark the verb as well. What is the verb? (ATE)

Does *ate* have a subject? (YES, DRAGON)

An object? (THE TEACHER)

Let the pupils mark the sentence, then have them compare it to the answer you write/project on the board.

They then continue with the worksheet.

Adjectives worksheet

Definition

An adjective is:

_____

_____

_____

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and join them to the words they modify.

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

Now take one of your example sentences and add two more adjectives to the subject.

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Adjectives example passage

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and join them to the words they modify.

The family rescued a dog, a perfect little dog with amber eyes and a tail with an explosion of white at the end. He was so lovely that after a couple of years they decided to get a new puppy. Their lives would never be the same again.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Adjectives worksheet notes

Definition:

An adjective is: A word which modifies a noun.

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners.
2 Circle the pronouns.
3 Underline the verbs and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.
4 Put brackets around the adjectives and join them to the words they modify.

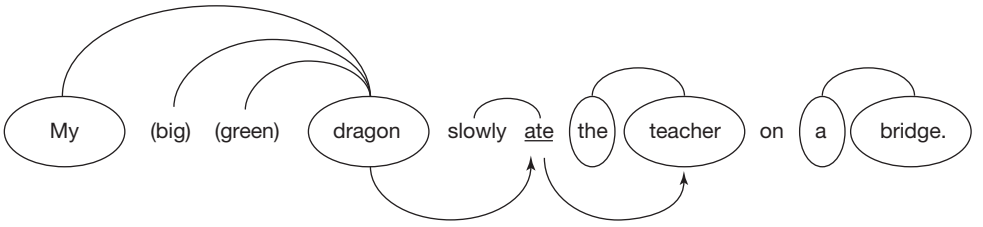


Figure 7.2 Adjectives example sentence marked

Adjectives example passage marked

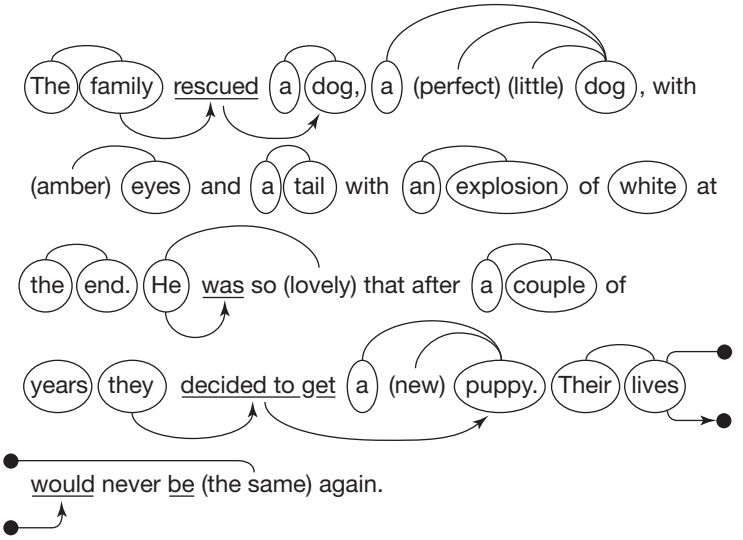


Figure 7.3 Adjectives example passage marked

8 Adverbs

Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. However, adjectives themselves can be modified too. So can verbs and other parts of speech. Welcome to the world of adverbs.

Definition

Adverbs describe, add information to or modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs.

Etymology

Latin *ad-* 'to' + *verb* 'word/verb'

Marking

Adverbs in our example sentences will also be bracketed, with superscript lines pointing to the verbs they modify.

The example sentence will look like this:

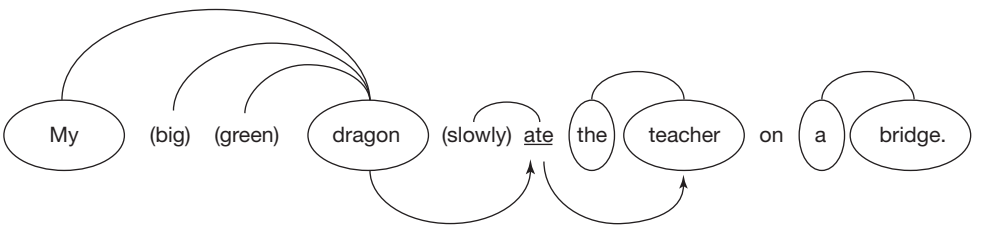


Figure 8.1 Adverbs example sentence marked

Interesting linguistic fact about adverbs

Whereas we could alter the form of nouns (e.g. singular/plural), verbs (e.g. tense/case/voice), and adjectives (e.g. comparative/superlative), adverbs are the first word class that cannot be altered. As the lesson proceeds, you will begin to notice this phenomenon.

From now on, in fact, each part of speech (adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions) have this 'unalterable' characteristic.

Activity 8.1—Discovering adverbs

There are other descriptive words in our language. We're going to look at some now. We've already added more information to our nouns, now let's add to the verbs and other parts of speech.

Let's look at our example sentence and see what word goes just before the verb. What's the verb in this sentence? (ATE)

What is the word directly before it? (SLOWLY)

What job is the word *slowly* doing here? (DESCRIBING THE VERB)

What do we call a part of speech that adds to a verb? (AN ADVERB)

Let's write the first part of the definition.

Definition

An adverb is a word that describes or adds to a verb.

Activity 8.2—Adverbs and word order

We can also put the adverb at the end of the sentence. So we could say:

My big green dragon ate the teacher on a bridge slowly.

Have pupils review their own sentences to find adverbs. Ask them to select one sentence with an adverb and see if they can place it in a different spot in the sentence.

Some pupils may have sentences with no adverbs. Ask them to select a sentence, add an adverb and then change its position in the sentence.

Activity 8.3—Modifying adjectives

Also, if we said *very big green dragon* in the example sentence, what job would you say *very* is doing? (ADDING MORE INFORMATION TO *BIG*)

Adverbs can also add information to adjectives. Let's add that to the definition.

Definition

An adverb is a word that describes or adds to a verb. Adverbs can also be used to describe or add to adjectives.

Activity 8.4—Modifying adverbs

Also, if we said *very slowly* at the end of the example sentence, what job would you say *very* is doing? (DESCRIBING *SLOWLY*)

Adverbs can also describe other adverbs. Let's add that to the definition.

Definition

An adverb is a word that describes or adds to a verb. Adverbs can also be used to describe or add to adjectives and other adverbs.

Activity 8.5—Common adverb ending

Lots of these adverbs end with the same two letters, the letters *-ly*. You can often spot an adverb because it ends with *-ly*.

Let's think of another *-ly* word that could go in place of *slowly* in this sentence.

Let the pupils suggest other *-ly* words.

Activity 8.6—Types of information

1 Adverbs can add various kinds of descriptive information to other words. For instance, in the following sentences, what kind of information is the adverb providing?

Fiona sang brilliantly.
Timothy patiently *explained the situation*.
The wombat was virtually *dead when we found it*.

Answer: the adverbs above show *how* something is or happens.

2. What do the following adverbs show?

Jillian cycled far.
Fred put the dog outside.
Helen sailed away.

Answer: the adverbs above show where something is or happens.

3. What do the following adverbs show?

Daniel had already *left the country*.
The train finally *arrived*.
We'll be dancing with Jules later.

Answer: the adverbs above show when something is or happens.

Activity 8.7—Sentence adverbs

Sometimes writers use adverbs at the beginning of a sentence to show how they feel about what they're going to say. Consider:

Honestly, *I don't know why people are so uptight about grammar*.
Clearly, *you've never seen an example of good manners before*.
Ideally, *the sun would shine by day and it would rain at night*.

If we took the adverbs above and put them elsewhere in our sentences, not at the beginning, their meanings would be slightly different. Compare the sentences above with the following:

I cannot honestly *take any money from you*.
The child saw clearly *after the surgery*.
The house is ideally *situated*.

Use the worksheet to select three sentence adverbs and show contrasting sentences.

Can you think of any more sentence adverbs?

Adverbs example sentence

To note that we have spotted an adverb in a sentence, we will put brackets around it just like we did for adjectives. Why do you think we use the same marking for adjectives and adverbs? (THEY BOTH DESCRIBE OTHER WORDS IN THE SENTENCE, SO THEIR JOBS ARE VERY SIMILAR)



Adverbs worksheet

Definition

An adverb is:

_____

_____

_____

Sentence adverbs

Choose three adverbs from the list below and write one sentence that begins with a sentence adverb. Then use the adverb again, but this time not at the beginning of the sentence. For example:

1 Seriously, does anyone even watch TV any more?

2 The driver was seriously injured.

Adverb list

apparently, basically, briefly, certainly, clearly, confidentially, curiously, evidently, happily, honestly, hopefully, however, ideally, incidentally, indeed, ironically, naturally, presumably, regrettably, sadly, seriously, strangely, surprisingly, thankfully, theoretically, therefore, ultimately, unfortunately

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Adverbs example sentence

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and connect them to the words they modify.

5 Put brackets around the adverbs and connect them to the words they modify.

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

6 Now take one of your example sentences and add two more adverbs.

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Adverbs example passage

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw an arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and connect them to the words they modify.

5 Put brackets around the adverbs and connect them to the words they modify.

Slowly and silently the owl flew to the

highest branch. Carefully her eyes scanned

the undergrowth. Her ears deftly tracked the

tiny, almost inaudibly scrabbling noises of

the mouse family who were busily making

their way from their nest to the much cooler

floor of the forest.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Adverbs worksheet notes

Common questions:

Q. Why isn't *were* in the phrase *were busily making* marked as having a subject or an object?

A. *Were* is an auxiliary verb, going with *making*. Adverbs can be inserted between auxiliary and main verbs.

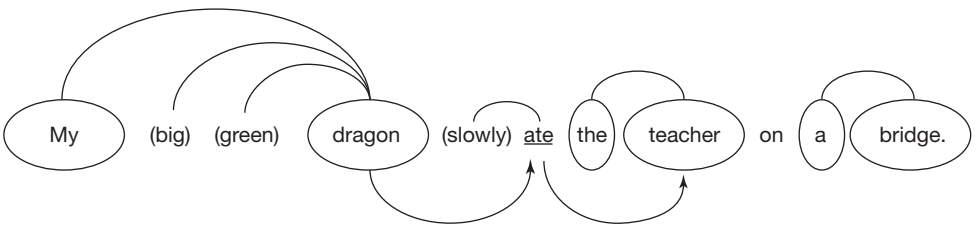


Figure 8.2 Adverbs example sentence marked

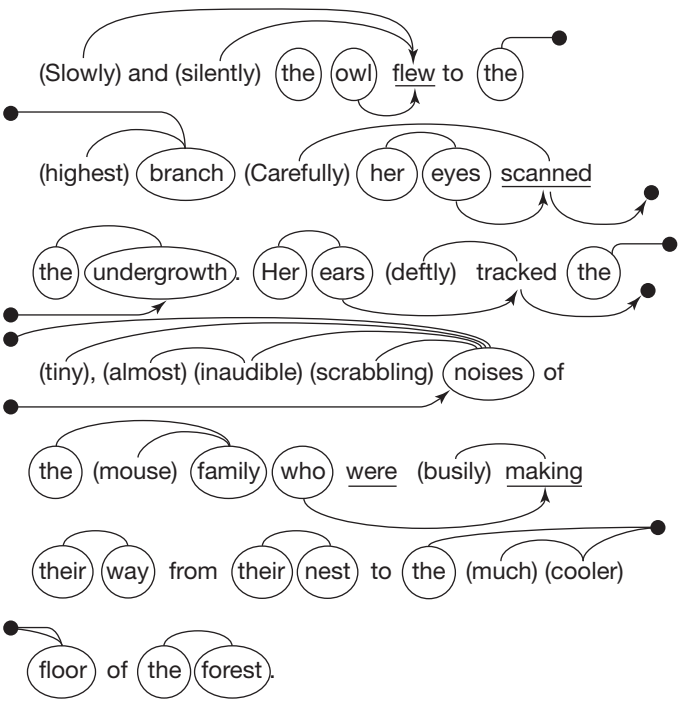


Figure 8.3 Adverbs example passage marked

Parts of speech progress check 2

Two thirds of the lessons on parts of speech have now been completed. Your pupils are familiar with subjects, verbs, objects and words which modify them. All that is left are the relationship words: those with the task of knitting elements of sentences together.

Each relationship word has its own special way of uniting the words around it. Some show location, some show time. Some show how whole sentences are more or less important than other whole sentences.

Words in this category are called prepositions and conjunctions.

Table 8.1 Parts of speech

Parts of speech	*Examples*	*Function*	*Description*	*Notes*
Nouns (and determiners and pronouns)	town, rain, harmony, it, his, them	Universals	Together they form a complete thought and are the minimum requirement in any sentence.	When they appear together in sentences, they must *agree.*
Verbs	make, take, am, have, do			
Adjectives	charming, ill, miserable	Modifiers	They describe, intensify, limit or qualify other words.	Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify everything else.
Adverbs	funny, really, afraid, ever			
Prepositions	at, in, than	Relationship Words	They carry within their meaning specific ways in which words relate to one another in sentences.	
Conjunctions	and, so, but			

9 Prepositions

Definition

Prepositions connect a preceding noun or verb to a following noun:



Figure 9.1 How prepositions join words

Etymology

Latin *prae* ‘before’ + *ponere* ‘to place’

Special note on the word of

We need to deal with the most common preposition, and indeed one of the most common words in our language: the word *of*.

Some prepositions are easy to spot: *behind, under, near* etc., but *of* is trickier.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives it nine definitions, but sums its function up thus:

> Preposition connecting its noun with preceding noun, adjective, adverb or verb and indicating relations . . .

Marking

Prepositions will be marked with square brackets. We won’t use arrows to show relationships between prepositions and other parts of the sentence, as this can get extremely complex very quickly.

Interesting linguistic fact about prepositions

Whereas we could alter the form of nouns (e.g. singular/plural), verbs (e.g. tense/case/voice), or adjectives (e.g. comparative/superlative), prepositions, like adverbs in the preceding chapter, cannot be altered. As the lesson proceeds, you will begin to notice this phenomenon.

Linguists also refer to prepositions and conjunctions as a 'closed class'. No new prepositions or conjunctions are being made. This is also true for pronouns.

Activities

Activity 9.1—Place prepositions

Our sentences are now pretty colourful. We can describe nouns, pronouns and verbs with adjectives and adverbs.

The last two parts of speech that we are going to learn about also have similar jobs.

When we communicate we often need to join our ideas together. We use our language like building blocks, one idea with another, either by showing how one word relates to another, or even how one sentence relates to another.

We are going to look at particular words which show the relationship between words or even join sentences and words to whole other sentences. These words are the relationship words. Let's take words which join words first.

We've looked at and marked the example sentence:

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

So we have two nouns and their determiners, a pronoun and a noun, two adjectives, an adverb and a word in the sentence we haven't marked yet. What word? (ON)

What is the word *on* doing in this sentence? (IT IS SHOWING WHERE THE DRAGON ATE THE TEACHER.)

The word *on* often answers the question *where*?. Does anyone know the name for a word that does that? (A PREPOSITION)

What parts of speech are linked by the preposition in this sentence? (THE VERB *ATE*, THE NOUNS *DRAGON*, *TEACHER* AND *BRIDGE*.)

That's right, this tiny word *on* unites all the main parts of the sentence to the noun where everything took place. Prepositions might sometimes be small, they don't stand out as the subject or object, they don't add shades of descriptive colour, but the job they do is just as important as all the others.

Let's write the first part of the definition.

Prepositions worksheet

Ask pupils to write the following:

A preposition is a word that shows place.

They should then review their own sentences for place prepositions and discuss the parts of speech that are united by those prepositions.

If their sentences do not contain any prepositions, guide them to select and use some from the list below:

Table 9.1 Place prepositions list

above	across	against
among	at	away
behind	below	beneath
beside	between	beyond
by	from	in
in front of	inside	near
next to	off	on
opposite	out	outside
over	past	through
under	upon	with
within	without	

Activity 9.2—Time prepositions

Suggested dialogue

> Prepositions also answer the question 'when?'
> Take the sentence
> *We got home after it was dark*.
> Which word answers the question when? (AFTER)
> Let's write the next part of the definition.

Prepositions worksheet

Ask pupils to write the following:

A preposition is a word that shows place or time

They should then review their own sentences for place prepositions and discuss the parts of speech that are united by those prepositions.

If their sentences do not contain any prepositions, guide them to select and use some from the list below:

Table 9.2 Time prepositions list

after	before	during	past	within
around	between	for	since	until/'til
as	by	from	with	up to

Activity 9.3—Other relationships

Suggested dialogue

Aside from place and time, a small number of prepositions show how a noun can relate to other parts of speech in various other ways.

Here are some example sentences. Think about the relationships that the prepositions are showing:

Everyone except *Catherine panicked*.
We were amazed to hear about *Judy's adventures*.
Karen loves to be with *Bruce*.

We're going to mark prepositions in our sentences by putting square brackets around them.

Discuss the role that the prepositions *except, about* and *with* are playing in the above sentences.

Activity 9.4—Of in all of its glory

Suggested dialogue

There is a very common word in our language, that can show place, time and a whole lot of other things, which is also a preposition. This is the word *of*.

Here are some example sentences. Think about the relationships that the word *of* is showing:

Sara and Susan are two of *my oldest friends*.
Tony is the king of *antiques*.
Shian knitted a pair of *socks*.
Gordon was certain of *his talents*.

Of is one of our oldest words and is used to show relations between many words in many different ways. When you see it, you are going to mark it as a preposition.

As we saw before, prepositions go with at least one noun and not necessarily with a verb. That's why if you say *could of, would of* or *should of* you know you're using the wrong word. What is the correct word? (HAVE)

Let's note this down.

NOTE: The word OF is a preposition.

Activity 9.5—Strong bonds

Suggested dialogue

Some words are so strongly bonded to certain prepositions that they sound very strange with an incorrect one. Consider:

**Joanne doesn't believe for ghosts*.

What should the preposition be? (IN)

Sometimes it's not that easy to decide on the correct preposition. Some words can dramatically change a sentence's meaning just by virtue of the preposition it is bonded to. Would you rather be laughed *with* or *at*? It's better that someone is afraid *for* you or afraid *of* you?

Your worksheet has some exercises in/on this. Which one? (THIS IS OPEN TO DEBATE)

Pupils fill in the missing prepositions and discuss their different choices.



Prepositions worksheet

Definition

A preposition is a word which:

_____

_____

_____

Examples

Place

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Time

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Note

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Nouns and prepositions

Fill in the correct preposition from the two choices

concern _____ (of/for)
success _____ (at/in)
hope _____ (of/for)
respect _____ (of/for)
interest _____ (in/with)
grasp _____ (of/for)
fondness _____ (of/for)
participation _____ (at/in)

Adjectives and prepositions

Fill in the correct preposition from the two choices

angry _____ (at/of)
worried _____ (of/for)
similar _____ (from/to)
proud _____ (of/for)
interested _____ (of/in)
capable _____ (to/of)
jealous _____ (of/for)
sorry _____ (of/for)

Verbs and prepositions

apologise _____ (of/for)
trust _____ (in/at)
belong _____ (to/at)
worry _____ (of/for)
study _____ (of/for)
prepare _____ (of/for)

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Prepositions example sentence

Mark the preposition in the example sentence below by putting square brackets around it. This time we are not going to draw lines to and from the words being connected, but it is interesting to notice them nevertheless.

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners and connect them with a superscript line.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw a subscript arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and connect them to the words they modify.

5 Put brackets around the adverbs and connect them to the words they modify.

6 Put square brackets around the prepositions like this [ ].

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Prepositions example passage

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners and connect them with a superscript line.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw a subscript arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and connect them to the words they describe.

5 Put brackets around the adverbs and connect them to the words they describe.

6 Put square brackets around the prepositions like this [ ].

When the Christmas tree was no longer needed, it was thrown on a pile of garden waste. The gardener was going to make a bonfire at some point. This fact did not stop one very independent hen from hiding her eggs among its needles. Eventually, she even hid herself and emerged a month later with a brood of fluffy chicks.

Your sentences

Now take one of your example sentences and add a preposition and some more information.

_____

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Prepositions worksheet notes

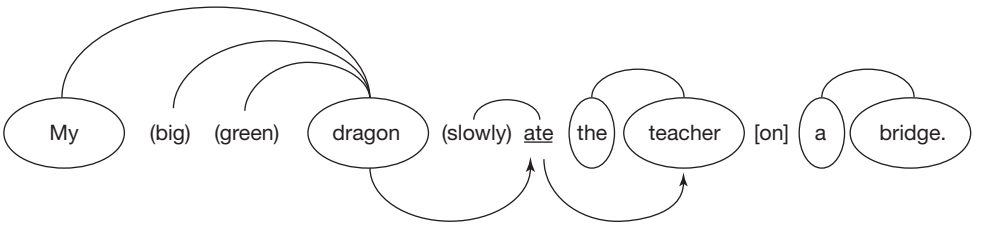


Figure 9.2 Prepositions example sentence marked

Nouns and prepositions

Fill in the correct preposition from the two choices

concern	for (of/for)
success	in (at/in)
hope	for (of/for)
respect	of (of/for)
interest	in (in/with)
grasp	of (of/for)
fondness	for (of/for)
participation	in (at/in)

Adjectives and prepositions

Fill in the correct preposition from the two choices

angry	at (at/of)
worried	for (of/for)
similar	to (from/to)
proud	of (of/for)
interested	in (of/in)
capable	of (to/of)
jealous	of (of/for)
sorry	for (of/for)

Verbs and prepositions

apologise	for (of/for)
trust	in (in/at)
belong	to (to/at)
worry	for (of/for)
study	for (of/for)
prepare	for (of/for)

Prepositions example passage marked

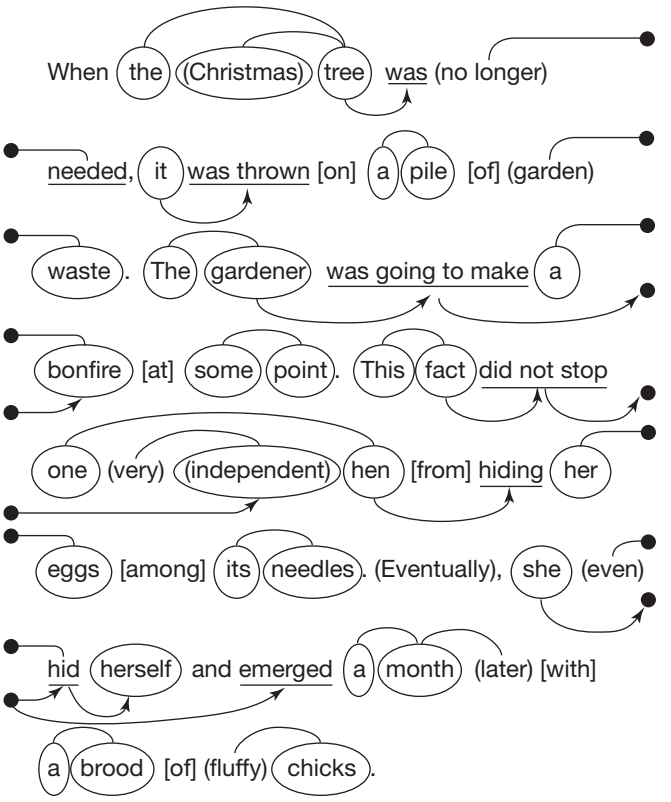


Figure 9.3 Prepositions example passage marked

Extension activity 9.1—Complex prepositions

Suggested dialogue

Aside from strongly bonded prepositions, complex prepositions contain a whole string of up to four words. This brings us quite neatly up to phrases in the next chapter, but for now, consider the use of the following complex prepositions:

on behalf of
such as
in order to
for the sake of
by means of
as opposed to

Can you think of any more?

Extension activity 9.2—Preposition environment

Look over the example sentence and passage, then discuss the kinds of words that go directly before and after prepositions.

What are your findings?

Extension activity 9.3

Q. Look over the example sentence and passage and discuss the kinds of words that go directly before and after prepositions.
What are your findings?
A. Prepositions usually connect nouns to other parts of speech.

10 Conjunctions

Definition

A conjunction is a word that connects not only individual words, but larger parts of sentences to one another. By larger parts we mean phrases, clauses and sentences, not just words.

Etymology

Latin *con-* 'together' + *iugare* 'join together'

Marking

Conjunctions will be marked with a two-headed arrow sitting above them.

Types of conjunction

There are three main conjunction types:

- coordinating conjunctions (e.g. *or, and*, *but*)
- subordinating conjunctions (e.g. *until, because, whether*)
- correlative conjunctions (e.g. not only . . . but also, neither . . . nor, whether . . . or)

You and your pupils will explore each type.

Conjunctions constitute a closed, non-alterable word class. Below is a table of common conjunctions designating their type.

Table 10.1 Conjunctions

Type	*Function*	*Examples*
Coordinating conjunctions	To join elements that have equal status in a sentence	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS)
Subordinating conjunctions	To join subordinate clauses to main clauses	although, because, if, for, how, unless, until
Correlative conjunctions	These join sentence elements in the same way as coordinating conjunctions, but function as a pair.	both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, whether . . . or, not only . . . but also

Activities

Activity 10.1—Discovering conjunctions

Sometimes when we are talking or writing, we like to say more than just one idea in one sentence at a time. If we talked only in complete sentences that had one subject, one verb, what do you think our speech and writing would be like? (BORING AND STILTED ARE SOME OF THE POSSIBLE ANSWERS HERE)

Let's take the example passage:

Many people write films, and often they write about their own lives and experiences. This is a relatively easy task, yet some filmmakers write purely from their strange imaginations. Take 'Sharknado', for instance, a film not only about sharks and tornadoes, but about sharks in a tornado attacking human cities. The result is surprisingly compelling.

In the first sentence, there are two main ideas, first that people write films, and second that they often write about their own lives and experiences.

Which word joins those ideas together? (AND)

How does the word *and* join them? As equal or unequal parts of the sentence? (AS EQUALS)

Even in the last part of that first sentence, there are two things that people write about, joined as equals by a word. What two things? (THEIR OWN LIVES AND THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES)

What word joins them? (AND)

Do you know a name for a word that joins two ideas together like this? (A CONJUNCTION)

Write the definition.

A conjunction is a word or words that joins two ideas together.

Activity 10.2—Coordinating conjunctions

Suggested dialogue

We looked at the word *and*, which we agreed made two elements in the sentence equal. The name for this type of conjunction is *coordinating conjunction.*

The seven major coordinating conjunctions can be remembered with a simple acronym: FANBOYS

This stands for:

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

We mark conjunctions by putting a two-headed arrow above them. Let's mark the conjunctions in the passage. Now let's mark the whole passage.

Activity 10.3—Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions connect what's known as subordinate clauses to main clauses. We will discover more about clauses in the following chapters. What we need to discuss here is that when subordinate and main clauses go together, they form *complex sentences*. The conjunctions are used to join them by showing time, place or cause. Consider:

Michelle might go for a swim if the rain ever stops.

We have the main clause *Michelle might go for a swim*, the subordinating conjunction *if* and then the subordinate clause *the rain ever stops*.

Subordinate clauses are named this way because they depend on the main clause for their meaning.

The list below shows some common subordinating conjunctions.

Table 10.2 Subordinating conjunctions list

after	how	though
although	if	till (or 'til)
as	inasmuch	unless
as if	in order that	until
as long as	lest	when
as much as	now that	whenever
as soon as	once	where
as though	provided (that)	whereas
because	since	wherever
before	so that	whether
even if	than	while
even though	that	why

Activity 10.4—Correlative conjunction

Some conjunctions combine with other words to form a pair. These are called *correlative conjunctions*. They always appear together, joining various sentence elements. They should be treated as coordinating conjunctions.

1 Ian is skilled *not only* in IT *but also* in linguistics.

Note: it is also acceptable to say *not only . . . but . . .*, omitting the word *also* in longer constructions. See the example passage and discuss.

2 Simon claimed he was *neither* a football *nor* a basketball fan.

3 *Whether* Jacqui paints *or* does yoga, something peaceful is always created.

Below is a list of common correlative conjunctions.

Table 10.3 Common correlative conjunctions list

both . . . and	not only . . . but (also)	not . . . but
either . . . or	neither . . . nor	whether . . . or

Have pupils suggest possible additions to the example sentence and join them with some of the conjunctions above. For example:

Coordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge but left her hat behind.

Subordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge after she finally caught her.

Correlative conjunction

Either my big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge or I'm imagining things.

Conjunctions worksheet

1 Definition. A conjunction is:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Add more information by using the three types of conjunction at the end of this sentence:

Coordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge

_____

_____

Subordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge

_____

_____

Correlative conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



3 Now take one of your example sentences and add a conjunction and some more information.

4 Choose three coordinating conjunctions and three subordinating conjunctions and use them in sentences. Make sure you can clearly show coordination and subordination.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Conjunctions example passage

1 Circle the nouns and their determiners and connect them with a superscript line.

2 Circle the pronouns.

3 Underline the verbs and draw a subscript arrow from the subject to the verb and the verb to the object if there is one.

4 Put brackets around the adjectives and connect them to the words they modify.

5 Put brackets around the adverbs and connect them to the words they modify.

6 Put square brackets around the prepositions like this [ ].

7 Mark the conjunctions by putting a double-headed arrow over them like this:

↔
and

When people write films,
they often write about their own experiences.
Some filmmakers, however, write purely from
their strange imaginations.
Take 'Sharknado', as an example,
a film not only about sharks and tornadoes,
but about sharks *in* a tornado attacking human cities.
The result is surprisingly compelling.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Conjunctions example passage marked

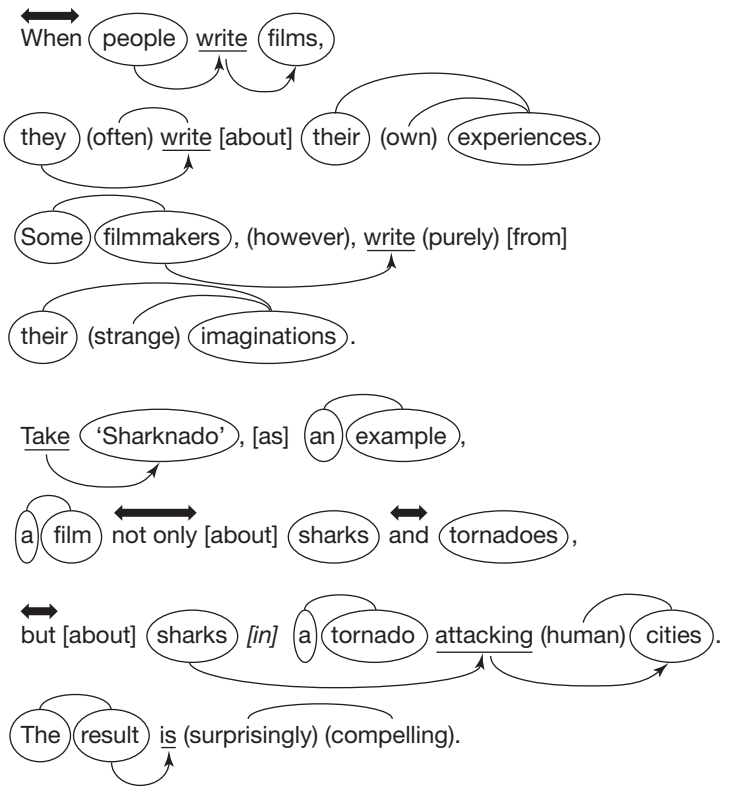


Figure 10.1 Conjunctions example passage marked

Parts of speech final progress check

The major parts of speech have now been covered. The table below shows each word class and also some extra information about whether the classes are:

- alterable or unalterable (plurals, tense, case, comparison) and
- closed or open (i.e. whether they constitute a finite set or whether new examples can be added).

Table 10.4 Parts of speech

Parts of speech	*Open/ closed*	*Alterable/ unalterable*	*Examples*	*Function*	*Description*	*Notes*
Nouns (and determiners and pronouns)	open	yes	town, rain, harmony, it, his, them	Universals	Together they form a complete thought and are the minimum requirement in any sentence.	When they appear together in sentences, they must *agree.*
Verbs	open	yes	make, take, am, have, do			
Adjectives	open	yes	charming, ill, miserable	Modifiers	They describe, intensify, limit or qualify other words.	Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify everything else.
Adverbs	open	no	rapidly, really, such, ever			
Prepositions	closed	no	at, in, than	Relationship Words	They carry within their meaning specific ways in which words relate to one another in sentences.	The word *of* is a preposition.
Conjunctions	closed	no	and, so, but			

11 Phrases

Definition

A unit in a sentence that functions as a whole within a larger construction.

When is a sentence not a sentence? When is a clause not a clause? Well, when it's a phrase. A phrase is one of three things:

- a subject
- a verb
- another word or group of words relating to the subject, the verb or the object.

Phrases NEVER contain a subject AND an object. That would be a clause. And we'll deal with clauses after this.

In music, phrasing gives expression and meaning to tunes and songs. In language, phrasing gives structure and variety to our communication.

We are naturally aware of phrasing, tending to group words around The Universals. Consider the act of dictating the following sentence.

The sloth pulled itself up in the tall tree.

Dictation forces us to slow down and pause, yet we still tend to dictate in phrases, whether we are aware of it or not. We would tend not to say:

The sloth pulled . . .
itself up in . . .
the tall . . .
tree.

But rather:

The sloth . . .
pulled itself up . . .
in the tall tree.

A phrase can be one word, such as *they* in:

They bought his present at the shop.

In this sentence, *they* is the subject and is also a phrase. There are other phrases in the sentence:

his present at the shop

which is the object of the verb *bought*. This phrase includes the smaller phrases *at the shop* and *the shop*.

In linguistics, sentences are often illustrated using phrase-structure trees. These trees provide a fascinating visual analysis of the internal structure of sentences. Take the sentence:

Ken watches cartoons on a Saturday.

This sentence can be represented by the following simple tree diagram:

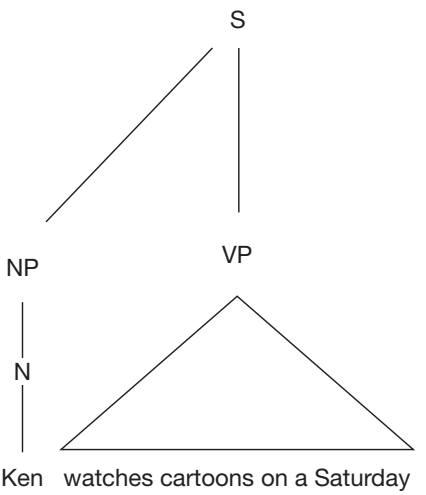


Figure 11.1 Simple Ken tree

Key:
S = sentence
NP = noun phrase
VP = verb phrase

Just above the word-level we have phrases. These phrases are termed 'constituents' in linguistics, which is what is meant by 'constituent analysis'—another way of talking about phrase structure.

We could take that whole triangle, representing *watches cartoons on a Saturday* and replace it with one word, such as *sleeps* or *yawns* or *stretches*. What we can also do is analyse the verb phrase further, breaking it down into its constituents. The words which group themselves together naturally are *watches cartoons* and *on a Saturday*. Now the tree would look like this:

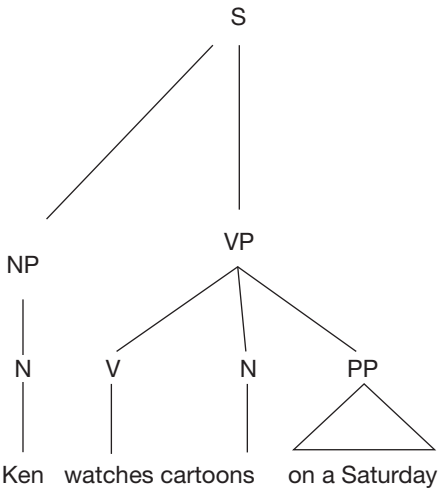


Figure 11.2 Less simple Ken tree

If we were to analyse the sentence even further, we would see that the prepositional phrase, *on a Saturday* contains a preposition and a noun phrase:

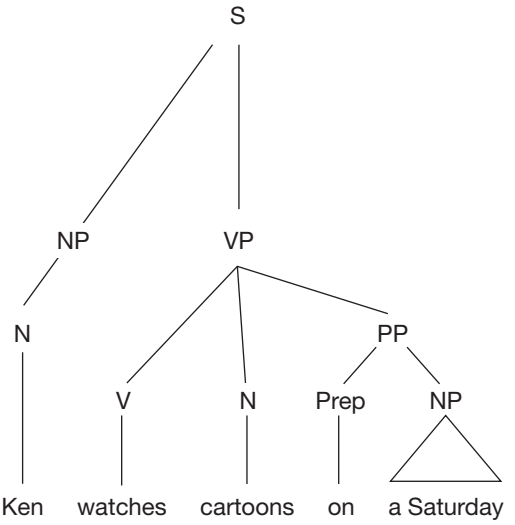


Figure 11.3 Less simple Ken tree 2

At its most complex, the noun phrase can be broken down into a noun and a determiner, giving us the least simple version of this sentence's phrase structure tree below:

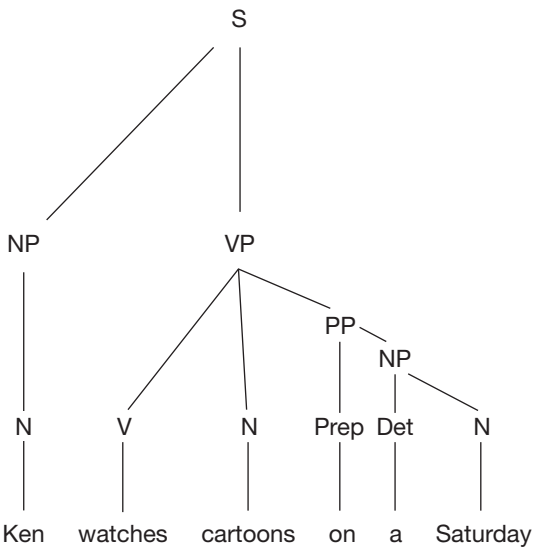


Figure 11.4 Least simple Ken tree

Drawing phrase-structure trees takes time and thought and can be as complex as the sentences they reflect. The precise expression of our thoughts demands a certain complexity and we are well equipped to encode and decode such things.

This lesson, however, will be limited to collaborating on a few simple phrase-structure trees for some straightforward practice sentences and then for the example sentence. Depending on your students' abilities, you can break the example sentence into a simple noun phrase and a verb phrase, or you can continue to analyse the phrases in increasing degrees of detail, as demonstrated above.

The activities are designed to cover all parts of speech and how they might be diagrammed with a phrase-structure tree. This is the stuff of first year linguistics and though fascinating, engaging and highly enlightening, they are nevertheless activities which could place sizeable demands on you and your pupils.

It is for this reason that I would advise caution when proceeding with the activities. There is a simple path and a complex path. The simple path ends when your pupils can recognise that their example sentence consists of a noun

phrase and a verb phrase. The complex path requires that pupils are able to account for every constituent and show how each one fits into a phrase-structure tree.

Conjunctions have been mentioned and diagrammed only when they connect words or phrases. When they connect clauses, they require analysis that opens a whole linguistic can of worms. But if you wish to pursue this further, you might be well served by doing some additional research. The bibliography in this book will provide some suggestions.

Activities

Activity 11.1—A simple tree

Now that we've looked at all the parts of speech we can start grouping them into larger units according to their functions and relationships.

When we group words into units like this, we call those units phrases. Phrases are the building blocks of sentences, just like sentences are the building blocks of paragraphs.

To find a phrase in a sentence, we have to first look for the subject and then look for the verb. A phrase contains one or the other, but never both. If it contained both a subject and a verb, then it would be a clause or a sentence. We will look at clauses next.

Phrases are the incomplete thoughts that go together to make clauses and sentences. Sometimes a phrase is only one word, but we still call it a phrase because it needs something else to make it a complete thought.

You can study sentences by using phrase structure trees. These are diagrams that show which words belong to which phrase in a sentence. Let's take the simple sentence

Donna loves dogs

and draw a tree diagram.

It will look like this:

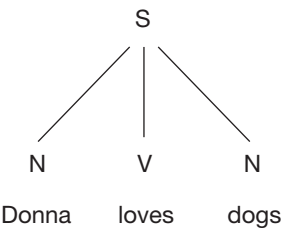


Figure 11.5 Simple syntactic tree

What do you think the abbreviations mean? (S = SENTENCE, N = NOUN, V = VERB)
What is the subject of the sentence? (DONNA)

It's just one word, but we still call it a noun phrase because we could have more than one word there and it would still function as the subject of the sentence. For example, instead of *Donna*, we could write *my cousin's wife*. That's a noun phrase too and is still the subject of the sentence. This is what we mean when we call phrases *constituents*. They function as whole units and can be replaced by single words.

We could take the two words *loves dogs* and replace it with one, such as in the sentence:

Donna does.

When a verb and its object go together like this, we have what's called a verb phrase. The head of the phrase is the verb and the whole phrase consists of a verb and a noun. If you were to replace it with a single word, that word would be a verb. That's how we decide what kind of phrase we're dealing with.

We put these words together naturally. What other parts of speech do you think might go in verb phrases? (ADVERBS, SINCE THEIR JOB IS TO MODIFY VERBS)

We can draw it like this:

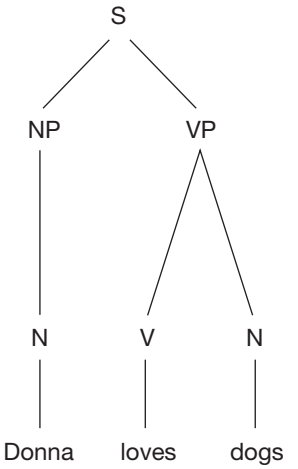


Figure 11.6 Tree with phrases

Pupils begin to write the phrase structure key.

Activity 11.2—A tree with a determiner

Now let's add a determiner:

Donna loves the dogs.

What word does the determiner belong with? (THE NOUN *DOGS*)

This gives us another phrase. What phrase? (A NOUN PHRASE)

We put these words together naturally. What other parts of speech do you think might go in noun phrases? (ADJECTIVES, SINCE THEIR JOB IS TO MODIFY NOUNS)

So this sentence now consists of a noun, the subject of the sentence, and a verb which also has an object. The verb and the object go together to form a verb phrase. The verb phrase consists of a verb and a noun with its determiner.

We can draw it like this:

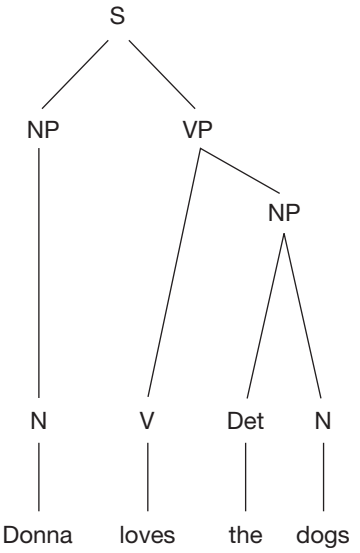


Figure 11.7 Tree with determiner

Pupils add the term VP (meaning *verb phrase*) to their key.

Activity 11.3—A tree with a determiner and an adjective

Now let's a put in an adjective:

Donna loves obedient dogs.

What word does the adjective belong with? (THE NOUN *DOGS*)
So do we still have a noun phrase? (YES)

So this sentence now consists of a noun, the subject of the sentence, and a verb which also has an object. The verb and the object go together to form a verb phrase. The verb phrase consists of a verb and a noun modified by an adjective.

We can draw it like this:

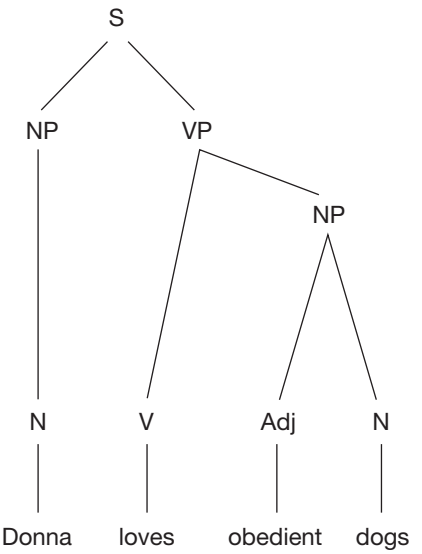


Figure 11.8 Tree with adjective

Activity 11.4—A tree with a determiner, an adjective and an adverb

Now let's put in an adverb:

Donna really loves obedient dogs.

What word does the adverb belong with? (THE VERB *LOVES*)

When an adverb modifies a verb like this, we still look at the overall phrase as the verb phrase, but it contains two further phrases. What phrases? (AN ADVERBIAL PHRASE AND A NOUN PHRASE)

So this sentence now consists of a noun, the subject of the sentence, and a verb phrase. The verb phrase contains an adverb, the verb of course, and the object of the verb which is modified by an adjective.

That sounds like a mouthful, but if taken step by step like this, it unravels quite naturally.

We can draw it like this:

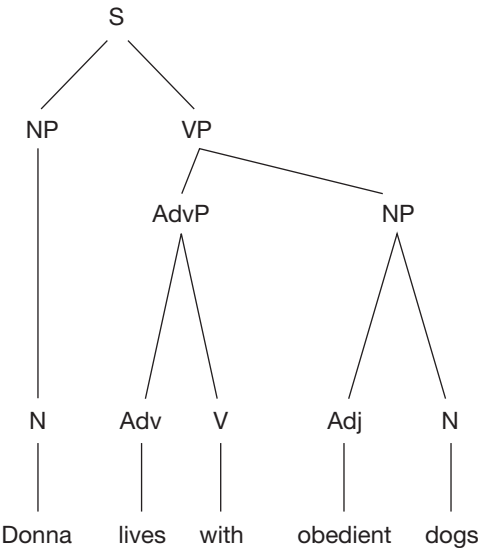


Figure 11.9 Tree with adverb

Pupils add the term Adv and AdvP (meaning *adverb* and *adverbial phrase*) to their key.

Activity 11.5—A tree with a determiner, an adjective, an adverb and a preposition

Now let's see where a preposition might belong. We'll change the sentence slightly:

Donna sometimes lives with bad dogs.

What word is the preposition? (WITH)

The verb phrase now contains two additional phrases: *sometimes lives* and *with bad dogs*. The head of the first phrase *sometimes lives* is an adverb, so we have what type of phrase? (AN ADVERBIAL PHRASE CONTAINING AN ADVERB AND A VERB)

The head of the second phrase is the preposition *with*, so what does that make this phrase? (A PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE)

That phrase also contains the noun phrase *bad dogs* which consists of an adjective and a noun.

So this sentence now consists of a noun, which is the subject of the sentence, and a verb phrase. The verb phrase contains an adverbial phrase containing the verb, a prepositional phrase, containing a preposition and a noun phrase, which is the object of the verb and which is modified by an adjective.

We can draw it like this:

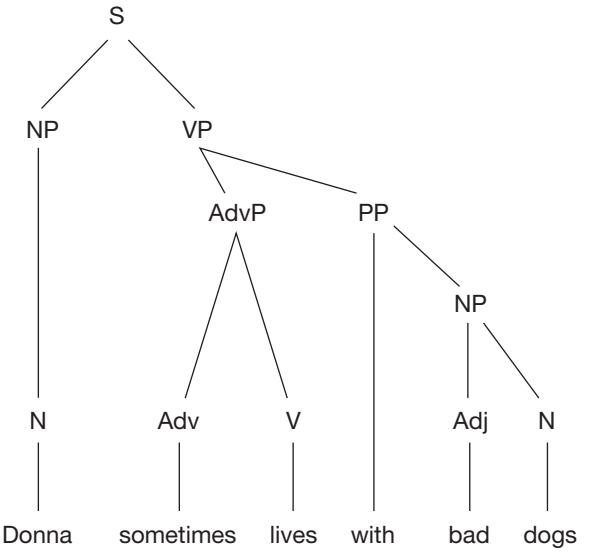


Figure 11.10 Tree with preposition

Pupils add the term Prep and PP (meaning *preposition* and *prepositional phrase*) to their key.

Activity 11.6—What happens when you add a conjunction?

This depends on what the conjunction is doing. Consider:

Donna lives with dogs and cats.

The conjunction *and* shows that Donna lives with both dogs and cats. The conjunction connects these two words. *Dogs and cats* is a simple noun phrase containing two nouns and a conjunction. There are, however, conjunctions that connect more than just words. Some conjunctions connect whole phrases. Consider:

Donna lives with obedient dogs and disobedient cats.

The noun phrases *disobedient dogs* and *disobedient cats* have the adjective *disobedient* in them. They are connected via the conjunction *and*.

When conjunctions connect whole sentences, that is, two subjects and two verbs, then we leave phrases and enter the realm of clauses, the next building-blocks of communication. Consider:

Donna lives with disobedient dogs though Ian quite likes them.

What is the word *though* doing here? (CONNECTING THE IDEAS OF DONNA LIVING WITH DISOBEDIENT DOGS AND IAN QUITE LIKING THEM)

These are both potentially complete sentences, but due to the presence of *though* we get the sense that Ian likes the dogs whether they are disobedient or not. Two sets of ideas joined by a conjunction bring us into the territory of clauses.

Discuss this with your pupils as a lead-in to the next chapter.

Phrases worksheet

Phrase structure key

1 Create a key for all the abbreviations used in phrase structure trees:

sentence =
noun =
noun phrase =
verb =
verb phrase =
pronoun =
determiner =
adjective =
adverb =
adverbial phrase =
preposition =
prepositional phrase =

2 Create the key for the parts of speech in the example sentence by writing the key letters for each word in the boxes:

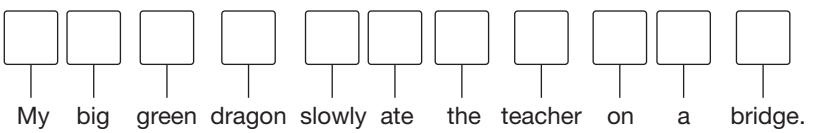


Figure 11.11 Dragon sentence key

3 What is the subject of the sentence?

_____

4 What part of speech is the subject?

_____

5 Do any other words belong with the subject? If so, write them down.

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

6 Now you have a phrase. What kind of phrase?

_____

7 What is the verb?

_____

8 Do any other words belong with the verb? If so, write them down.

_____

_____

9 Now you have another phrase. What kind of phrase?

_____

So you could now say that the example sentence contains a noun phrase and a verb phrase. Here is how that would be drawn:

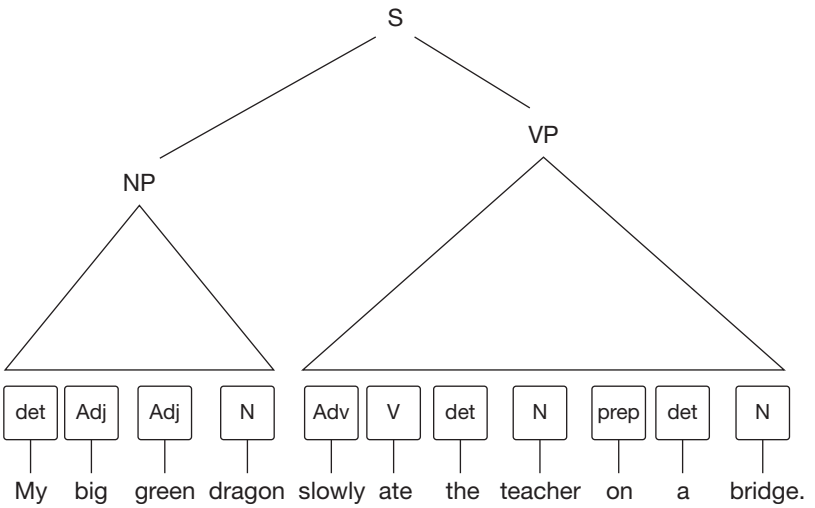


Figure 11.12 Dragon sentence with simple phrase structure

There are other phrases inside those big triangles that comprise the two main phrases.

If you wish to continue diagramming the structure of those phrases, consult your teacher for the answers.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Phrases worksheet notes

1 Create a key for all the abbreviations used in phrase structure trees:

sentence = S
noun = N
noun phrase = NP
verb = V
verb phrase = VP
pronoun = Pron
determiner = Det
adjective = Adj
adverb = Adv
adverbial phrase = AP
preposition = P
prepositional phrase = PP
conjunction = Conj

2 Create the key for the parts of speech in the example sentence by writing the key letters for each word in the boxes:

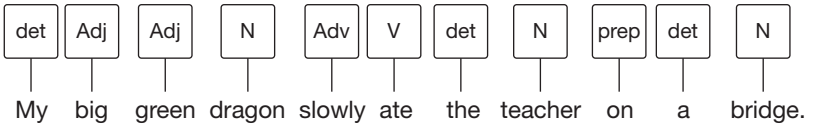


Figure 11.13 Dragon sentence key answered

3 What is the subject of the sentence?

dragon

4 What part of speech is the subject?

a noun

5 Do any other words belong with the subject? If so, write them down.

my, big and *green*

6 Now you have a phrase. What kind of phrase?

a noun phrase

7 What is the verb?

ate

8 Do any other words belong with the verb? If so, write them down.

slowly, the teacher on a bridge

9 Now you have another phrase. What kind of phrase?

a verb phrase

Phrase structure expanded

Now let's break the verb phrase down. First, it contains an adverbial phrase and a noun phrase:

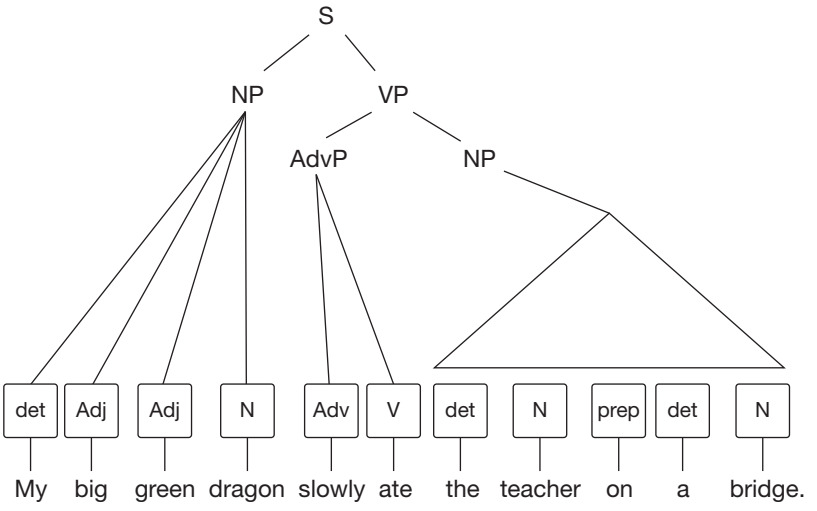


Figure 11.14 Phrase structure tree expanded 1

Then we can break the noun phrase down:

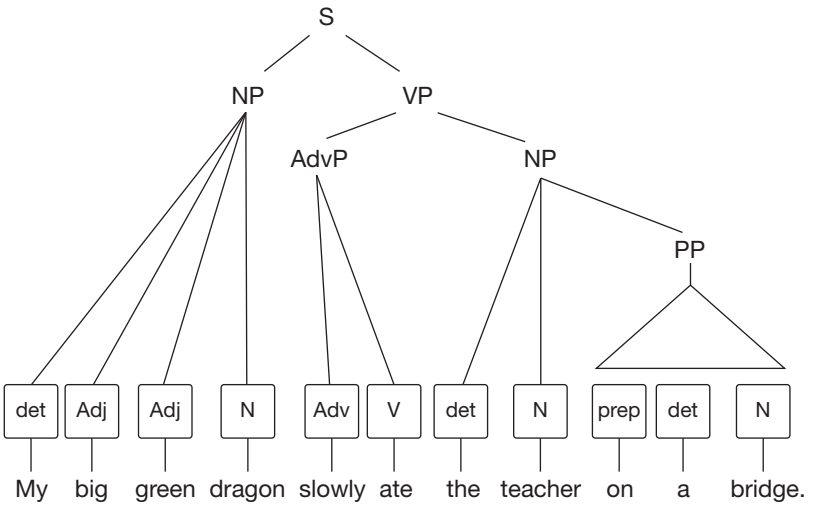


Figure 11.15 Phrase structure tree expanded 2

Then the prepositional phrase:

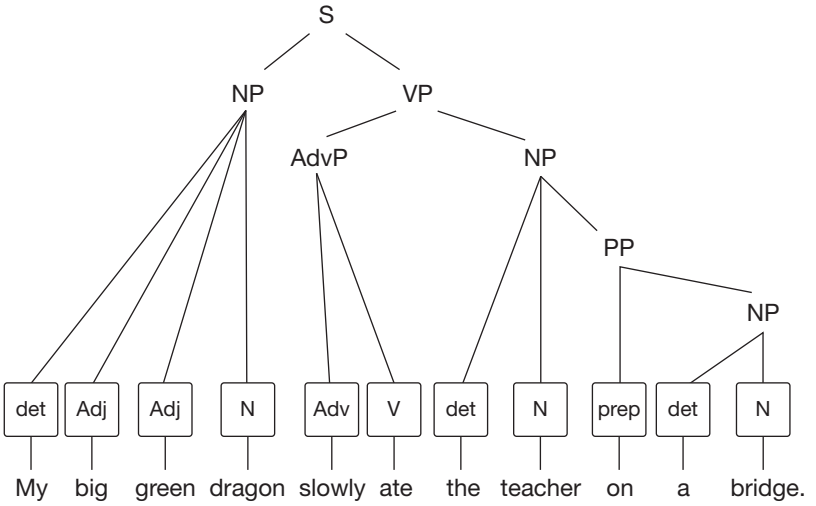


Figure 11.16 Phrase structure tree expanded 3

12 Clauses

I have been teaching children and adults how to make better use of English for more than two decades. I taught my own children to read and spell. I have qualifications in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and I have a degree in linguistics. This book on grammar is my second published work. I am also the author of several articles and submissions and am consulted regularly by the Australian Broadcasting Commission on matters of grammar and spelling. My husband is a writer. I have known many journalists and broadcasters throughout my life who have influenced the way I speak and write. I won prizes at school for my writing.

My point? I didn't actually know what a clause was until I wrote this chapter. That knowledge has never been in the slightest bit useful to me and the lack of it has never kept me from enjoying my career as a writer and educator.

I've been innately aware of clauses, but their intricacies I have never properly studied. The two fellow linguists who edited the book were appalled. One said: 'I find it incomprehensible that you didn't know what a clause was until just now.'

The other said: 'Didn't we do clauses in syntax at some point? We must have split sentences up into clauses to do grammar trees?' I find it highly amusing.

Yet in just about every recommended curriculum in the Anglophone world, knowledge of clauses is mandated. In the original manuscript for this book, clauses weren't even mentioned.

At first I resented having to research and write about clauses, but it didn't take long for me to start enjoying the process. I can now happily say that I've learned something new, a new perspective on this wonderful thing called language.

Knowing about clauses can be useful and enjoyable. Who knew?

Definition

A clause is a group of words that contains at least one verb. It can stand alone as a complete sentence or it can form part of a bigger construction.

There are two types of clause:

1 Independent clauses a.k.a. main clauses. Every sentence contains at least one main clause.
2 Dependent clauses a.k.a. subordinate clauses. They cannot stand on their own and depend on a main clause for their meaning.

Extra teacher information

Subordinate clauses can be broken down further. They will be enclosed in curly brackets:

a Relative clause (two types):
  i Restrictive relative clause:

  She reminds me of the girl {who used to work here.}

The restrictive relative clause in the sentence above depends on its main clause and does not make sense without it. It also changes the meaning of the main clause.

  ii Non-restrictive relative clause:

Lyn, {who had just learned about clauses,} shook her head in despair.
This kind of clause can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the main clause.

b Conditional clause:

I'll be there at 11 o'clock {unless the train is delayed.}
{If Peter tells one more joke} I'll have to leave.

In these lessons, pupils discover and define main and subordinate clauses and look closely at the words that determine whether a clause is main or subordinate.

Activities

Activity 12.1—Defining clauses

Now we know what phrases are, we are going to look at what happens when you join phrases together. There is just one more sentence part that we need to look at: clauses. Let's start with a definition.

DEFINITION: A clause is a group of words that contains at least one verb. It can stand alone as a complete sentence or it can form part of a bigger construction.

There are two types of clause:

1 Independent clauses, also known as main clauses.
2 Dependent clauses, also known as subordinate clauses.

When added together in certain ways, they form either compound or complex sentences.

Activity 12.2—Independent clauses

Consider:

Darcy likes all animals but he likes chickens the best.

We have two main ideas here:

1 That Darcy likes animals
2 That Darcy likes chickens the best

Neither of them relies on the other for their meaning. They are both independent clauses joined with the coordinating conjunction, *but*. What we have here, then, is a *compound sentence*:

independent clause + independent clause = compound sentence

One of the properties of a compound sentence is that you can do away with the subject in the second clause and it would still make sense:

Darcy likes all animals but likes chickens the best.

Activity 12.3—Coordinating conjunctions

Independent clauses can be separated from one another by coordinating conjunctions. We looked at this in the chapter on conjunctions.

If we break the word *coordinate* down, we find this:

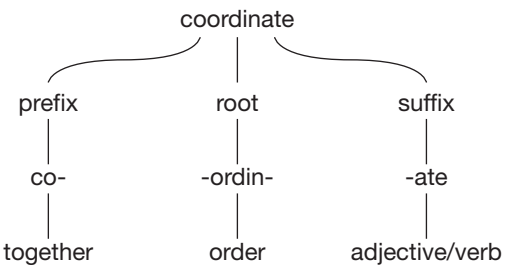


Figure 12.1 Coordinate morphology diagram

So here the word coordinate is a verb meaning 'arranged together' as opposed to 'subordinate' meaning 'arranged under'. Coordinate clauses are joined by coordinating conjunctions.

Here is a list of common coordinating conjunctions and a trick to remember them:

F	A	N	B	O	Y	S
for	and	nor	but	or	yet	so

They are not the only coordinating conjunctions in existence, but are a good guide to the type of words you can use for this purpose.

Pupils should practise spotting and defining the clauses in compound sentences on their worksheet.

Activity 12.4 Dependent clauses

Another name for a dependent clause is *subordinate clause*. The word subordinate is made from three parts: a prefix, a root word and a suffix:

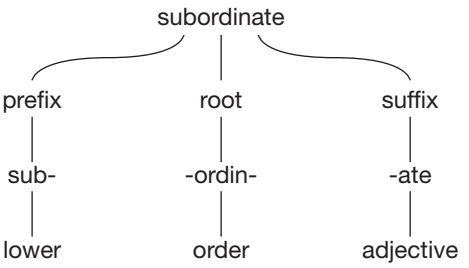


Figure 12.2 Subordinate morphology diagram

The prefix *sub-* means 'lower'. The root word *-ordin-* means 'order', in the sense of place on a scale. The suffix *-ate* is an adjective-forming suffix, meaning that the word *subordinate* is an adjective here.

So anything that is subordinate is less powerful or of a lower order than something else. I've heard someone say that subordinate clauses are like Batman: pretty good but has to rely on all his gadgets. Independent clauses, on the other hand are like Superman: they can do anything, all with their own power.

They act as modifiers of a main clause and therefore rely on a main clause to make sense.

Activity 12.5—Subordinating conjunctions

The example sentence again with one difference: this time we are using a subordinating conjunction:

Darcy likes all animals although he likes chickens the best.

What word makes the second clause dependent or subordinate? (THE CONJUNCTION *ALTHOUGH*)

Subordinate clauses are dependent because they contain words that make them that way. Those words are called subordinating words and are either conjunctions or certain types of pronouns called relative pronouns, such as 'who', 'which' and 'that'.

Instead of saying the sentence that way, I could take out the subordinating word and have two independent clauses. If I did that, how would I write it? (DARCY LIKES ALL ANIMALS. HE LIKES CHICKENS THE BEST.)

I'd have to make it into two sentences. It wouldn't sound right if I just ran one clause into the other. Sometimes people keep the whole thing as one

sentence, but they separate the dependent and independent clauses by using a semicolon instead of a subordinating word like because, like this:

Darcy likes all animals; he likes chickens the best.

That's what semicolons are for, by the way. More about that in the lessons on punctuation.

One characteristic of subordination compared to coordination is that this time you cannot leave out the subject in the second clause:

**Darcy likes all animals although likes chickens the best*.

This time we have a different kind of sentence: a complex sentence.

main clause + subordinate clause = complex sentence

Activity 12.6—Reversal

One more exciting thing that you can do with subordinate clauses is reversal. Consider:

Darcy likes all animals although he likes chickens the best.
Although he likes chickens the best, Darcy likes all animals.

Let's have a look at the conjunctions table again and do the exercises on the worksheet:

Table 12.1 Conjunctions

Type	*Function*	*Examples*
Coordinating conjunctions	To join elements that have equal status in a sentence.	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS)
Subordinating conjunctions	To join subordinate clauses to main clauses.	although, because, if, for, how, unless, until
Correlative conjunctions	These join sentence elements in the same way as coordinating conjunctions, but function as a pair.	both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, whether . . . or, not only . . . but also

Clauses worksheet

Independent (main) clauses

1 Write the list of common coordinating conjunctions under the acronym

F	A	N
_____	_____	_____

B	O	Y	S
_____	_____	_____	_____

2 Underline the first independent clause and write the coordinating conjunction underneath.

a My plane was late and the snowstorm was fierce.

_____

b The aphids were sprayed but they still attacked the plant.

_____

c Trevor had a piano for sale so he put an ad in the paper.

_____

3 Combine each of the two sentences below to make one compound sentence (clue: you'll have to use a coordinating conjunction).

a Darren writes about football. Darren writes about music.

_____

_____

b Nikki was sent home early. She did some ironing.

_____

_____

c Kim doesn't like cold days. She doesn't like hot days.

_____

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Clauses worksheet (continued)

Dependent (subordinate) clauses

1 Underline the subordinate clauses in the following sentences and write the subordinating conjunction underneath:

a Unless Phoenix ate them all, the peanuts are in the cupboard.

_____

b Derek bought another bus because so many bands wanted to tour in his first one.

_____

c Robyn was enjoying a quiet morning until David showed up for work.

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Clauses worksheet notes

Independent (main) clauses

1 Write the list of common coordinating conjunctions under the acronym

F	A	N
for	and	nor

B	O	Y	S
but	or	yet	so

2 Underline the first independent clause and write the coordinating conjunction underneath.

a <u>My plane was late</u> and the snowstorm was fierce.

and

b <u>The aphids were sprayed</u> but they still attacked the plant.

but

c <u>Trevor had a piano for sale</u> so he put an ad in the paper.

so

3 Combine each of the two sentences below to make one compound sentence (clue: you'll have to use a coordinating conjunction).

a Darren writes about football. Darren writes about music.

Darren writes about football and music. (Note: the repetition of *Darren writes about* was unnecessary.)

b Nikki was sent home early. She did some ironing.

Nikki was sent home early so she did some ironing.

c Kim doesn't like cold days. She doesn't like hot days.

Kim neither likes cold days nor hot days.

or

Kim neither likes cold days nor does she like hot days.

Clauses worksheet notes (continued)

Dependent (subordinate) clauses

1 Underline the subordinate clauses in the following sentences and write the subordinating conjunction underneath:

a Unless Phoenix ate them all, the peanuts are in the cupboard.

unless

b Derek bought another bus because so many bands wanted to tour in his first one.

because

c Robyn was enjoying a quiet morning until David showed up for work.

until

Part II

Dictionaries

> The dictionary is an essential resource for supporting literacy learning in areas of reading, writing, spelling and word knowledge. Unlike Google, the use of dictionaries develops students' awareness of alphabetical order, word meanings, origins and structure. I find students especially enjoy working with dictionaries in my classroom and taking part in the navigation/research process for themselves. I find that when I do allow students on Google to find word definitions or to source correct spellings of words that it takes them a much greater time to do this!!
>
> I always have at least three to four different dictionaries around the class to support students' independent research.
>
> (Primary school teacher in response to online survey)

Are paper dictionaries obsolete? With sophisticated search engines and online dictionaries in our lives, there are certainly grounds for arguments in the affirmative.

My conclusion is twofold:

- At the time of writing, paper dictionaries were still very much present in classrooms.
- Both online and paper dictionaries are organised in the same basic way.

Therefore, learning the parts of a dictionary, and how to use reference materials in general, is still a valuable skill. Furthermore, a large majority of the teachers surveyed at my workshops over the past several years admit to not knowing the full extent of the information provided and conventions used by dictionaries. Their feedback is always positive in this regard, and they often report a renewed keenness to help their pupils get the most out of dictionaries.

In the following lessons, pupils will discover the various sections of a dictionary. They will find examples of these sections and will play games and do activities to familiarise themselves with dictionaries.

Definition

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a dictionary is a book dealing, usually in alphabetical order, with words of a language.

By *dealing with,* we usually mean:

- defining
- pronouncing
- spelling
- working out how to use
- tracing the origins of words.

The first lesson shows how to have pupils learn the alphabet really well, by getting them to learn it backwards. Entries in reference materials are usually in alphabetical order so it stands to reason that alphabet knowledge is an important skill.

For most of this chapter, pupils will need to access a good dictionary, suitable for their grade level.

Webster's and Oxford offer a wide range of student dictionaries and are my personal favourites. Living in Australia necessitates the use of the Macquarie dictionary as well.

Even dictionaries don't agree, so why should we?

When working through the dictionary activities in the book, you and your pupils will find a slight difference in classification, pronunciation, usage and definition of words from dictionary to dictionary. The point is, even dictionaries don't agree.

In the Concise Oxford Dictionary the word *lounge* is defined as a verb, three nouns to do with the sense of a sitting room and one noun as an act of lounging.

The Webster's Pocket Dictionary gives it three verb and noun definitions apiece.

Australia's Macquarie Dictionary Online has three senses of the verb and a whopping seven noun entries. The Australians have really taken to the word, giving it all kinds of uses. It shares the *sofa*/*couch* definition with the Webster's, but only the Australians have managed to bring their love of lounges into a corruption of the French *chaise longue* with the very endearing *chaise lounge*.

The Macquarie peevishly states: '**Usage:** Although deprecated by some, the form *chaise lounge* has now achieved equal currency with *chaise longue* in Australian data.' Bless them.

The point here is that, like our pupils and colleagues, even grand institutions do not agree on word usage. Some, like our pupils and colleagues, regard themselves as something of an authority above all others (the Concise Oxford Tenth Edition states on its cover that it is 'The foremost authority on current English'). Why would we expect our pupils and colleagues to act any differently?

Encourage and enjoy the arguments.

Resources

- Copy and laminate as many alphabet backwards cards as needed.
- Pupils work in pairs or threes. Each team needs to have a good paper dictionary on hand. There can be several different editions in one classroom.

This page intentionally left blank

13 How to start using a dictionary

Activity 13.1—The alphabet backwards

Suggested dialogue

We are going to learn all about dictionaries. But before we even look at one, we need to speed things up a little. Each one of you is going to learn the alphabet backwards.

I know this sounds hard, but it's actually quite easy if you take it step by step.

When you know how to do this, looking up words in the dictionary and other books gets much easier.

Give each pupil an alphabet card and have them learn the alphabet backwards one line at a time. Set your own time limits and games and rewards around this. Pupils love to have this skill.

This is what an alphabet card looks like:

Z	Y	X	
W	V	U	T
S	R	Q	P
O	N	M	
L	K	J	I
H	G	F	
E	D	C	B
A			

Figure 13.1 Alphabet backwards card

Watch out!

Before attempting this exercise, please ensure that your pupils can recite the alphabet forwards first. We as teachers assume that pupils know this, but when I survey the children in my clinic, I often find that many of them only have partial knowledge of the alphabet. Below is a summary of my common findings in children above the age of eight:

- Some children simply cannot say the alphabet fluently.
- Some children skip letters or make errors in their order.
- When some children recite the alphabet, they merge the letters l, m, n, o and p to form one large word: 'ell-a-menno-pee'.
- When some children recite the alphabet they insert the word *and* between the letters y and z.
- Some children can only say the alphabet by singing *The Alphabet Song* and are lost when asked to say the letters individually without the tune. Their alphabet is stored as one continuous string of sounds.

This partial knowledge has very little usefulness in the real world.

Activity 13.2—The position game

Once the alphabet has been learned forwards and backwards by every pupil, you can start playing The Position Game. This consists of calling out a letter, then have pupils immediately call out the preceding and the following letter. This can be done as a whole-class activity and on an individual basis, though take care not to single anyone out who may still be struggling with the alphabet.

Suggested dialogue

> Let's play The Position Game. Stand up and listen to the letter I call out. Tell me the letter straight before and straight after as quickly as you can.
>
> For instance, if I call out g, what two letters would you answer with? (F AND H)

Discovering the dictionary parts

Pupils can discover the various dictionary parts in pairs or groups of three. Each team should have access to a good paper dictionary.

Discuss each section individually, then do the exercises in the worksheet. It is best to do this over the course of several weeks, rather than all in one go. It is also important to give pupils plenty of practice in identifying and using each dictionary part.

Entries

These are the words being looked up in the dictionary. They are entered in alphabetical order and are usually in bold letters.

Some dictionaries put a number after an entry word to show that the word is a homonym. This means that there are other words spelt like this but with a different meaning. For example, the word *hail* can mean frozen raindrops or it can mean to signal or call out to someone. It looks like this in some dictionaries:

hail[1]
hail[2]

Pupils look up *hail* in their dictionaries and discuss how it is presented. They then do the exercises on the worksheet.

Guide words (paper dictionaries only)

These are the words that show the first and last entry on each page. They usually sit at the top of every page. This is a quick reference to tell you whether you are on the right page when you're looking up a word.

There is nothing that will make you stop using a dictionary quicker than having to scan page after page for the word you're looking for. Using the guide words will transform the way you use a dictionary.

Learn to use the guide words and see how fast you can go. Of course, you have to know your alphabet really well in order to do this properly.

Pupils should do the exercises on the worksheet.

Pronunciation

Most dictionaries tell you how to say a word. Many dictionaries have a pronunciation key to help you figure out how the words are said.

To save space and time, most dictionaries that offer a pronunciation guide will only include pronunciations of words that might be tricky to native speakers of English. Everyday words like *table, mother* or *phone* generally won't be included in a pronunciation guide.

The pronunciation of a word is usually entered in a dictionary between a pair of brackets. Most often they are slanted brackets //, but ordinary parentheses are sometimes used ( ) as well as square brackets [ ].

Dictionaries vary greatly in their representation of pronunciation. Some opt for very simple notation using only the letters of the alphabet:

coelacanth /see-luh-canth/

Some adopt a relatively simple notation system using a limited set of phonetic symbols:

coelacanth /sē-lə-kanth/

Some stick to the International Phonetic Alphabet:

coelacanth /siː.lə.kænθ/

Be sure to consult your pronunciation guide and become familiar with its conventions.

Online dictionaries are a huge advantage when it comes to pronunciation. Most of them have an icon that you can press to hear the word as it is said. Paper dictionaries require a bit of prior study to get the most out of their pronunciation guides.

Orient pupils to the pronunciation guide in their dictionaries and do the worksheet exercises.

Variants

If two pronunciations/spellings of a word are in general use, dictionaries will list the different ways to pronounce or spell it. These are called *variants*.

An example of a variant would be the pronunciation of *farkleberry* in the Concise Oxford English dictionary. *Farkle-* is pronounced the same in all accents, but the *-berry* part can be pronounced 'berry', 'bri' or 'bəri'.

An example of a spelling variant would be the spelling of *medivac*/*medevac*. This is a word made from combining the words *medical* and *evacuation*. Some use *medi* + *vac* while others use *med* + *evac*.

Note to teachers:

American and British English have a well-known list of spelling variants (color/colour, center/centre, pediatrics/paediatrics), but spellings also vary within dialects. Though often viewed as an American/British contrast, the spelling of words ending in -ise/ize is actually a British phenomenon. See Appendix 2 *The -ize have it* for a deeper explanation.

Orient pupils to the pronunciation guide in their dictionaries and do the worksheet exercises.

Syllables

A syllable is a single beat in a word. It is made with one impulse of the voice. Words often have two or more beats, or syllables. There are many different ways to count syllables and each dictionary has its own particular notation.

Some put spaces between the syllables in words:

be tween

Some highlight the stronger/strongest syllable (more on syllable strength shortly):

be*tween*

Some place dots between syllables:

be.tween

Some place dashes between syllables:

be-tween

Orient pupils to the pronunciation guide in their dictionaries and do the worksheet exercises.

Strong syllables

In a word with two or more syllables, one of the syllables is always stronger. This means we can hear it clearer and our voices when producing this syllable are often louder and higher pitched.

If we didn't vary syllable strength in words, we would waste a lot of breath. Discovering the strong syllable in words is quite tricky at first, but a good dictionary will show you which one it is.

Again, the way dictionaries do this varies. Some put a vertical bar before the strong syllable:

be|tween

Some put a vertical bar after the strong syllable:

between|

Some make the strong syllable bold:

be**tween**

Orient pupils to the pronunciation guide in their dictionaries and do the worksheet exercises.

Parts of speech

After six full sections, we finally come to information on what part of speech a word is.

A word can belong to several different word classes, and dictionaries usually list them according to how common they are. For instance, *junior* is most commonly used as an adjective, meaning 'of a younger age', but is also used as a noun, meaning 'a child at a junior school'.

Labels

Some words are only used in English in certain ways and don't appear in standard modern English, except in a certain context. This is where labels come in.

Dictionary labels vary, but some common categories are:

- formal: *terminate* as opposed to *end*
- informal: *show up* as opposed to *arrive*
- archaic: *fare* meaning *to travel* (we still say *farewell*)
- technical: *byte*

Dictionaries will also give geographical labels for words peculiar to a particular region. They often do this in a different font from the main font, e.g.

fankle /**fan** kəl/ v. Scottish entangle

Usage

Some words require use in a certain way, for instance *scissors* and *trousers* are always plural. *Mumps* sounds plural but is treated as singular.

Some verbs are irregular (*be, buy* and *beat*). Some have irregular plurals (*children*, *crises* and *halves*).

When this is the case, dictionaries will note this.

Definitions

The definition of a word in a dictionary is an explanation of what an entry word means. Words can have more than one definition. These are numbered in order of how common each definition is, starting with the most common.

One of the words with a large number of definitions is the word *set.* The Oxford Online Dictionary gives it three main definitions, with thirty-three separate entries alone in the first main definition.

Etymology

Dictionaries also tell you where words come from. This is called their etymology. A word's etymology is like a family history and can tell you all kinds of interesting stories about a word and its relatives.

The last section of information about a word in a dictionary is usually the etymology.

Some dictionaries go very far back in history to show all the languages the word has travelled through. Some give less detail.

Looking at the etymology gives a much bigger picture of the word and also helps to associate it with other words that you might not have known belong in the word's family.

There are whole dictionaries dedicated to etymology alone.

Dictionary worksheet

Entries

1 Point out three entry words to your partner.
2 How does your dictionary show entry words?

_____

3 What is the first entry word on page 100 of your dictionary?

_____

Guide words

1 Point out four guide words to your partner.
2 Find the pages that *big, star* and *flower* are on by using the guide words only.
3 Find the pages that the words *tall, moon* and *tree* are on without using the guide words. Did it take you more or less time?

Pronunciation

1 Find and read through the pronunciation key in your dictionary with your partner.
2 Look up the words *enough, telephone* and *shoe* and notice how the pronunciation key tells you to say the words.

Variants

1 Look up the word *scone* and see if your dictionary gives two pronunciations.
2 If it does, which one is first?

_____

3 Find another word with pronunciation variants and write them below, transcribed as your dictionary would.

_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



4 Look up and find the spelling variants for the following words:

moreen _____

parkie _____

whiskey _____

Syllables

1 How does your dictionary show syllables?

_____

2 How many syllables in:

scratch _____

computer _____

wonderful _____

Strong syllables

1 How does your dictionary show strong syllables?

_____

2 Look up the word *refuse.* How many entries does your dictionary have?

_____

3 Are there any differences in accent between the entries that are noted by your dictionary?

_____

Parts of speech

How many parts of speech does your dictionary say that the following words can be?

face _____

fly _____

house _____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



Labels

1 What labels does your dictionary give the following words?

résumé
thou
minor

Usage

1 Find the plurals of these words:

nucleus _____
curriculum _____
salmon _____
graffito _____
datum _____
vertex _____

2 Find three more words that are always used in plural form.

_____
_____
_____

Etymology

1 Read the guide to abbreviations in the etymology if there is one.
2 Find out where *consider*, *telephone* and *spaghetti* come from, using the etymology in the dictionary.

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Dictionary worksheet notes

Many of the activities on the worksheet can be done orally. They can also be done as a whole class or in smaller groups. Make time to check back on what the groups have concluded. Try to offer a variety of dictionaries so that pupils can get a real feel for the different conventions across editions.

Variants

1 Look up the word *scone* and see if your dictionary gives two pronunciations.
2 If it does, which one is first?
Scone rhyming with *John* is usually given as the first pronunciation.
3 Look up and find the spelling variants for the following words:

moreen	morine
parkie	parky
whiskey	whisky

Syllables

How many syllables in *scratch,*
1
computer
3
and wonderful?
3

Labels

What labels does your dictionary give the following words?

résumé (usually North American/Australian)
thou (archaic)
minor (after the first few definitions, there is also a musical label)

Usage

Find the plurals of these words:

nucleus	nuclei
curriculum	curricula but now also curriculums
salmon	salmon
graffito	graffiti
datum	data
vertex	vertices

Nouns that are always in plural form:

bellows, clothes, contents, firearms, gallows, goggles, goods, measles, oats, outskirts, pampas, pincers, premises, pyjamas, remains, riches, scissors, shears, shenanigans, species, spectacles, stairs, suds, thanks, tongs, trousers, series, victuals

This page intentionally left blank

Part III

Morphology for Life

Definition

The study of the way meaningful word units combine and behave. This includes the study of prefixes, root words and suffixes.

Etymology

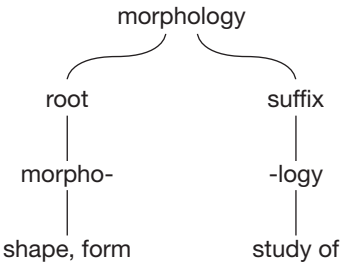


Figure 14.1 Morphology diagram

Children start formally learning about morphology usually in the early years of primary school. The lessons in the following three chapters are written with the assumption that basic morphology has already been covered.

Having said that, it is evident from conversations with teachers and pupils that most morphology lessons begin with a basic definition of and practice in prefix, roots and suffixes and end there.

These lessons are intended to give greater depth to the notion of word parts and how they combine and behave.

A large list of Latin and Greek morphemes has been compiled and included in Appendix 2 to aid these and subsequent lessons.

This page intentionally left blank

14 Prefixes

Just as we devised a simple system for parsing and analysing sentences, we will also now work with a simple word-structure system, a basic map that points to word parts and their meanings.

First: prefixes. Apart from teaching their meanings, the following lessons delve deeper and look at a set of prefixes that change according to the root word they're attached to. These are called *prefix variants*.

Prefixes can vary according to the subsequent morpheme. There are numerous examples in the Prefixes worksheet key.

In this lesson, your pupils have to look up the prefix, find its variants, define them and select example words. They then have to look at these words and devise a theory as to why the variants exist.

The goal here is to have pupils learn to recognise these word parts so that they can grasp meaning without having to look up words in dictionaries. Again, this is a skill for life and broadens and deepens your pupils' understanding of their language.

We're assuming here that the idea of prefixes is not unknown, so we won't labour over introducing the concept.

Our prefix list goes like this:

a) co-/col-/con-/com-/cor-	together/with
b) a-/an-	not/without
c) ac-/ad-/af-/ag-/al-/an-/ap-/ar-/at-	to, towards
d) en-/em-	within/inside
e) in-/im-/il-/ir-	not
f) in-/im-/il-	in/into/towards
g) ob-/oc-/of-/op-	against

Pupils should use the worksheets and their dictionaries to find and write the meaning of each prefix. This will then become a platform for discussion regarding why certain prefix variants are used. There is no example lesson, as the worksheets are self-explanatory.

For a larger list of prefixes, please see Appendix 2 *Latin and Greek morphemes.*



Prefixes worksheet

1 Each group of prefixes means the same thing. Use your dictionary to look them up and write their definitions.

a) co-/col-/con-/com-/cor-
Definition: _____

b) a-/an-
Definition: _____

c) ad-/af-/ag-/al-/an-/ap-/ar-/at-
Definition: _____

d) en-/em-
Definition: _____

e) in-/-im-/-il/-ir
Definition: _____

f) in-/-im-/il-
Definition: _____

g) ob-/oc-/of-/op-
Definition: _____

2 Now find two example words for each prefix. Make sure that your example words fit the definition of the prefix.

a) co- _____

col- _____

con- _____

com- _____

cor- _____

b) a- _____

an- _____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



c) ac- _____

ad- _____

af- _____

ag- _____

al- _____

an- _____

ap- _____

ar- _____

as- _____

at- _____

d) en- _____

em- _____

e) in- _____

im- _____

il- _____

ir- _____

f) in- _____

im- _____

il- _____

g) ob- _____

oc- _____

of- _____

op- _____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Prefixes worksheet notes

1 Each group of prefixes means the same thing. Use your dictionary to look them up and write their definitions.

a) co-/col-/con-/com-/cor-
Definition: with, together

b) a-/an-
Definition: not, without

c) a-/ad-/ac-/af-/ag-/al-/am-/an-/ap-/ar-/as-/at-
Definition: movement to or towards, in addition to

d) en-/em-
Definition: put into or on

e) il-/im-/in- (clue: there are two sets of these) + ir-
Definition: not, un

f) il-/im-/in
Definition: in, into

g) ob-/oc-/of-/op-
Definition: against

2 Now find two example words for each prefix. Make sure that your example words fit the definition of the prefix.

a) co- coagulate, coalescence
col- collide, collect
con- connect, contain
com- comprise, compress
cor- corrode, correct

b) a- amnesia, asymmetry
an- anaerobic, anhydrous

c) ac- accept, accelerate
ad- adapt, adore
af- affect, afflict
ag- aggression, aggrandise
al- allege, allow
an- annotate, announce
ap- approach, approximate
ar- arrest, arrive
as- ascend, associate
at- attract, attune

d) en- enclose, envelop
em- emblem, embellish

e) (meaning not, un) in- invariable, inert
im- impossible, imperfect
il- illegitimate, illegal
ir- irresponsible, irregular

f) (meaning in, into) in- intrude, inhabit
im- import, impinge
il- illuminate, illustrious

g) ob- object, obstinate
oc- occipital, occur
of- offend, offense (there really are very few examples for this prefix)
op- oppose, oppress

Conclusion

Prefixes vary according to the initial letter of the morpheme that follows.

15 Suffixes

Definition

A meaningful letter or letters placed at the end of a root word with the purpose of changing the root word's meaning.

Etymology

sub- 'under, secondary to' + *-fix* 'fasten'

Teacher notes

Once again, as in the chapter on prefixes, we are assuming that the basic concept of affixes is known to pupils. These lessons, then, are about the grammatical function of suffixes. Knowledge of the parts of speech is essential for this lesson.

Activities

Activity 15.1—Suffix types

Discuss the suffix types below with your pupils and assist them by drawing the relevant morphology diagrams.

There are two types of suffix:

1 Those which tell you about tense and agreement (inflectional suffixes).
2 Those which tell you what part of speech a word is (derivational suffixes).

Type 1: Inflectional suffixes

Inflectional suffixes add little meaning to a root word other than ensuring that agreement takes place. They never change the part of speech a word is, but each part of speech has its own special set of inflectional suffixes.

English has only eight inflectional suffixes. In your worksheet, we are going to list some examples of words ending in these suffixes in order to work out what they mean.

If you've ever had trouble using apostrophes, this might just be the lesson where things become much clearer on that front. There is an inflectional suffix known as -'s. We will come to that shortly.

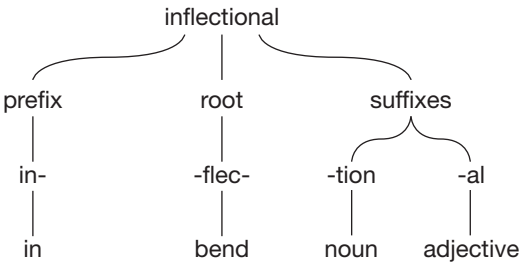


Figure 15.1 Inflectional morphology diagram

To inflect, is to bend according to grammatical function (e.g. number, person or tense and in some limited examples, case and comparison).

Inflectional suffixes:

- add only grammatical information
- never change the part of speech.

Remember: If an inflectional suffix occurs, it will always be the last suffix of any type in the word, and there will only be one inflectional suffix in any word.

Number:

dog + the inflectional suffix -s = *dogs*

grass + the inflectional suffix -es = *grasses*

child + the inflectional suffix -en = the irregular plural *children*

cactus + the inflectional suffix -i = *cacti*, though the habit of changing -us to -i is falling out of use. In a recent survey of teachers, only about 50 per cent changed hippopotamus to hippopotami and only 10 per cent changed radius to radii, preferring *hippopotamuses* and *radiuses* respectively.

Person:

Love + -s = third person singular

First person singular verb I *love* horses

Third person singular verb Nicky *loves* horses

Tense:

Verbs have four suffixes: *-ed, -s, -ing, -en*. The main function of these suffixes is to distinguish the tense of the verb. Notice that verbs also have a suffix -s, although in this case it indicates that the verb is present tense and being used with a third-person subject, i.e. something other than 'I' or 'you.'

verb + -ed = past tense, e.g. Susan *played* the trombone.

verb + -s = present tense third person singular, e.g. *Susan plays the trombone.*

verb + -ing = continuous tense, e.g. Susan *is playing* the trombone.

adjective/noun + -en = verb, *widen*, *strengthen* (we are now in the territory of derivational suffixes).

Case:

English doesn't really have case-marking suffixes like Latin and German has, with one massive exception: *possessive case*.

We mark possessive case by adding an apostrophe and the letter s to nouns:

Caroline + 's = Caroline's

The noun suffix -'s indicates possession. It sounds the same as the plural suffix -s and the contraction for *is* in spoken language. They are distinguished in the written form but can lead to great confusion if not taught thoroughly.

Please note that -'s is the whole suffix. This takes so much confusion out of apostrophe work. When showing possession, it is not a case of where to put an apostrophe, it is a case of simply adding the suffix to the noun. Much more simple.

Confusion also comes when the noun being marked already ends in s. People tend to panic and do one of two things:

- Place the apostrophe before the s in the root word: The water belonging to Hastings becomes **Hasting's water*.
- Omit the apostrophe altogether: **This is James bike*.

There is a simple process for correction and teaching apostrophe +s.

1 Understand that this is a suffix containing two marks: an apostrophe and the letter s.
2 Determine the word that you are adding this suffix to.
3 LEAVE THE WORD ALONE and add the suffix at the very end.
4 Decide if there's an 's' too many and remove the LAST one. Example:

The plural noun, *dogs*, if placed into possessive case, would be spelt *dogs's*. There is no need for the final s, so it can be eliminated: *dogs'*.

James's is pronounced 'James + -es'. If you can hear that final syllable, /es/, then leave the apostrophe + s.

The surname Connors is pronounced without a final /es/. When adding the suffix -'s, leave the final s off, since it is not heard in speech: Connors'.

The apostrophe used in contractions is part of punctuation and should be taught as an entirely separate lesson.

Comparison

The adjective suffixes -er and -est are also considered inflectional. Traditionally they are used when comparing two things (-er, meaning more) or more than two things (-est, meaning most).

Lizzie's hen was the bigger of the two.
Ade's motorbike had the loudest engine.

Many people use *more/most* and an adjective with -er/-est to refer to the same thing. Though this is grammatical, it is informal:

Catherine was feeling more kinder that day.
Shona was the most angriest person in the room.

Yes, they grate, but they are also accepted forms of spoken language.

Two quick lists for reference:

Irregular adjectives:

Table 15.1 Irregular adjectives

Adjective	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
good	better	best
little	less	least
bad	worse	worst
many	more	most
far	farther	farthest
old	elder	eldest

Adjectives that don't take -er or -est:

Table 15.2 Adjectives without -er/-est

beautiful	favourite	frightening
interesting	generous	complicated
expensive	crowded	confident

What do these adjectives have in common? Why is it that they don't take -er or -est in comparison situations? See if your pupils can figure it out.

The answer is that they are formed from other parts of speech using the second kind of suffix: *derivational suffixes*.

Type 2: Derivational suffixes

To derive, is to trace the origin. In its most literal sense, words float downstream from other words.

Derivational suffixes are used to make (or derive) new words. In particular, they are used to change a word from one part of speech to another. Here is an example:

entertain = verb
+ -ment = entertainment = noun

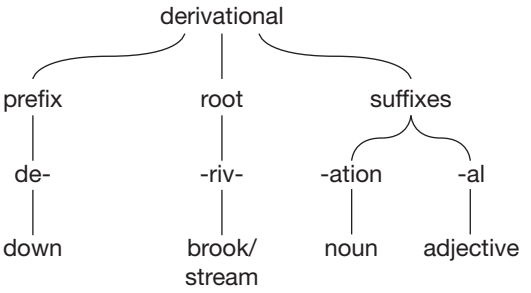


Figure 15.2 Derivational morphology diagram

These are the three main parts of speech that derivational suffixes fall into:

- noun-forming
- adjective-forming
- verb-forming

In the example above, we call -ment an noun-forming suffix because it creates nouns. A noun-forming suffix can change verbs into nouns, as we saw. A noun-forming suffix can also turn adjectives into nouns:

loyal = adjective
+ -ty = loyalty = noun

Some quick reference tables:

Table 15.3 Noun-forming suffixes

Suffix	*Examples*
-hood	childhood
-ness	wellness
-ance/-ence	inheritance, independence
-tion	celebration, motion
-ty	enmity, ability
-ment	enjoyment

Table 15.4 Adjective-forming suffixes

Suffix	*Examples*
-al	final
-ous	famous
-ish	reddish
-ent	independent
-y	muddy

Table 15.5 Verb-forming suffixes

Suffix	*Examples*
-ate	eliminate
-en	shorten
-fy	identify
-ise/ize	idolise/familiarize

Suffixes worksheet

1 Write examples for the eight inflectional suffixes:

Table 15.6 Inflectional suffix example table

Part of speech	*Suffix*	*Example*
NOUN	-s	
	-’s	
VERB	-ed	
	-s	
	-ing	
	-en	
ADJECTIVE	-er	
	-est	

2 Choose five noun-forming suffixes and complete the table below:

Table 15.7 Noun-forming suffixes example table

Suffix	*Example*
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge



3 Choose five adjective-forming suffixes and complete the table below:

Table 15.8 Adjective-forming suffix example table

Suffix	*Example*
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

4 Choose five verb-forming suffixes and complete the table below:

Table 15.9 Verb-forming suffix example table

Suffix	*Example*
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Apostrophe + s

The following words in capitals, when combined with the words in lower case, all need to be put into the possessive case using the inflectional suffix 's. For example, DOG + fleas = dog's fleas.

- Understand that we are dealing with a suffix containing two marks: an apostrophe and the letter s.
- Determine the word that you are adding this suffix to.
- LEAVE THE WORD ALONE and add the suffix at the very end.
- Decide if there's an 's' too many and remove the LAST one.

1	DOG	fleas	dog's fleas
2	HORSE	oats	_____
3	CHILDREN	playground	_____
4	WOMEN	club	_____
5	BOSSES	secretaries	_____
6	MICE	nest	_____
7	ELEPHANT	memory	_____
8	TREE	leaves	_____
9	HOUSES	chimneys	_____
10	CHRIS	motorbike	_____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Suffixes worksheet notes

1 Write examples for the eight inflectional suffixes:

Table 15.10 Inflectional suffixes key

Part of speech	*Suffix*	*Example*
NOUN	-s	dogs
	-’s	dog’s
VERB	-ed	skipped
	-s	jumps
	-ing	singing
	-en	enlighten
ADJECTIVE	-er	taller
	-est	highest

The following words in capitals, when combined with the words in lower case, all need to be put into the possessive case using the inflectional suffix ’s. For example, DOG + fleas = dog’s fleas.

Don’t forget to follow the process:

1	DOG	fleas	dog’s fleas
2	HORSE	oats	horse’s oats
3	CHILDREN	playground	children’s playground
4	WOMEN	club	women’s club
5	BOSSES	secretaries	bosses’ secretaries
6	MICE	nest	mice’s nest
7	ELEPHANT	memory	elephant’s memory
8	TREE	leaves	tree’s leaves
9	HOUSES	chimneys	houses’ chimneys
10	CHRIS	motorbike	Chris’s motorbike

16 Root words

The English of the Middle Ages was a language very different from the English we speak today. The entrance of Latin and Greek roots to English around this time hugely expanded the English vocabulary. Medicine, botany, literature, philosophy and law, to name but a few fields, were and still are strongly influenced by these roots.

Some Latin and Greek words and word parts (morphemes) have come through French and other Romance languages (e.g. Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Romanian) before entering English. This makes it difficult to accurately assess the extent of the language's Latin and Greek influence, but some estimates go as high as 60 per cent (Moats, 1998).

Many English words derived from classical Greek did not exist in the Greek language itself, but were formed by combining Latin and Greek morphemes. These are called hybrid words and number several thousand. *Synaesthesia*, *polyglot* and many of the words beginning with *hyper-* or ending with *-phobia* are examples of this hybridisation.

Many words in English have been formed using roots from various other languages as well as by different methods of combination. We will explore word-formation in this chapter.

Activities

Activity 16.1—Variable vs invariable root words

The study of root words reveals all kinds of valuable information. For instance, did you know that there are two types of words? There are variable words, such as *house*, *run* and *good*, and there are invariable words like *myself*, *about*, *so* and *whether*.

Invariable words are not able to be changed. We can't add prefixes or suffixes to them. With a noun like *house*, how can we vary it? (HOUSES, HOUSING, HOUSED)

How about *run*? (RUNNING, RUNNER, RAN)
And *good*? (GOODNESS, GOODS)
But *myself*? (NO VARIANTS)
Try varying *so* or *whether*. (YOU CANNOT)

Most of our words are variable. We can study their structure by isolating their parts. These isolated parts are called *morphemes*, from a Greek word, meaning 'form' or 'shape'. That is why the study of word parts is called *morphology*.

Activity 16.2—Bound vs unbound root words

A fact not widely known is that root words fall into two additional categories: *bound* and *unbound*.

Any morphology lesson happily deals with unbound root words like *play, help* and *swim*. These words can be altered by adding prefixes and suffixes (*playing, unhelpful* and *swimmers*). They are just as recognisable without such affixes and can easily stand on their own.

It is, however, always something of a surprise to a significant number of teachers in my workshops, to find that there are also bound root words which are as valid and carry as much meaning as their unbound brothers.

For example, the word *trigonometry* includes the root word -gon-, meaning 'corner, angle, knee'. This is where we get words like *polygon* but also the word *genuflect*, meaning 'to briefly kneel'.

Appendix 2 has a large list of bound root words that can be taught systematically through discussion and use.

Be sure to point out to your pupils the difference between the two. This is assuming your pupils have access to a dictionary that defines root words. It is always advisable to have some on hand. There are also several excellent root word lists online.

Activity 16.3—Root word variants

The art of morphology relies on knowing where the boundaries are between morphs. There is no better place to learn about this than in the study of root words.

We are going to take six root words and define them. We are then going to find words in their family and we are also going to find their variants, that is, their other slightly different forms.

For example, if you turn to your worksheet, our first root word is *-fact-*. Use your dictionary to write down the definition of this root word.

The definition of *-fact-* is 'do/make'. Some example words would be *factory* or *artefact*.

The root word *-fact-* is also known by several other forms, including *-fict-* and *-fect-*. Can you think of any examples of words with these roots? Let's find some and figure out what their meanings have to do with doing or making.

Examples:

fiction
office
infect
effect

You can likewise review each root word from the worksheets with your pupils in this way, giving as much or as little guidance as required.

Activity 16.4—Word-formation: Greek and Latin hybrids

Now that we have a basic idea of word-formation and morphology, we're going to look further into the various ways words are formed.

Many of our words, especially those concerned with science and nature, were coined using a mixture of Greek and Latin morphemes. They did not exist as a word in either language, but as the need arose, they were invented using whatever seemed convenient at the time.

Consider, for example, the word *television*. The first morpheme, *tele-* is Greek for 'far'. The *vision* part is Latin. Some people joke that the 'correct' word should be *proculvision*, using purely Latin morphemes. There are many great writers and academics throughout history who have rejected Greek and Latin hybrids, but their distaste has done nothing to stop this type of word-formation, and neither should it.

List of hybrid words from Greek and Latin morphemes

automobile, biathlon, bioluminescence, dysfunction, electrocution, hexadecimal, homosexual, liposuction, metadata, monolingual, neonate, neuroscience, neurotransmitter, quadraphonic, quadriplegia, sociology, sociopath, television, tonsillectomy

Activity 16.5—Word-formation: Mixed languages

French and German morphemes were also used to form words in English. Take a look at the list of mixed-formation words and figure out where they came from using your dictionary.

List of hybrid words from a mixture of languages

around, because, disbelief, forefront, outcry, overpower, unable, aimless, dukedom, falsehood, courtship, oddments, plentiful, foolish, tallboy, travelogue, troublesome, heirloom, scapegoat

Activity 16.6—Word-formation: Portmanteau words

In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, the poem 'Jabberwocky' is explained by Humpty Dumpty. It contains many words never heard of before, such as *brillig*, *frumious* and *burble*. Yet it manages to convey the sense of the story well.

The words put the reader in mind of other words, and this is deliberate, as the words are formed from already familiar morphemes.

brillig = broiling + (presumably) -ig/-ish. Humpty explains that it meant about 4 in the afternoon when people started broiling things for dinner.

frumious = fuming + furious

burble = bubble + gurgle

Lewis Carroll invented a term for this type of word-formation: *portmanteau words*. Portmanteau is French for cloak-carrier. It was a kind of case consisting of two halves joined by a hinge. His intention was to express a word that carried more than one meaning.

See if you can figure out which two words are merged to form the words in the list below.

Portmanteau words

biopic, blog, brunch, carjack, chocoholic, chuckle, Chunnel, dandle, Ebonics, emoticon, Eurasia, fantabulous, fanzine, jeggings, labradoodle, manbag, Microsoft, mocktail, moped, motel, Oxbridge, Pastafarian, religulous, smog, surfactant, tangelo



Root words worksheet

1 Underline the variable root words in the following list:

take	read
show	for
me	cry
happy	between
dream	give
with	of

2 Look up the definition of the following bound root words, then write an example of a word that contains them:

-radi- _____

-quiesc- _____

-robor- _____

-tribul- _____

-tox- _____

-veh- _____

3 Find the variants of these common root words and write down their meanings with examples.

-fact- _____

-fract- _____

-pon- _____

-sec- _____

-reg- _____

-cad- _____

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Root words worksheet notes

1 Underline the variable root words in the following list:

take	*read*
show	for
me	*cry*
happy	between
dream	*give*
with	of

2 Look up the definition of the following bound root words, then write an example of a word that contains them:

-radi- beam, spoke *radiation*

-quiesc- rest *quiet*

-robor- strength *robust*

-tribul- rub *tribulation*

-tox- bow *toxic*

-veh- carry *vehicle*

3 Find the variants of these common root words and write down their meanings with examples.

-fact- make, do -fict- *fiction* -fect- *infect*

-fract- break *fracture* -frag- *fragment*

-pon- put component -pos- position

-sec- cut *section* -seg- *segment*

-reg- king *regal* -rex- *anorexia*

-cad- fall *cadence* -cid- *accident* -cas- *casualty*

This page intentionally left blank

Part IV

Punctuation for Life

Before embarking on these lessons, it might be prudent to recall the Two Laws as outlined in the introduction to *Grammar for Life*:

1 *You can be completely wrong*. For example, if you said that placing a full stop in the middle of a simple sentence is a good idea, you would be wrong. You have no recourse. You have faulty information and are operating from a perspective that will gain you no agreement in any sector of the English-speaking community.
2 *You can be in a position to argue*. There can be overlap. There is grey, ambiguity, wiggle room, call it what you like. In some instances you may be able to successfully argue your point. Punctuation is the area of language where personal style allows for all kinds of variation.

The history of punctuation

Written language wasn't always the straightforward, organised system we have today. Punctuation didn't even exist back in the days of the first writing systems.

It wasn't until the third century that people started to use strokes and points in paragraphs to aid separation.

The distribution of the Bible called out for a system that aided reading aloud, so more conventions were adopted, such as line breaks, initial capitals for nouns and indentation.

It was the Irish in the seventh to eighth centuries who finally got everyone to put spaces between the words. This was the beginning of a very clear distinction between spoken and written forms of language. Spoken language is one uninterrupted stream of sounds and writing reflected this for a long time.

As with other aspects of language, the arrival of increasingly sophisticated printing machinery from the fifteenth century onwards hastened the need for

standardisation. The evolution of punctuation over this period has particularly aroused passionate debate.

The approach in this book is to keep the two laws in mind. Much as Lynne Truss bestseller *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* is hilarious, informative and beautifully written, it is not this author's opinion that rigid adherence to one generation's punctuation peccadilloes will save society.

17 Punctuation activities

Definition

Punctuation can be defined as the marks we use in our writing to show how we mean to say things.

Etymology

Latin *punctus* ‘a prick’ (as in prickmark, just to be clear)

The sixteen punctuation marks in these lessons are divided into four groups.

The terminators

These marks show the end of a sentence or the boundaries of a quote or a title. They are:

- . the full stop or period
- ? the question mark
- ! the exclamation mark
- “ ” double quotation marks
- ‘ ’ single quotation marks.

The separators

These marks show the separation of elements within a sentence, they are:

- , the comma
- ; the semicolon
- : the colon
- — the em dash

- ( ) parentheses
- [ ] square brackets
- { } curly brackets

The joiners

These marks show how elements are joined to each other, they are:

- – the en dash
- - the hyphen

The indicators

These marks show missing parts. They are:

- . . . the ellipsis
- ’ the apostrophe (contractions only)

Finally we will mention, just for further study, some other less common punctuation marks and say something about their functions.

Wherefore the possessive apostrophe?

There is another use for the apostrophe but it has been deliberately omitted from these lessons. It is known in some circles as the possessive apostrophe and is that little mark that is added to a noun, sometimes with the letter *s* to show ownership.

Much as I tend toward a descriptive rather than prescriptive view of language, I must assert something here that I believe is vitally important in the teaching of punctuation and on the subject of apostrophes:

In my opinion, this mark does not belong in the punctuation arena at all. It belongs to grammar, and more specifically, to morphology. The apostrophe and the letter *s,* when added to a noun, is a suffix. Just like the suffixes *-ful*, *-ed* and *-ing*.

If you have read the lessons on prefixes, root words and suffixes, you will have already heard this view. I would happily risk overstating it though, just to get the point across.

The English-speaking world need not be divided into two groups: those who can use the apostrophes and those who can't. It is simply a matter of teaching. Traditional methods have confused the issue by lumping the possessive apostrophe in with the full stop and the comma. Actually there is no such thing as a punctuation mark called the possessive apostrophe. There is a suffix:

-'s

which is mostly attached to nouns or some very specific noun-like phrases (*each other's*, *anybody else's*, etc.). Not pronouns. Not verbs. The suffix means 'owns this'.

If you haven't already read about it in the chapter on suffixes, now might be a good time. I implore you not to teach the suffix *-'s* in a punctuation lesson. I also implore you not to teach it as an isolated apostrophe, like the mark we use for contractions. That's where it becomes confusing. It is a suffix:

-'s

As a footnote, there is some speculation that *-'s* is becoming obsolete. David Crystal himself, prolific author and basically one of Planet Earth's go-to people on matters linguistic, traces its history and concludes that what *should* be obsolete is poor teaching on the subject. I couldn't agree more.

The idea here is to teach *-'s* separately from punctuation, leaving the good old apostrophe to do its original job: to show a missing letter or letters:

cannot/can't
it is/it's

This indication of omission, by the way, is how the possessive apostrophe began. There used to be a suffix *-es* that put nouns into the possessive case. The omission of the *e* led to the suffix being transcribed as *-'s*. It was a suffix back then and remains so today.

Activity 17.1—The terminators

Three of the sixteen punctuation marks are used as sentence endings and two are used to enclose speech and titles. They are called the terminators because they show the boundaries of elements in sentences. We will discuss these marks and then do some work with them.

Discuss with your pupils what they might be. They are:

- . the full stop or period
- ? the question mark
- ! the exclamation mark
- “ ” double quotation marks
- ‘ ’ single quotation marks

Full stop

Also known as: period

This mark has been in existence since about the third century. The Economist Style Guide says, ‘Use plenty. They keep sentences short. This helps the reader.’

It is now also becoming less common to use full stops in abbreviations. We can now write (hopefully without upsetting too many people):

8pm
I saw a UFO
Mr and Mrs Hollis

Question mark

A question mark indicates a direct question when placed at the end of a sentence. For example:

When did John leave for the train?

To clarify what a direct question is, let’s contrast it with an indirect question:

Byron asked where the Q-tips were.

Discuss the distinction between these two types of question with your pupils.

Exclamation mark

Also known as: exclamation point

This is a mark used at the end of sentences that require emphasis. They can be used within dialogue:

'Woohoo!' shouted Lidwina.

They can be used to emphasise a point:

That kind of injustice makes me furious!

The exclamation mark is regarded as belonging to a less formal register. It would not appear in legal or technical documents.

An even less formal use is to write several at once, though, in conversational writing it happens frequently.

Note: Before the 1970s, there was no exclamation mark on typewriters. If people felt they really *must* use one, they were forced to type a full stop, then a backspace and an apostrophe!

Double quotation marks

Also known as: double quotes, double quotemarks, double speech marks, inverted commas.

In American English (predominantly)

1 They are used to show the beginning and end of an utterance attributed to another and repeated word for word. For example:

She said, "Has the Evian gone straight to my head?"

2 They are used to show titles:

In my opinion, "Hatful of Hollow" was the best Smiths album.

3 They are used to express irony or scepticism:

Anita's "friend" was nowhere to be seen.

When 1, 2 or 3 above need to be written but are already inside double quotation marks, single quotation marks are used.

When Fergus sang, "She said, 'I know you and you cannot dance' so seriously" I laughed.

Single quotation marks

British English tends to use single quotation marks for 1, 2 and 3 above, using double quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

It is, however, still common for people in Britain to *air-write* double quotation marks when they are being ironic. See Billy Connolly's sketch on air-punctuation for additional research.

The separators

The comma, semicolon and colon are often misused because they all can indicate a pause in a series.

Comma

1 Commas are used to separate words in a list:

Sarah grew mint, parsley and sage in her garden.

Even at the single word level, commas cause arguments. Some say that using a comma before *and* is a dreadful misuse of punctuation. Others would say it stops us from thinking the wrong thing in situations such as:

My greatest influences are my parents, Albert Einstein and Oprah Winfrey.

You must be *some* kid.

Using a comma before a conjunction in lists is acceptable and known as *The Oxford Comma, The Harvard Comma,* or *The Serial Comma.*

2 Above the single word level, commas are used to indicate separation of clauses. Compare:

a *Holly kissed all the boys, who were handsome*.
b *Holly kissed all the boys who were handsome*.

With the comma, a indicates that all the boys were handsome. Without the comma, b indicates that Holly only kissed the handsome boys.

Then, of course, there is the famous debate on where the comma, if any, should go in the following sentences:

A woman without her man is nothing.
Let's eat Grandma.

3 Commas are also used after the greeting and closing comments in letters, although this is falling out of fashion in emails.

Semi-colon

This indicates a separation between clauses but is entirely replaceable by commas or, in many cases, full stops. Of semicolons, Kurt Vonnegut famously said, 'All they do is show you've been to college.' If you must use them, here is an example:

John was amused; he knew she only said it to entertain him.

No semicolons were used in the making of this book.

Colon

A colon has three main uses in writing:

1 After a word introducing a quotation:

In the words of Gob: 'We demand to be taken seriously!'

2 After a word introducing an explanation:

We want the windows open: it's hot and stuffy in here.

3 After a word introducing an example:

For example: bears, beets, Battlestar Galactica.

Colons are also used to separate hours and minutes when referring to time:

2:30

The em dash

This is a dash that takes up two character spaces, as contrasted with the shorter en dash. Their names come from the fact that the letter *m* is twice as long as the letter *n*.

The em dash shows extra but related information. It helps to introduce a phrase added for emphasis, definition or explanation. It can also be used to separate clauses. For example:

> *Punctuation for Life—though the subject itself is complex—was easy to understand*.

Tip: To make an em dash on a Mac, hold down option and shift then press the minus key.

It is acceptable to use commas and parentheses/brackets in this way too. We have, at this point, crossed the line into personal preference territory.

Brackets, braces, and parentheses

Brackets, braces, and parentheses are used to contain words that give further explanation or which belong together in a group.

Parentheses (or brackets in the UK and Australia)

These are curved marks used to contain further thoughts or qualifying remarks. However, parentheses can be replaced by commas without changing the meaning in most cases. For example:

> Marita and Liz (who are not sisters) both have milky-white skin.
> Marita and Liz, who are not sisters, both have milky-white skin.

Brackets (or square brackets in the UK and Australia)

These are, as the name suggests, squared brackets used for editorial comments inside quotes. For example:

'Let them [the poor] eat cake.'

The words *the poor* were not originally said.

Braces (or curly brackets, also known as accolades)

These are used mostly in poetry, music and mathematics. They are sometimes used in handwriting to group lines of words together, but rarely are they used in printed material for this purpose.

The joiners

Our smallest group contains two marks and they both look very similar.

The en dash

This is used to connect continuing or inclusive numbers:

2001–2003

They also connect elements to aid clarity:

parent–child relationship

Hyphen

A similar symbol to the en dash. However, it has slightly different usage rules. Use a hyphen between the parts of a compound word or name:

eye-opener
Smithers-Jones

or between the syllables of a word, when spilling over into the next line:

I would go out to-
morrow night, but
I haven't
got a stitch
to wear.

The indicators

The final two punctuation marks show where something is missing, either a letter or a whole statement.

Apostrophe

Used to indicate the omission of a letter or letters from a word. When this happens, we have a contraction.

Some common contractions

Table 17.1 Contractions

Not	aren't, can't, couldn't, didn't, doesn't, don't, hasn't, haven't, isn't, shouldn't, wasn't, weren't, won't, wouldn't
Have	I've, you've, we've, they've
Am/is/are	I'm, you're, he's, she's, it's, we're, they're, that's, who's
Would/will	I'll, you'll, he'll, she'll, it'll, we'll, they'll, that'll, who'll, I'd, you'd, he'd, she'd, it'd, we'd, they'd, that'd

Ellipsis

Usually represented by three full stops. The ellipsis indicates an omission, especially of letters or words.

When quoting, ellipses are frequently used to skip from one phrase to another, omitting unnecessary words that do not interfere with the meaning. Students writing research papers or newspapers quoting speeches will often employ ellipses to avoid copying lengthy text that is not needed:

'To be . . . that is the question.'

An ellipsis can also be used to indicate a dramatic pause in speech:

'Never before . . . in the field of human conflict . . .'

An ellipsis can indicate an unfinished thought:

I just can't . . .

For extra dramatic effect, an ellipsis is often very helpful:

It's just that I . . .

Unusual punctuation marks

‽ *The interrobang*

The exclamation and question marks combined. Used to indicate strong emotion attached to a question:

Are you crazy‽

This has failed to catch on in English, although the State Library of New South Wales uses it as their logo.

¶ *The pilcrow*

This mark is used in editing to indicate separate paragraphs. The pilcrow can be seen in word-processing programmes by turning on all the non-printing characters.

~ The tilde

This is used to show omission in a dictionary entry:

> ~smith, Maker of something using specific material as in black~, word~, silver~

^ *The caret (not 'carrot' as some may think)*

This is a mark made in writing or printing to show the place where something is to be inserted:

```
      to
Sing me.
      ^
```

& The ampersand

This symbol is an abbreviation for *and*. It is used widely. Its name comes from *and per se and* meaning 'the character by itself means "and"'.

Part V

Information for teachers

This section of the book is written as a guide for teachers. It comprises essays on the topics that most commonly crop up during teacher training workshops, through correspondence with teachers and via social media forums.

The subtitle of this book is ‘Where linguistics meets teaching’. These chapters are intended to provide the background knowledge necessary for that to take place.

This page intentionally left blank

18 Language and literacy

Literacy theorists have long argued over the best ways to teach reading and writing, and in many cases, have split into highly combative camps.

The problem is, we did not evolve to read and write. Print has only been around for between 5,000 and 6,000 years. This means that there is no one area of the brain specifically evolved for literacy.

We have to use several parts of our brain rapidly and simultaneously in order to get words off or put words on the page. These parts can be called the *underlying sensory-cognitive functions*. When analyzed together, they form a model of literacy that is quite useful.

This chapter looks at these parts one by one and, in doing so, might provide some insight into why people struggle to read and write and what can be done to help.

What is literacy?

The simple definition of literacy, i.e. the ability to read and write, which you will find in most dictionaries, is true enough. But as people interested in teaching, I think we have to look beyond the standard definition. After all, there are many people who can decode very competently, but cannot comprehend what they read.

We have to get words off and put words on the page, and we have to be able to understand the individual words and what those words mean together. We have to be able to transmit our thoughts into written words that others are able to interpret accurately.

A more precise definition of literacy, then, could be:

The ability to understand and be understood in writing.

There are different degrees of literacy ranging from illiteracy to absolute literacy. Somewhere in between those is functional literacy, where a person is able to write their name, recognise basic signage, follow simple written

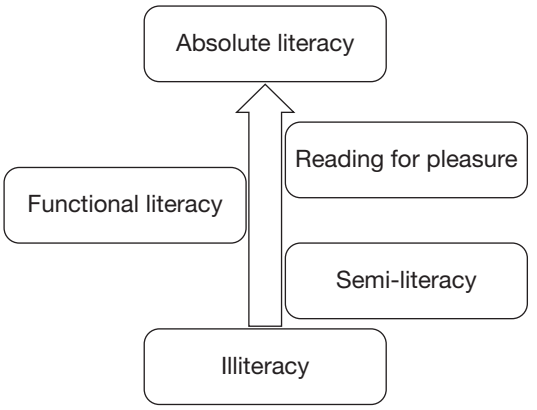


Figure 18.1 The literacy scale

directions, etc. Functional literacy is described as the minimum needed to meet personal and social needs in general education and in a complex society.

Absolute literacy is the ability to read and understand any text in at least one language (discounting highly technical or specialised texts). Not all adults achieve absolute literacy. Not all adults even read for pleasure. We are all somewhere on that scale.

Literacy is deemed by the United Nations as a basic human right. Up to 900,000,000 people on Earth are illiterate and two-thirds of those are women. Several studies show that children of illiterate women are far more likely to die in their first five years than children whose mothers can read.

These high mortality rates are predominant in less developed countries, but even in higher income places, illiterate or semi-literate people face vast social and economic disadvantages.

The first process

We pay attention to sounds, even in utero, before we pay much attention to anything else. Our auditory cortex is the first language pathway to come into existence. Research shows that the period from twenty-five weeks' gestation to five to six months of age is the most critical window for the development of that part of the cerebral cortex (Graven and Browne, 2008).

The brain grows by use, so auditory development and, in the case of literacy, the ability to discriminate sounds is a highly important, ongoing task. This development requires external stimulation. Auditory experiences are like fertiliser, growing the hearing equipment to its highest potential.

With vision, sensory input to develop the visual equipment is not necessary until after birth. It's dark in the womb. But sounds, from the very beginning, are highly important.

Think of the activities parents with very young babies and children engage in instinctively. So much of their input is auditory.

Studies show that children who have even temporary auditory problems (glue ear, etc.) in the crucial first six years of life have a greater likelihood of literacy failure.

Problems with auditory development can lead to low phonemic and phonological awareness, a disaster for a young reader and writer.

The Matthew effect

An interesting study, illustrating something called the Matthew effect, highlighted early input as essential for literacy success. The research made it very clear that the younger and better a child learned to read, the more his abilities grew as his schooling continued.

It also showed that those with language impairments or simply a language-poor background, began to fall behind their more successful peers in reading and did so at an increasing rate. When reading became more and more of a requirement for learning, poor readers then began to fall behind in other academic areas and the gap continued to widen. This effect was named after the verse in the Book of Matthew in the Bible, roughly paraphrased here as 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer'.

Phonemic awareness

Words are composed of units of sound called *phonemes*. When combined in certain sequences, these phonemes form recognisable words.

Competent readers and writers are skilled at recognising phonemes and putting them together to construct words and phrases. They do this quickly, accurately and automatically.

The absence of or weakness in this critical linguistic skill makes it difficult for children to decode and encode single words. This makes it almost impossible, then, to read and write sentences, paragraphs and whole stories.

The definition of phonemic awareness is, the ability to perceive:

- the number
- the order
- the similarity
- the difference

of sounds within words.

Number

Pot consists of three phonemes. They are /p/o/t/. If an extra phoneme is added, such as /s/ and form the new word *pots*, the word now has four phonemes.

The Latin word for peace, *pax* and the word *packs* also have four phonemes, the exact same ones in fact. Yet the spelling of the former requires three letters and the spelling of the latter requires five. So converting phonemes to letters is not as straightforward as it first appears. The written numbers don't necessarily convert to the written letters.

Knowing that speech can be converted to text and vice versa is called the *alphabetic principle*. It is an essential set of realisations that aids literacy acquisition. But more on that later.

Order

There are four phonemes in *pots*, as we know. We can manipulate the order of those phonemes and form new words. It's this process of recombination that builds the words in any language.

So we can keep the number and identity of phonemes the same and yield *spot* and *stop* and *opts*.

People struggling with phonemic awareness would typically have trouble identifying which word is which when reading. It would be unlikely that they would be able to reliably check if they have written the correct word.

Similarity and difference

Perception of similarity and difference of phonemes in words can also be problematic. Difficulty here yields poor discrimination of words like *pops* and *pots*. In tests, struggling pupils are far less able to recognise that in *pops* the first and third sounds are the same.

Phonological awareness

Another crucial linguistic skill encompassing phonemic awareness is phonological awareness. This is a range of understandings related to the sounds of words and word parts, including skill in identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as words, syllables and syllable parts. Syllables consist of basic parts:

- the onset (the sounds before the nucleus)
- the nucleus (typically the vowel)
- the coda (the sounds after the nucleus)

The diagram below illustrates the syllable parts for the word ‘stamping’.

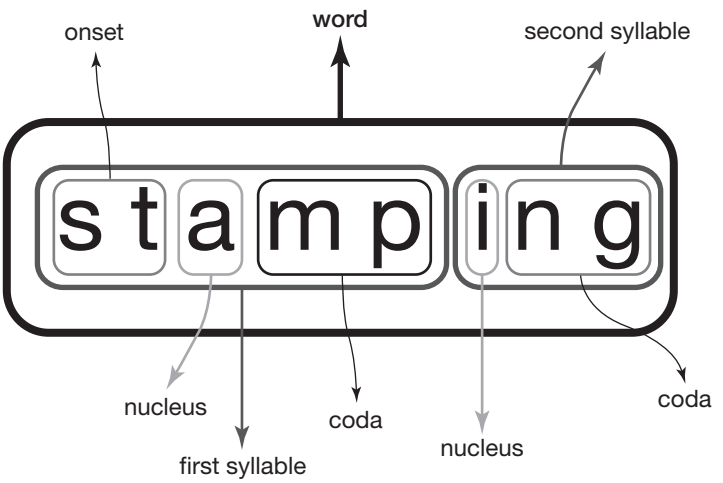


Figure 18.2 Parts of a syllable

There is now overwhelming evidence that phonological awareness is the most reliable predictor of reading success or failure in children.

It then follows that phonics programmes for very young students give the best start to literacy instruction. There is, thankfully, a strong swing back towards explicit, synthetic phonics in lower-primary schooling in the western world.

But we can't stop there. Think of the problems associated with going through life just sounding words out. If that's all we ever did, then absolute literacy may not even be achievable. This brings us on to the next process.

Visual processing

As mentioned previously, written language is sound/symbol based and our knowledge of sounds is transferred to their symbolic representations in the alphabet. This requires the use of the visual cortex.

Exposure to written words typically results in a sight-word vocabulary which most children possess in varying degrees. Even an average pre-schooler is able to recognise his/her name without having to work it out.

As we mature, so does our sight-word vocabulary and this forms the basis for fluent reading. The majority of words in our sight-word vocabulary were first learned by phonetic processing, so that auditory function is very important, but ultimately, our visual system plays the major part in word-recognition.

Visual impairments in young children are not necessarily a barrier to literacy, although research supporting specific instructional approaches for these children is limited.

Language in context

Reading and writing is not just about recognising words. Ultimately it is about understanding and being understood.

Consider the word *enough*. It doesn't have a one-to-one sound/symbol correspondence, so alphabetic principle skill is not useful here.

If it hasn't been seen with sufficient frequency, it won't exist in the sight word vocabulary, so can't be retrieved using visual memory skills.

If, however, the word is surrounded by recognisable words, there may be sufficient clues to figure it out. Say if the sentence were:

The dog drank the whole bowl of milk and realised he had more than . . .

A word that would make sense here would be *enough*. Checking the first two letters would confirm that this is the likely word. The word *enough* often follows *more than*, so a reader's word knowledge could further confirm their first assumption.

Combination of word and world knowledge is the most developmentally mature underlying literacy process.

Emerging readers are often too young to have sufficient knowledge to rely on this method and must use auditory and visual cues first. This is why reading programmes that rely solely on context often fail. Asking pupils to make an educated guess in the absence of education is nonsensical.

Instructing children to read using context only is a method known as 'whole-language'. Entire generations of semi-literate people have been created because of it.

Tips for enhancing language processing

- Aside from diagnosing and remediating auditory processing and comprehension problems, building oral vocabulary is an important daily task.
- Learning the parts of speech and their relationship to one another is essential.
- Dictionary work is highly recommended.
- Don't be afraid to use big words in context. A great example is this:

Consider a child looking at a tree from the classroom window. 'What's that?', says the child. The teacher has ten seconds in which to do a number of things before the child's attention goes elsewhere. She can say:

'It's a tree.' or she can say,
'It's an oak tree.' or
'It's a Caucasian oak.' or
'It's a Caucasian oak but it's sometimes called the Persian oak.' or
'It's a Caucasian oak but it's sometimes called the Persian oak and its Latin name is quercus macranthera.'

The list goes on.

Language processing

The use of language is what can be referred to as a *nuclear* process. That is, to perform the awe-inspiring task of receiving, storing, retrieving and cross-referring linguistic information, many things have to happen and/or be understood simultaneously.

Take the situation where the suffix *-ed* is added to a root word. There are certain concepts that must be understood before the suffix can be successfully added. This prior knowledge clusters around the nucleus as shown in the diagram below:

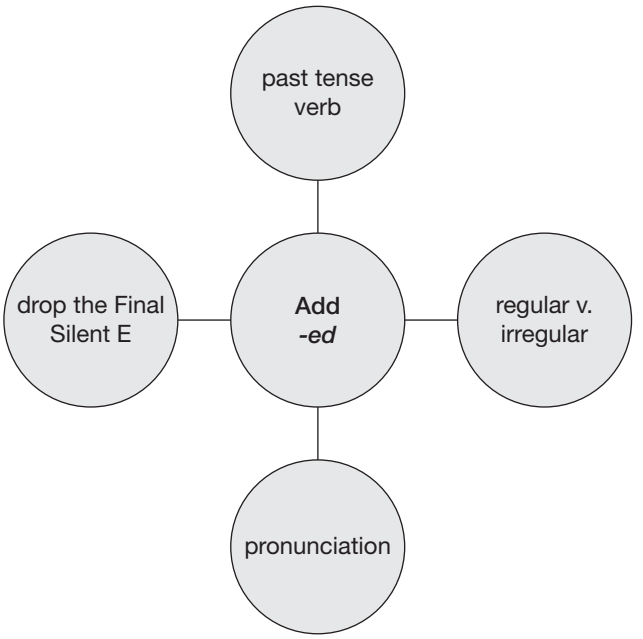


Figure 18.3 Nuclear knowledge diagram

In order to successfully add the suffix:

- We have to know what a past tense verb is.
- We have to distinguish between regular and irregular verbs (we don't add -ed to words like *draw* and *run*, etc.).
- It is important to know how to pronounce the word once the prefix is added (i.e. do you say 'ed' as in *wanted*, 'd' as in *played* or 't' as in *skipped*?).
- If the root word ends with Final Silent E, we take the *e* away when adding *-ed.*

Due to the fact that we live in a space-time continuum, however, we can often only teach or learn one thing at a time. We therefore frequently have the experience of teaching nuclear processes using linear methods, but it's all we *can* do.

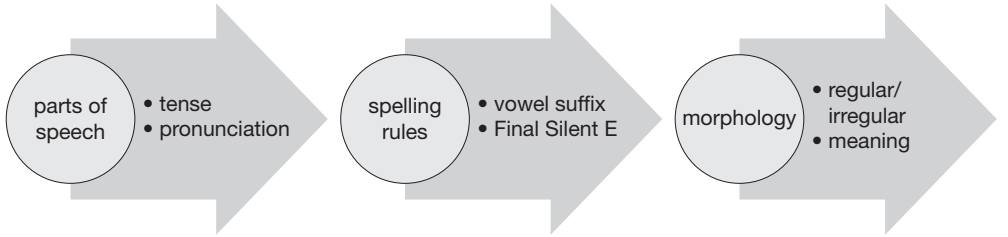


Figure 18.4 Linear knowledge diagram

19 Language impairment

Though I work as an educator, my job is somewhat different from that of a traditional teacher. I get to work with a high concentration of children and adults living with a range of language impairments.

Writing a book on human language, I am compelled to not only mention this, but also to offer my own perspective to teachers as to what language impairment looks like, feels like and what can be done about it.

Though the human brain is an organ well-evolved to process language, any number of obstacles can affect how successfully this happens.

Speech and language clinicians have long been aware of the various types of language impairment that exist. Though difficulties with language are as diverse and unique as the individuals experiencing them, I will limit this chapter to two major conditions: dyslexia and auditory processing disorder.

Both cause children to struggle with reading and writing. Both are increasingly better understood by the teaching profession and the scientific community, but there is still room for improvement.

Fortunately we have had the luxury, as a civilisation, of being able to build an admirable store of knowledge about the origins of and remedies for these conditions.

Historically speaking, the last century or so has produced many workable theories about language impairment. Populations in developed nations no longer have to worry about the day-to-day task of staying alive, and can refine their focus toward smaller and smaller problems. Language impairment is one of those.

That is not to say that language impairment is a small problem. Some estimate that reading disability alone affects one in five people (Shaywitz, 2005).

The figures for auditory processing disorder are still unclear, as this is a younger field than dyslexia.

Despite a growing body of research in the field of language impairment, we still have an education system that favours certain cognitive abilities while neglecting certain others. The English writing system, for example, was developed to favour right-handed people, since they form the majority. Left-handed people often struggle with handwriting as a result. To this day,

left-handed people are still penalised in primary schools who run ludicrous 'pen licence'[1] schemes for neat writers. This happens mostly in the absence of explicit teaching for lefties.

There is a reason for such insensitivity. When schools began to grow and flourish, western society was undergoing the Industrial Revolution. A shift away from a purely local, agrarian society meant that people had to learn to live in cities in increasingly large communities. Children were being taught things that would be useful in an entirely different social context. These things were reading, writing and arithmetic.

These three subjects are quite hard to master, being reliant on coordinating different parts of the brain in complex ways. Certainly there is no one area of the brain devoted to reading and writing. Teaching and learning such sophisticated processes demanded that as much as possible was taught to as many as possible in a relatively short space of time. This is why rote learning, recitation, repetition and punitive teaching shaped the foundations of education.

Those whose cognitive abilities, for whatever reason, were not suited to this type of learning were consigned to certain altered paths:

- Some were unable to learn but masked this by being pleasant or useful.
- Some were unable to learn and dropped out of school as quickly as possible.
- Some were unable to learn using the methods offered and instead taught themselves to be literate by methods of their own design.
- Some transcended the traditional learning model altogether and eventually became leaders in their field (Leonardo da Vinci, Richard Branson and Walt Disney are a few examples).

Dyslexia: a case study

I began to suspect dyslexia on an intuitive, rather than professional basis when my daughter was around three years old. I had sat opposite people with dyslexia, day in, day out, for over fifteen years and not surprisingly, I had developed a feel for the condition.

Though the actual definition comprises a wide range of symptoms—often disagreed upon—I will use the definition as given by the International Dyslexia Association:

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words.

Dyslexia affects individuals throughout their lives, however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life.

It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can make it very difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment, and in its more severe forms, will qualify a student for special education, special accommodations, or extra support services.

Her profile

As a Doman baby myself, that is, one who was taught to read using whole-word flashcards since birth, I expected my daughter, with similar input, to be reading and writing like a typical five year old by the time she was three or four.

She was read to multiple times a day and had flashcard teaching, with very little TV.

She developed a fantastic auditory memory, being able to recite whole epic poems and the text from her favourite books, such as 'The Lion Who Wanted to Love', but could not point out the word *the* in that or any other book for an unusually long time.

She had other motor and emotional symptoms too, which for the sake of her privacy, I won't go into. Suffice to say that she has come a long way in both those areas.

When she was four, I started the *Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS)* with her. This got her to feel what her brain told her mouth to do when she made sounds. She loved this work. It gave her the phonemic awareness she needed so that she could reach the next stage in her literacy development.

But still she did not read. By this time, her writing, though quite neat, was in perfect mirror formation. She can still write backwards quite well.

We also did Sig Engelmann's *How to Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* from the age of four and a half. We got up to lesson number 20, but it was a struggle, and I could tell that she didn't think it was as much fun as LiPS. I certainly wasn't going to push her, keeping in mind a central Doman tenet: 'Stop before they want to stop!'

School began . . . oh dear . . .

My daughter started school at the age of five years and four months. After hundreds of hours of direct reading instruction, as well as thousands of hours of implicit instruction (i.e. being read to, having letters, sounds and words pointed out, talking about the theory of spelling and its rules), my daughter entered school with a huge vocabulary, a love of learning, a passion for literature . . . and . . . wait for it . . . the ability to write and recognise her own first name (and she often wrote it the right way round too).

She made slow progress with the basal readers she brought home every night and was still in the lowest writing group, while some of her peers were starting to write sentences and stories.

She began to dislike school.

In the holidays, her term two report showed her to be in the average band. This was fine, but I felt she needed something else. So we started the Spalding *Writing Road to Reading* programme.

My daughter adored it. She excelled! It was as if all the information she had been given at the different stages of her development was finally starting to synthesise. At last her brain began to coordinate all the processes required for literacy.

She went back to school in term three after having practised reading and spelling fifty of the seventy Spalding phonograms.

This was the result:

- She moved up four levels in reading.
- She was writing her own sentences and stories.
- She was much happier at school.
- She was able to sound out multi-syllable words where she previously could not.
- She became even more interested in spelling rules and loved to recite and demonstrate them.

These were the areas that still needed work:

- She still preferred to guess using the word-initial letter rather than sound the word out.
- She developed the FATAL habit of looking for little words inside big words, a morphologically redundant strategy that leads vulnerable non-readers down dead-end streets.
- She still looked at the pictures in books for contextual cues.

In the next holidays, we continued with Spalding, ensuring that she acquired all seventy phonograms and could use them in context. We also kept practising her sight words.

My goal was to get her to read increasingly harder texts (with no pictures) and to have her answer higher-order thinking skills questions based on what she read. This way, I could keep abreast of her comprehension, as well as her decoding skills.

The next two years

Happily, my daughter, in her second year at school began to have a wonderful time. She progressed through her sight words beautifully and kept up with the curriculum. Her teacher couldn't have been better, a wonderful human being with compassion and understanding. My daughter loved her.

We then moved to a different place and a different school. My daughter entered her third year and I felt it was time to bring up the D-word with her teacher.

I was unknown to this school, whereas in the town I lived previously, I was the only tutor and knew all the schools and their struggling students. Our relationship with her previous school was excellent.

This time my words fell on deaf ears. My daughter was not struggling so how could she possibly be dyslexic? My daughter was well behaved so I must be an overly worried parent.

I actually saw her teachers' eyes glaze over when I mentioned the word *dyslexia*. Not only were they painfully untrained in the definition of the condition, they dismissed me immediately on the grounds that I didn't know what I was talking about.

I let her continue through the next two years without her teachers' support, but I refused to participate in signing the nonsensical 'reading diaries' they sent home with her.

Those particular diaries and the dreadful reading cues within them were based on no research at all. I know this because I called the manufacturers and asked them for the author and title of the studies underpinning their claims. They said there weren't any, but nevertheless the reading cues in the diaries and the claims by their marketing department were based on 'sound reading methods'.

Some of the cues that parents and teachers were encouraged to use when a child couldn't read a word in a story are listed below. My responses are in brackets.

- Say the first letter and guess the word (why not process all the letters in the word and actually *read* the word?)
- Read on and see if you can come back to the word once you've read the sentence (what if you can barely read any of the words?).
- Look at the picture (no, this is comprehension, not decoding).

Nonsense.

We did our own thing and she continued to progress.

'Mum, am I dyslexic?'

During all that time I never *once* mentioned dyslexia to her. But she read very little, while her sister, two years her junior with similar early input, devoured every book in sight, and read and spelled well beyond her years.

Her fourth year began and this time her teacher took a little more interest in my view. She allowed my daughter extra time with written assignments and placed absolutely no importance on the 'reading diary' regime. She was a wonderful teacher who championed my daughter's oral abilities and gave her the highest mark in the grade for a speech she made. This meant the world to her.

Then one day she came home after observing a fellow student and said, out of the blue, 'Mum, am I dyslexic?' My chin hit the floor.

The fellow student had been diagnosed with dyslexia and was using the word freely. My daughter recognised those difficulties and tendencies as her own and identified straight away with the condition.

I never used the word to label her as I didn't want her to be unduly worried, preferring to work quietly in the background and to provide reassurance. Now faced with this unexpected question, I had to frame my response carefully.

I told her that in my opinion, she did indeed have dyslexic tendencies, but that dyslexia was a condition that affected people on a broad scale, and that due to the hard work she had been doing all her life, she had overcome the worst aspects of it and was somewhere in the mild region.

She had met many of my students over the years and began to realise that all this time I had been working with people with mild to severe dyslexia, just like her.

I told her that nowadays there was a great deal of help, technology and understanding on the subject. I told her that many great and successful people had had dyslexia, including Richard Branson, Walt Disney and the inventor of Scrabble, Alfred Mosher Butts.

We looked together at stories of these people and how when they were young, their dyslexia was often labeled naughtiness or laziness or stupidity. She was inspired by the fact that they were able to overcome this and shine.

She also views dyslexia as a way of thinking, not as a disability, and she is becoming quite an impressive advocate for the condition.

She is glad to know that she is not alone and that there is an explanation for her non-love of reading and for her having to work twice as hard as most others to get her writing done. She knows she is very bright, with a great vocabulary and extensive knowledge on a wide range of subjects. She is no longer puzzled or envious that her younger sister was reading and writing with ease before she began school.

At the beginning of every school year, I request a meeting with her teacher to discuss support options. These are the things we talk about:

- having extra time to complete written class assignments
- having someone on hand to read out written maths problems
- having permission to submit digitally written, as opposed to handwritten assignments wherever possible
- gently encouraging reading for pleasure by exposing her to interesting, engaging literature

Her teachers, for the most part, have been increasingly accommodating. For instance, when Australian national testing was done in 2014, her teacher didn't bat an eyelid when we told her that my daughter simply wasn't going to participate in the reading assessment. We didn't want the stress and didn't feel it necessary to put her through such an ordeal. She fully supported our decision.

She also made my daughter a 'literacy leader' in class: one of only four people who are chosen to lead the literacy groups. My daughter was incredibly proud and even began to insist that she read to me every night.

At home I continue to support her by doing the following:

- taking her through my *Spelling for Life* programme
- building up a robust vocabulary of instant spelling words
- encouraging her to read for pleasure and never complaining when she asks me to buy her a certain book

I have also offered audiobooks to her, as I still can't help worrying that she's missing out on so much quality children's literature, but she politely declines, saying that audiobooks take up too much space on her iPad.

In telling this story, I'm not trying to champion one method over another. Rather, my aim is to make several key points in order to help teachers and parents who suspect, or are dealing with, dyslexia:

- Early intervention is essential when overcoming reading disorders. In fact, I am a strong advocate for early literacy for EVERY child.
- If the child is younger than eight, and you suspect dyslexia, have a competent literacy and language therapist assess and diagnose straight away. This can be done from the age of four onwards. The earlier the better.
- A dyslexia diagnosis is useful to gain more time during exams and class-work, as well as more understanding and consideration from educators.
- If at all possible, have the child undertake skilled, professional tutoring from a practitioner who understands how the brain works and its effects on literacy.

Dyslexia is not necessarily a death sentence, but it requires relentless advocacy and intervention for the achievement of satisfactory literacy.

Auditory processing disorder: a case study

Though I have no case study story from my own family to share this time, I still have many years of experience working with people with this diagnosis.

The story of 'Bonnie', below, was first written as a handout for parents whose children also experienced auditory processing issues. It is based on a real person, but her name has been changed.

Bonnie was nine years old when she first came to see me. Her parents both worked: her father in middle management and her mother part-time in a secretarial position. Bonnie read words accurately, but her parents noticed that she often didn't understand what she was reading. Even when she was little, she would fail to grasp the content of stories, films and TV shows. Her catchphrase was, 'I don't get it'.

A standard hearing test when she was seven showed no hearing loss. The regional school speech pathologist suggested an Auditory Processing Screening Assessment by an audiologist and it was found that Bonnie had difficulties in the following areas:

- Auditory Figure-Ground Processing: where a person has higher than normal difficulty paying attention in the presence of background noise (e.g. finding it hard to listen to instructions or talk with friends in the playground),
- Auditory Attention Problems: where a person can only focus for a short time, usually never being long enough to complete a task (e.g. listening to a teacher explaining something, paying attention during assembly, etc.),
- Auditory Cohesion Problems: where a person cannot accurately draw conclusions, make inferences, predict outcomes, or generally use more than one comprehension skill at a time (e.g. where it is important to select the correct meaning from a choice of meanings, such as in jokes, riddles, personal comments, etc.).[2]

Bonnie was given a short, medium and long-term learning plan. This included:

- immediate commencement of the 'Visualising and Verbalizing Program'
- the gradual introduction of classical, and then Bonnie's preferred music, at increasing volume during all sessions, then gradually during homework sessions
- two weekly 45-minute tutoring sessions for eighteen months

Her parents and teachers reported a definite shift in Bonnie's behaviour during this time. She began to exhibit less frustration at school and at home, and could now complete much of her schoolwork on time even when the classroom was noisy.

The intervention sessions at the clinic were reduced and then finally curtailed. Before she left, Bonnie and her parents were equipped with a range of reports and strategies to be reviewed and shared with her teachers throughout the rest of her academic career.

Conclusion

As with my daughter and dyslexia, apart from evidence-based intervention, what makes a lasting difference is the continuing climate of open communication between pupil, parents and teachers.

Each new school year brings an opportunity to create the best learning environment possible for children with language impairments. Some teachers are highly skilled and educated in this area, some are not. It is vitally important

that pupils, parents and teachers set, wherever possible, realistic, achievable academic goals for the school year. This takes parental advocacy and teacher willingness. Fortunately, there is no shortage of either.

Notes

1 A pen licence scheme is an archaic, discriminatory, arbitrary set of conditions imposed on primary school children which prevents them from writing with their implement of choice until they satisfy some illogical standard of graphic excellence.
2 There are other areas of auditory processing that were tested but found to be in the normal range, which won't be discussed here. More information and further reading can be found on the Lifelong Literacy website and in the bibliography.

20 Language change

> . . . at a certain moment, the people who have no trouble distinguishing between *he* and *him* feel at a loss when it comes to *who* and *whom* and begin to say *the doctor whom we believe saved the patient*. Editors and teachers fight the trend but soon they too forget what is right and what is wrong, and the more advanced ('popular') usage takes over.
>
> (Liberman, 2014)

There is a commonly held opinion in education circles that the study of language has two paths: prescriptivism and descriptivism. Prescriptivism is more resistant to language change, whereas descriptivism positively embraces it.

In my view, this is a false contrast. Both approaches have merit and their own time and place. There is, however, a pleasing shift in education from a more prescriptive attitude to one which is inclined to describe.

Prescriptivism

There are situations where one variety of language is championed over another. For example, the standard English accent known as *Received Pronunciation* (think BBC in the '50s) was prescribed in most British schools during the 1950s regardless of wide regional variations. The section on code-switching in this chapter explores this particular phenomenon more closely.

Prescriptivism can result in some superbly illogical 'rules', such as 'never end a sentence with a preposition' or 'don't split infinitives'. The chapter on grammar myths further explores these 'rules'.

A tendency towards being overly prescriptive in teaching is often due to several basic factors:

1 Insecurity about what is correct, leading to rigid adherence to an arbitrary set of rules.
2 Misplaced social superiority resulting in an urge to un-teach a perfectly good dialect and replacing it with a version of the language that the teacher finds acceptable.

Neither method seems to result in the development of linguistically curious minds, and may even be the chief reason that language study is abandoned by so many.

That is not to say that language shouldn't operate according to sets of rules. Indeed for one person to understand or accept another, the underlying rules have to be known by both. Consider the *tu*/*vous* distinction in French. They both mean *you*, but *tu* implies familiarity while *vous* provides social distance. Not knowing this and using the *tu* form only is considered rude.

Rules can be outdated and no longer useful, such as adding *-s* or *-es* to third person singular verbs: *What Michael do with a camera is his business* is as understandable as *What Michael does with a camera is his business.*

However, some rules, like those concerning word order, cannot be broken without dramatically altering meaning. *The Labrador bit Billy* is something quite different from *Billy bit the Labrador*.

Far be it from any linguist to say that standardisation is necessarily a bad thing either. Before writing evolved, language structure was a matter of local convention. Grammar rules were invented to help with consistency and as an aid to understanding once written language broke free from former geographical bounds.

The problem is, that sometimes language conventions are prescribed without any flexibility, and this is where we run into trouble.

Just as each person fiercely guards his own idiolect, so also does he tend to guard against change in the wider dialect. A human lifespan enables the average adult to witness sometimes vast changes in the way his language is spoken and written by younger generations.

An interesting mix of resentment accompanied by delusions of superiority often go hand in hand when generations regard each other's language usage. The elders, perhaps feeling the reality of mortality, regard slang, new usages and neologisms as sloppy, disrespectful and unintelligent, the younger generation, in a natural state of rebellion, regard the language of their elders as overly formal, prescriptive and just downright *old*.

This is language change at work. Rarely is it embraced by older generations. Seldom is it curbed by the younger.

Additional to that is the inevitable personal pride of mastering one's own language. An infant slaves at the task for six years, earnestly listening, copying, failing, being corrected and being generally mocked. By six years old, children usually have a fine grasp of their language and spend the next twelve years or so refining it through various school lessons, listening, copying, failing, being corrected and in many cases continuing to be mocked.

It is no wonder, that on reaching a certain age, a person feels justified in saying, 'I'm done. I've worked hard to acquire this language, I am a functional communicator and I'm not learning any more.' From that point on, their notion of the structure of language begins to set and woe betide anyone who suggests change.

The myth of language deterioration

A special debate in the House of Lords in Britain in 1979 revealed an almost complete consensus that English was deteriorating. The debate was entitled 'The English language: Deterioration in usage'. It is a wonderfully interesting document and can be viewed via Hansard online anytime.

Analysis of this document in class would be not only a lesson in history, but in the futility of resistance to language change.

Despite the speakers' earnest appeals to restore clarity of language to English before it presumably brought about the end of civilisation, not one effective measure was ever taken. This is because it is impossible to arrest language change, no matter how you might feel about it.

Particularly amusing was the staunch anti-American sentiment that ran through the debate. Such racism is still somewhat tolerated nowadays. I am often asked, during radio interviews, to comment on the 'terrible' influence that the American language and culture is having on non-American society.

Declaring my marriage to a person from California is sometimes sufficient to quell the negativity, but not always. It seems that being a dominant culture attracts this kind of blame/shame attitude from the rest of the world.

As an interesting aside, the debate mentions what is now known as 'The Bullock Report'. Its lesser-known title is 'A Language for Life' (I was unaware of this report when I decided on the name for this book). In 1975 the British government launched an inquiry into the teaching of language and it was presided over by Alan Bullock. Its recommendations had profound and positive effects on teaching from that point on. It berates the practice of trying to change a child's dialect and calls it irrational, unnecessary and inhumane. It points out that appropriateness according to the speaker's situation is far more important than some arbitrary perception of 'correctness'.

In summary it calls for a deepening and widening of teachers' explicit understanding of the language of their pupils. The point of the paper was entirely missed by the speakers in the House that day.

The Bullock Report still makes compelling reading and I thoroughly recommend it.

L'Académie Française

Certain members of French society (I am loath to make such a sweeping generalisation by saying 'The French') set up a rather formidable body known as 'L'Academie Francaise'. To get an idea of its ideological underpinnings, one only has to consider the founder, Cardinal Richelieu, and his ideas about state control.

More recently, in 1945, Philippe Pétain was removed from the Academy due to his leadership of Vichy France. He was tried and found guilty of treason in connection with his aiding the Nazi regime and suppressing the French Resistance.

The Academy's chief aim was to safeguard the French language from outside influence and keep the language pure. It has been widely criticised for its excessive conservatism and its xenophobic attacks on regional alternatives to French (Basque and Catalan being among them).

Among its self-imposed roles, the Academy tries to encourage the development and use of terms to replace 'Anglo-Saxon' influences, suggesting the replacement of *un sitcom* with *une comédie de situation* and *une banana split* with *banane Chantilly*.

As Steven Pinker remarks in *The Language Instinct*, '. . . the purpose of the Academie Francaise is to amuse journalists from other countries with bitterly argued decisions that the French gaily ignore.'

This is an example of prescriptivism at its most laughable.

The two laws and why grammar wars break out

We all know what a dialect is. Dialect helps us to determine where a speaker is from. If I use the word *cannae* as in 'I cannae be bothered', you could not be reproached for thinking I came from Scotland. Similarly, if I were to say *heaps* when I meant *lots*, as in 'I love you heaps', Australia might spring to mind. If I pronounced the word *tomato* as 'tuh-**may**-doe', it would probably clue most people into guessing that I originated from America.

So a dialect is a way that linguistic characteristics are shared by groups of people from a common geographical region. Those characteristics might be vocabulary (*cannae*), word usage (*heaps*) or pronunciation (*tuh-may-do*).

Aside from our dialect, though, we have a little pet creature called our idiolect. This is the store of words, usages and pronunciations particular to each individual. Our idiolect is mostly based on our dialect. Since we all have different experiences and influences in our lives, we each use language in slightly different ways.

For example, a teacher in one of my workshops was raised by an Australian mother and a Swedish father. She spoke the same Australian dialect as everyone in her home town, but, due to her father's Swedish influence, found that she couldn't help rolling her l's when they were sandwiched between two vowels, such as in 'holiday'. She said that word something like 'horriday'. In fact, she usually said 'vacation' so as to avoid being judged. Nobody else in the town, or indeed the family, did that. She adopted that pronunciation at a very young age and was unable to rid herself of it, thereby altering her usage. That was her idiolect.

Sometimes these differences are so slight as to be undetectable. Sometimes they only rise to the surface when we begin to discuss grammar. Since grammar is the way we use words, and everybody uses words slightly differently, grammar discussions can quickly become very personal and passionate. After all, we are talking about the expression of our innermost individuality. We carry the memory of the massive effort it took to learn our native language and, satisfied with the result, we are quick to take offence at suggestions that our usage could be wrong.

This is why it is good to remember the two laws of grammar:

1 **You can be completely wrong.** For example, if you said the word *Lizzie* is an adverb in the sentence *Lizzie plays to a full house*, you are wrong. You have no recourse. You have faulty information and are operating from a perspective that will gain you no agreement in any sector of society.
2 **You can be in a position to argue.** There can be overlap. There is grey, ambiguity, wiggle room, call it what you like. In some instances you can argue your point.

For example, if you were to say that the word *Mr* in *Mr MacMillan taught us to type* is a function word, classified as a title, you would hear firm agreement. Also acceptable is the view that titles like *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Lord*, *Professor*, etc. were also nouns, pronouns or even determiners. I have a personal preference, as,

I'm sure, do you, but in this case your argument would be sufficient for me to desist in trying to prove you wrong.

Number two is, of course, the most desirable outcome for your pupils. But as a teacher, you have to feel comfortable first. You have to be able to stand in front of a group of humans and say, 'I was taught this way and I'm teaching you this way, but I'm prepared to consider your arguments.' You don't have to be the stone-carved monument to prescriptive grammar that perhaps your forebears were.

All you have to remember is that grammar is a deeply personal subject that arouses strong emotions. That's fine. Go ahead and arouse them. It beats avoidance every time.

Code-switching

People are often proud of their dialect. It gives them a sense of belonging. They also have the capacity to switch out of their dialect and into a more 'standard' version of their language if they feel the occasion warrants it. My father spoke a dialect called 'Lallans'. This is his perspective.

> Working class people spoke a kind of Lallans modified by slang and immigration.
>
> Lallans comes from the English word *lowlands* and was spoken in central Scotland and the North of England. Robert Burns wrote in both Lallans and in standard English.
>
> Of course teachers were well aware that our playground language was not what they were teaching in class. They told us that we had to use standard English in class except when they were teaching Scots poetry or literature.
>
> There were misunderstandings of course, as some children found it difficult to separate the two forms of communication. One wee lad was told by his teacher to be careful with his pen in case he stained his shirt. He was baffled. She said to him, 'Don't you know what stains[1] are?'
>
> 'Aye Miss,' he replied, 'Ye chuck them.'
>
> However, in the main, the separation was quite easily managed. We were continually using both.

Lord Reith, the Scotsman who set up the BBC, insisted that all programmes go out in Received Pronunciation in the Fifties when I was growing up that had not yet been eroded [by acceptable regional variations]. Cinema was very popular and the actors were usually from theatrical backgrounds or were American. Almost all comic strips were in standard English. Most people who did not go on to tertiary education, including my parents, reverted to dialect almost exclusively on leaving school, but they still understood standard English.

I was out of Scotland for forty years and I have been married to an English person for 28 years. I therefore speak mainly in standard English but when spoken to in dialect, I respond in kind. To do otherwise would be rude.

Texting

Electronic communication has given rise to many new conventions in writing, including a need to abbreviate text to keep costs down. Wonderfully creative ways of saving electronic space have resulted in abbreviations such as:

u for you
gr8 for great
lol for laugh out loud (more than one person from the older generation has mistaken this to mean 'lots of love'—heaven help them if they send that in response to a message like *My cat died.*)

Some teachers report seeing these abbreviations in their pupils' written work, and so bemoan the evolution of this abbreviated vocabulary as another signal of civilisation's decline. My view is slightly different, either:

- Pupils have not been explicitly told that they should use a more formal register, in written work, which textspeak is not. If this is the case, why haven't they been told?
- They are doing it to annoy you.

David Crystal puts it rather well in a *Guardian* article. He says of texting: '. . . it is merely the latest manifestation of the human ability to be linguistically creative and to adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings.'

Descriptivism

It would be hard to find anyone who is purely descriptive in their analysis of language. As stated in the introduction to this book, I have my own prejudices, as does everybody else.

The art of teaching English language, however, is to know the difference between what you actually do and what you find acceptable.

For some, the gap between the two is very narrow. Though I'm not calling for an 'anything goes' attitude or literary anarchy, I am presenting a case for a widening of the gap.

Note

1 *Stains* rhymes with *stanes*, the Lallans word for *stones*.

21 Language myths

Following from the discussion about idiolects and how there is an understandable human tendency to be prescriptive, it might be useful to explore some 'language myths'. These fall into two categories:

- the somewhat arbitrary grammar rules that are broken by just about everyone, including great authors
- ideas about language in general that are, on close analysis, simply not true

In his book *The Language Instinct*, Steven Pinker (1994) dedicates a whole chapter to what he calls the 'language mavens'. These are people, who, having mastered their own grammar to the point of irrational pride, find it diverting to comment on the perceived imperfections of everybody else's grammar.

I used to be one.

It is comforting to know, however, that I am in good company. There are thousands of reformed sticklers out there. Some even write whole books about it (Kamm, 2015).

Others cling pedantically to their ideas about how people should use their own language. This is also fine, but I no longer rank among them and I have survived.

There are many studies which show the intricate scales of formality in communicative situations. This is the field of sociolinguistics and, to some extent, psycholinguistics. Though not my major field, I am proud to say that I was once introduced as a 'psycho linguist' on a live radio show. I did not argue.

Instead, I talked about language mavens but made it clear that there is nothing wrong with teachers impressing upon their pupils that their linguistic output will be judged, whether they like it or not. It will be judged in the same way that their appearance, posture, gestures and attitudes will be judged. This is what humans do and this is how humans make quick decisions about others. They may not be the right decisions, but we have to go on something, and language is an important social gauge.

Children know this intuitively anyway, and adjust their language automatically depending on who they are speaking with. Giving pupils tools to choose

their register is an essential part of English teaching. It just doesn't have to include obliteration of the language they are already using.

The following sections have been compiled in answer to the most common questions that occur during my teacher training workshops. There are many more language myths and some authors have written whole books about them. Please see the bibliography for further reading.

Myths about language as a whole

Some languages are easier than others

Studies of child language acquisition show this to be far from the truth. Children learn whatever language they are exposed to at about the same rate.

This perception is usually held when a speaker of one language observes a language markedly different from theirs. For instance, Chinese, Vietnamese and some Korean dialects are *tonal.* This means that some words differ only in syllable emphasis. English has a few examples of this, such as *refuse* meaning to fail to accept, and ***refuse*** meaning rubbish. Tonal languages differentiate their words in similar ways. In Chinese, the words for *ask* and *kiss* differ only in that *ask* has a falling tone and *kiss* rises and falls.

A native speaker of English, a language which does not rely on tone, might perceive that these tiny differences are almost impossible to learn, and conclude that Chinese is harder to learn than a non-tonal language such as German or French.

This perception merely stems from the fact that once a language is learned, the ear and brain become attuned to that and similar languages. Some languages are definitely easier to write, especially the phonemic ones like Spanish or Finnish, where one letter generally represents one sound. English spelling is slightly more complex and so might give rise to perceptions of the difficulty of the language as a whole. But bear in mind that writing is a relatively new concept, being about 5,000 years old. Spoken language, on the other hand, has existed in various forms for about 75,000 years.

Non-standard dialects are lazy/defective/ungrammatical

When conducting training sessions with teachers, we keep returning to the question of mismatch between their own dialect and that of their pupils. The

distinction is particularly sharp in lower socio-economic districts and even sharper in areas highly populated by indigenous children or children from non English-speaking backgrounds.

I am mostly concerned that non-standard English dialects will lessen chances of success in the workforce. I sympathise with this view. Children need to understand that at some point in their lives, they are likely to be judged on their linguistic output, whether they like it or not. My advice is always to make children aware of this fact and to inform them of the current standard dialect. This gives them the choice of either rigidly sticking to their home dialect in all situations or altering the way they speak as deemed appropriate by the situation.

However, to label non-standard dialects as somehow inferior is a mistake. The famous 'Ebonics' case in Oakland, California illustrates the point well.

Ebonics is a portmanteau word, coined from combining *ebony* and *phonics*. It describes what linguists term African-American Vernacular English. After several decades of linguistic analysis, and in contrast to White American popular opinion, Ebonics was found to be an expressive language, rich in terms of usage and with strict grammatical rules.

Myths about particular points of grammar

Split infinitives

'It is unacceptable to ever split an infinitive.'

Infinitives are the form of a verb used with the word *to*. They are a verb's basic form, e.g. *to be* is the basic form of *am, is, are, were*.

In bygone years, scholars, being highly proud of the effort they had put into learning Latin, noticed that Latin infinitives were never split, and therefore concluded that neither should English ones be. Of course, this is nonsense.

A famous example of how this edict is flouted appears at the beginning of every 'Star Trek' episode I've ever seen:

To boldly go . . .

I must admit, I stopped watching 'Star Trek' in the eighties, so they might have changed it. But I doubt it.

Preposition preposterousness

'Prepositions are words you should never end a sentence with.'

This is another odd 'rule' that eighteenth century Latin scholars espoused in an effort to bend English to Latin conventions.

A cursory internet search brings handfuls of snippets from the works of great authors, showing joyful disregard for such an edict. And yet there is an abiding effort to conform to this rule in speech and writing, bringing about disastrously convoluted sentences. This is best summed up by the famous retort wrongly attributed to Winston Churchill:

That is the type of arrant pedantry up with which I will not put.

It is true that an informal dialect of English puts prepositions, especially the word *at*, at the end of sentences in a slightly jarring, non-standard way. Consider:

Where's your head at?
I don't know where I'm at.

There is a joke in which the following dialogue occurs:

Speaker one: Where are you at?
Speaker two: Don't end sentences with prepositions.
Speaker one: Oh, sorry . . . where are you at, bitch?

I think that sums it up rather neatly.

Sentence starts

'And for goodness sake, don't start a sentence with *and, but, however* or any of the conjunctions.'

And why not? To be honest, if all an author's sentences begin with conjunctions, I could see how I'd want to stop reading. But, aside from the rather fragmented feel the habit gives to prose, there is actually no grammatical reason for the 'rule'.

In writing this book I was very much aware of doing this, even though I had previously avoided it. The sense of liberty is pleasant.

I, me, myself

Is it *between you and I* or *between you and me*?

If you refer to the pronoun table in the pronouns section, you'll see both *I* and *me* there, but what is the difference? Are you supposed to knock on a door and say *It is I*? When somebody asks who the culprit is, do you say *I* or *me*?

This is a tricky pronoun, the evidence for which can be found in countless examples of child-language acquisition. My two-year-old daughter used to hide and say:

**Where's me gone? Here me are.*

Tricky indeed. There is a tendency to use *I* instead of *me* in sentences with two objects:

Vicky gave Thomas and me some cake.
**Vicky gave Thomas and I some cake.*

As a checking mechanism, we could take the elements *Thomas* and *me* and separate them:

Vicky gave Thomas some cake.
Vicky gave me some cake.
**Vicky gave I some cake.*

In speech, however, there is much more laxity and in fact, the answer to

Who did this?
**Me!*

is, in fact, perfectly acceptable. We all do it.

What is also amusing is the utter distaste in some quarters for using *myself* in certain situations. In an effort to create social distance, it is quite common and certainly not a 'horrible misuse' or a 'sheer abomination' (Heffer, 2014) to say such things as

Is it just yourself tonight?
Send it to myself to sign.

Good, well, fine

Australians have done more to bust this myth than any other civilisation on the planet.

When asked how they are, the vast majority of Australians will say *Good*, *thanks*. Some will even go as far as to say:

> *Good, thanks. And yourself?* (See above to get a perspective on how apoplectic that exchange might make a maven.)

Who/whom

If you know how to use *whom* as opposed to *who*, well done. I have some bad news for you though. It's disappearing. It's going the way of *thou* and *thine*. Sorry. Just use *who*.

Even the Oxford English Dictionary says so. I sympathise. I found it hard to let go of this one, since I was so *good* at using it. But there it is. It is likely to be obsolete in your lifetime. Move on.

22 Redundancy

Have you ever read the paragraph making its rounds on various social media sites that goes something like this?

> fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too. Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny smoe plepoe can. i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclty uesdnatrnd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproarntnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! If you can raed this sahre it.

Nonsense! It is not amazing in any way. Sorry to burst any self-congratulatory bubbles that may have materialised in the process of reading this misinformed, yet wildly popular paragraph.

First, there are no confirmed studies from Cambridge University on this topic. A 2003 Edinburgh University study called *An anatomical perspective on sublexical units: The influence of the split fovea* alludes to the internal structure of words and is sometimes cited as the originator of paragraphs like the one above. It certainly does not conclude that only some people can read this kind of thing, nor does it say that spelling is not important.

If you can read it then you have an ordinary mind. What is happening here is a process known as *redundancy*.

Redundancy is a linguistic safeguard built into speech and writing that provides a belt *and* braces so that the listener/reader has multiple chances of understanding the speaker/writer. If success of communication were reliant on only *one* signal, the chances of miscommunication would be intolerably high.

> S1M1L4RLY, Y0UR M1ND 15 R34D1NG 7H15 4U70M471C4LLY W17H0U7 3V3N 7H1NK1NG 4B0U7 17.

That's because you're human. Not because you're smart. Sorry.

Not every conversation or message takes place in ideal conditions. Sound can be diminished by all kinds of environmental factors, such as distance, background noise or the ability of the speaker.

Writing is subject to similar interference, a fact that doctors everywhere seem to know innately. The instructions below from a consultation with my daughter's allergist is at once clear and unclear proof of the necessity of redundancy.

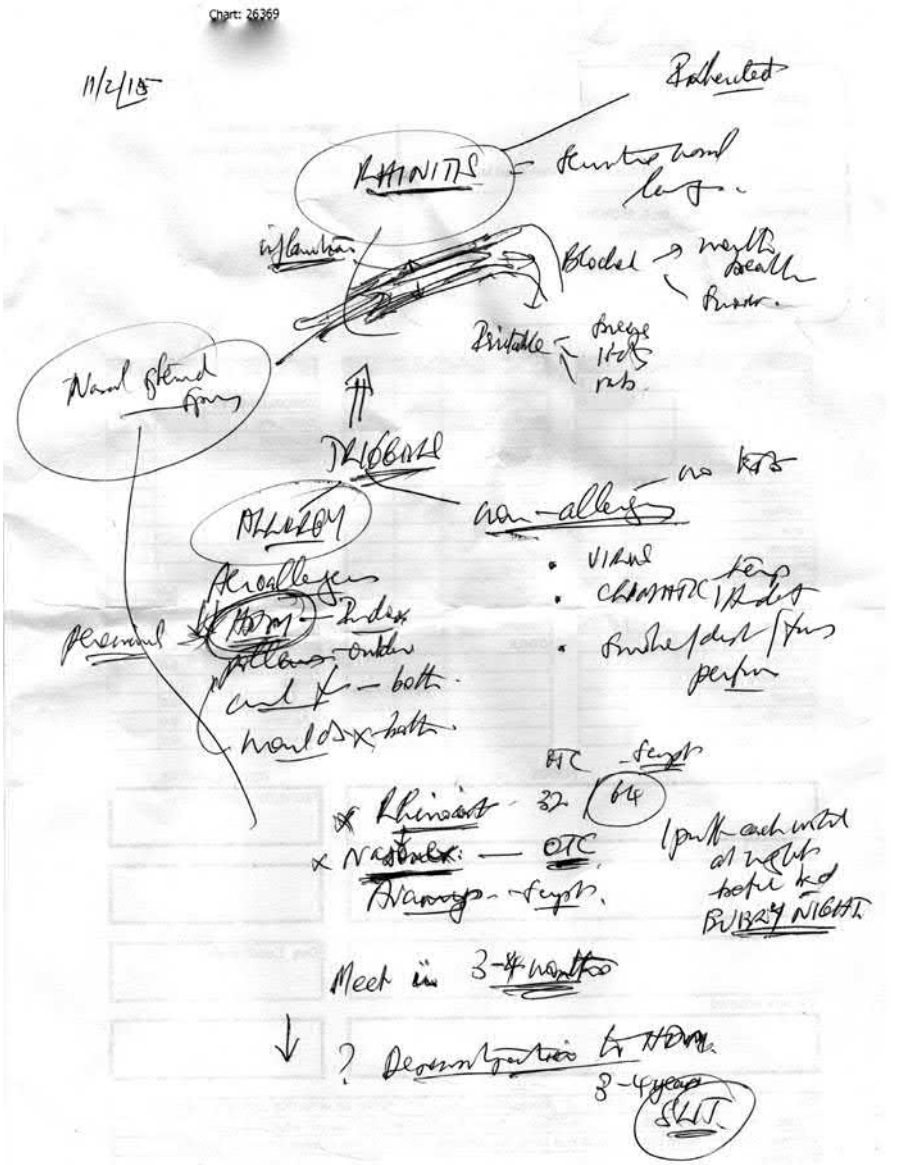


Figure 22.1 Doctor's scribble

A parent can still usually understand a small child's utterance, even if it is ungrammatical. On bringing my third daughter home, her sister, only 23 months her senior, constantly followed me around saying 'Me hod it!' It didn't take long for me to realise that she was asking, as best she could, if she might hold her sister.

Without redundancy, children might give up learning to speak and write altogether, but this is clearly not the case. They do not have to achieve phonetic and grammatical perfection to be understood. English, and indeed all languages, have a built-in system of redundancy to aid communication.

The ability of the reader/hearer is also a factor. Studies measuring brain glucose and attention have shown that humans can listen to a speaker for an average of 10 minutes before their minds begin to wander (Hattie and Yates, 2014).

Good writers and presenters know how to exploit redundancy so that their listeners get their message. They tend not to drone on and if they do repeat information, they do so in interesting ways. It's a lesson all of us could benefit from.

23 Figurative language

Speaking and writing is not just a straightforward case of subject, verb, object, phrase, clause, sentence or real situations. As we mature, we become aware of and increasingly proficient in the use of figurative language.

The great Austrian and German psychologists of the early twentieth century coined or made popular many terms that are still in use today. Take for example *ego, denial* and *sibling rivalry*. There were even words which remained untranslated and one of those is *gestalt*. This is the phenomenon whereby the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

The Kanisza figure below illustrates how a simple configuration of partial circles can create something more:

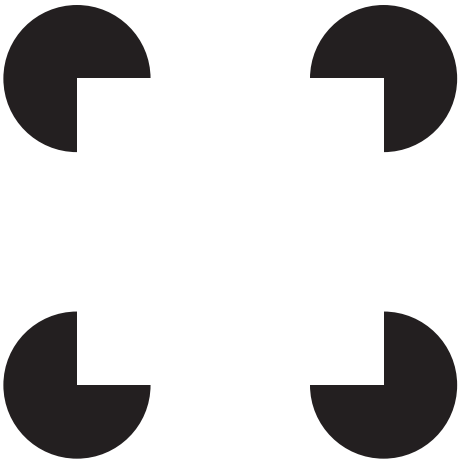


Figure 23.1 Kanisza figure

The same can be said for phrases. They may contain one, two or more different word classes, which have certain definitions and usages on their own, but when they go together, they can function as whole parts of speech. For example:

Byron writes highly entertaining romantic comedies.

The subject of the sentence is *Byron* the verb is *writes* and the object is the noun phrase *highly entertaining romantic comedies*. We could take that entire phrase and replace it with *scripts* or *screenplays*.

Some phrases are used in a less concrete way. Consider:

My love is like a red, red rose.

The abstract concept of love is compared, using the word *like*, to a red rose. This is a device of figurative language known as a simile. There follows an explanation and some examples of common figurative uses of language in English.

Simile

As in the example above, a simile is used to endow something with the properties of another unrelated thing. Similes always use the words *like* or *as*. For example:

- tight as a tourniquet
- big as a house
- quiet as a mouse
- as happy as a clam
- sleep like a log
- as dry as a bone
- like two peas in a pod
- like watching paint dry

No text on figurative language written by me could be complete without my favourite Australian and Scottish similes:

- flat out like a lizard drinking
- mad as a cut snake
- fleein' like a clocker (a clocker is a beetle and it's pronounced /cloaker/—it means hyperactive)

Metaphor

Metaphors are similar to similes, but without the use of *like* and *as*. Without these assistant words, they are slightly more abstract. Metaphors include:

- the night is young
- my heart sings
- time is money
- a blanket of snow
- a heart of stone
- a moral compass

A wonderfully amusing, but almost never deliberate, mistake in writing is to mix metaphors:

- to bite the hand that rocks the cradle
- to put all your chickens in one basket
- it's no skin off my teeth
- the spark that lit the camel's back
- it's not rocket surgery

Personification

Used best in narratives to enhance the reader's experience, personification is the bestowing of human characteristics onto otherwise non-human things, such as objects, animals and ideas:

- the wind whispered in the trees
- the butterflies danced in the garden
- the lighting flashed angrily
- the mouse smiled at me mischievously
- the cake called to me from the fridge
- the opportunity got up and left

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is used to add dramatic effect. It is a deliberate exaggeration:

- You snore louder than a freight train.
- I spent a couple of weeks there one day.
- She is so dumb, she thinks Taco Bell is a Mexican phone company.
- I had to walk 15 miles to school in the snow, uphill.
- You could have knocked me over with a feather.

Alliteration and assonance

When a writer deliberately uses several words that begin with the same letter to create an effect, this is called alliteration. It is similar to assonance, where a writer will use similar-sounding syllables, but not necessarily alliterative ones. This is alliteration:

- My mother makes me mash my mini M 'n' Ms on a Monday morning.

This is assonance:

- It's not the cough that carries you off, it's the coffin they carry you off in.

Rappers in particular use assonance as well as rhyme to create their songs.

Onomatopoeia

Many of our modern words began as onomatopoeia. This is where the word echoes the sound:

- beep, bang, click, clang, crunch, smash, meow.

Idioms

There are phrases whose words mean one thing individually but something very different when they go together. This is a very abstract form of figurative language called *idioms.* The meaning of that combination is particular to a specific language or group. For instance, literally translating *on the ball* into French will not yield the idiom as it exists in English. Here is the breakdown:

> *on*, a preposition, and the noun *ball*. When acting together to form the phrase *on the ball*, the sum of the parts creates an English idiom meaning 'having a good understanding of the situation'.

English is full of idioms. Their meaning can only be derived by looking up the entire phrase. This sometimes presents problems for non-native speakers:

- a piece of cake
- the apple of my eye
- a nest egg
- a chip on your shoulder
- once in a blue moon
- kick the bucket
- pull your socks up
- know the ropes

24 The -ize have it

(or, is it because -ise Scottish?)

I was recently asked by a teacher why it was that I chose to use the ending ‘ize’ as opposed to ‘ise’ in some of the words in my books.

She was concerned that I was using ‘American’ spelling, and being an Australian schoolteacher, she was reluctant to use texts with ‘American’ spelling.

Doing a review of my endings preferences, I noticed that I used ‘ize’ for some words and ‘ise’ for others. How could this be? Is it possible I was wrong?! (This would be a good opportunity to insert an interrobang, just FYI.)

My conclusion and justification

Though in common usage in American and British spelling respectively, the ‘ize’ version of words constitutes part of a highly acceptable form of British spelling known as ‘Oxford Spelling’. It is used in all Oxford University Press publications including the Oxford English Dictionary.

This seems logical to me, as about 200 -ize verbs are derived from Greek roots where the original words were spelled with the letter z. These include:

capsize, recognize, organize, standardize

As a reaction, perhaps to the prevalence of standard American spelling, some British publishing houses prefer -ise and use this ending almost exclusively. Cambridge University Press are notable agents of this.

Other words take the -ise form only:

advertise, advise, apprise, arise, circumcise, comprise, compromise, demise, despise, devise, disguise, excise, exercise, franchise, guise, improvise, incise, merchandise, revise, rise, supervise, surmise, surprise, televise

My personal opinion is that concern about this distinction in the classroom is redundant and unnecessarily prescriptive.

Children are exposed to both variants in such quantities that labouring over 'correctness' diverts attention away from striving to achieve an elegant communicative style.

Being a British citizen educated at both international and British schools, along with having lived in the United States followed by a significant period in Australia, I am unperturbed about spelling words with this distinction based on where and how I was initially exposed to them. Indeed, I have even noticed changes in my choices over the years. When a decade ago I tended towards Cambridge, I now see myself leaning more often to Oxford. There is no semantic difference between words that differ in this way, so I don't feel I'm introducing any confusion if I happen to be inconsistent.

What about 'our' versus 'or'?

Conversely, I adhere strongly to the 'our' versus 'or' distinction. I write *colour, glamour, labour* and *favour* this way. Why don't I pick and choose my spellings according to my experience for these variants? Well I'll tell you . . .

This is a clear British/American difference, and though again, semantically, there is no distinction, I choose not to use American spelling in any circumstance because it isn't an accepted form in any British English spelling pattern.

The *our/or* variants came about when Noah Webster was compiling his dictionary, and being a proponent of simplified spelling, he omitted the letter 'u' in words ending this way.

Other examples of this type of simplification occur in *ae/oe* forms, where Webster left out the first vowel in the digraph, such as in *pediatrics* and *esophagus*.

I have no problem with attempts to simplify spelling, in fact I wish I had the guts to do it more, critics be damned! But I chose Oxford over Webster in these matters a long time ago and now I find I cannot go back. Such is language.

Writers all over the Anglophone world are constantly faced with making these choices. Some, like me, vary their choices, others are dogmatically rigid.

The important thing to keep in mind though, is to try not to be overly prescriptive according to your own personal choices (this is called your 'idiolect'—the patterns of language unique to you, and occupies a whole chapter of this book).

By regularly encouraging your pupils to examine the language they use, and to become comfortable about noticing what constitutes a significant departure from the standard, as opposed to a difference in linguistic opinion, you stand a much better chance of raising their confidence, as well as your own.

Part VI

Resources for everyone

This page intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 Word cards

Copy and laminate these word cards for use in test sentences.

Table A.1 Word cards

James	cat	idea
he	she	you
run	eat	slide
small	shiny	afraid
quickly	very	much

© 2016, *Language for Life*, Lyn Stone, Routledge

Appendix 2 Latin and Greek morphemes

These word-parts are just a percentage of the list of Latin and Greek morphemes that have influenced the English language. There are many more, but this list has been compiled throughout the years using various dictionaries and in response to requests from teachers and pupils.

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
ab-, a-	away from	abnormal, absent, abstract, aversion
acr-	height, summit, tip	acrobatics, acronym, acropolis
acu-	sharp, pointed	acupuncture, acute
ac-, ad-, af-, ag-, al-, am-, an-, ap-, ar-, as-, at-	movement to or toward, in addition to	accept, accelerate, adapt, adore, affect, afflict, aggrandise, aggregate, aggression, allege, allow, annotate, announce, approach, approximate, arrest, arrive, ascend, associate, attack, attune
aero-	air, atmosphere	aerobic, aerodynamic, aeronautics, aerosol
aesth-	feeling, sensation	aesthete, anaesthetic, synesthesia
ag-, -ig-, act-	do, go, move	act, action, agenda, agent, agile, agitate, ambiguous, mitigate, navigate
alg-	pain	analgesic, neuralgia
ali-, alter-	other	alias, alibi, alien, alter, alternate
alt-	high, deep	altimeter, altitude
am-	love, liking	amateur, amatory, amenity, amoration, amorous, enamoured
ami-	friend	amiable, amicable
ambi-, amphi	both, on both sides	ambidextrous, ambient, ambiguous, ambition, ambivalent, amphibian, amphitheatre
ambul-	to walk	ambulance, amble, preamble
ampl-	ample, abundant, bountiful, large	ample, amplify
a-, an-	not, without	anaerobic, anhydrous, atheism, atypical
anem-	wind	anemometer, anemone
anim-	breath, life, spirit	animal, animate
ann-, -enn-	year, yearly	anniversary, annual, centennial, millennium, perennial
ant-, anti-	against, opposed to	antagonist, antagonise, antibiotic
ante-, anti-	before, in front of, prior to	antediluvian, antemeridiam (a.m.), anticipate

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
aqu-	water	aquamarine, aquarium, aqueduct, aquifer
arbit-	judge	arbiter, arbitrary
arch-	ruler	anarchy, archangel, archetype, architect, monarchy
archa-	ancient	archaeology, archaic, archaism
ard-	heat, glow, passion	ardent, arson
art-	art, skill	artifact, artifice, artificial, artisan
arthr-	joint	arthritic, arthritis, arthropod
aster-, astr-	star, star-shaped	aster, asterisk, asteroid, astronaut, astrology, astronomy
athl-	prize	athlete, athletic, decathlon
audac-	bold	audacious, audacity
audi-	hearing, listening, sound	audible, audience, audio, audiology, audition, auditorium
aug-, auct-	grow, increase	auction, augment, augmentation, inauguration
aut-	self, directed from within	autism, autobiography, autocracy, autograph, automatic, autonomy
av-	desire	avarice, avid
avi-	bird	aviary, aviation
bac-	rod-shaped	bacteria
bal-, bol-	throw	ball, ballet, ballistic, diabolical, hyperbole, metabolism
bar-	weight, pressure	barometer, hyperbaric
bas-	bottom	base, basic, debase
bell-	war	belligerent, rebellion
ben-	good, well	benefit, benevolent, benign
bi-	two	bicycle, biennial, binary, binoculars
bib-	drink	bib, beverage, imbibe
bibl-	book	bible, bibliography

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
bio-, bi-	life	biography, biology
bov-, bu-	cow, ox	beef, bovine
brachi-, brachio-	arm	brachiate, brachiosaurus
brev-	a short time	abbreviate, brevity, brief
bront-, bronto-	thunder	brontosaurus, brontology, brontophobia
burs-	pouch, purse	bursar, disburse
cad-, -cid-, cas-	fall	accident, cadence, casualty, coincidence
calc-	stone	calcite, calcium, calculate
calor-	heat	calories, Calor Gas
camer-	room	bicameral, camera
camp-	field	camp, campaign, champion
can-	dog	canine
can-, -cin-, cant-	sing	accent, chant, enchant, recant
cand-, cend-	shine	candle, candour, incandescent, incendiary, incense
cap-, -cip-, capt-, -cept-	hold, take	capable, capacity, captive, captivate, capture, conception, except, forceps, incipient, intercept, recipient
capit-, -cipit-	head	cap, capital, captain, decapitate, precipitation
cardi-	heart	cardiac
carn-	flesh	carnage, carnivore, reincarnation
cata-, cat-	down	catacomb, catalyst, catastrophe, catatonic, cathode
caud-	tail	caudal, coda
caust-, caut-	burn	caustic, cauterise, holocaust
cav-	hollow	cave, cavity, excavation, concave
celer-	quick	accelerate

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
cens-	to assess	censure, census
cent-	hundred	cent, centennial, centurion, percent
cervic-	relating to the neck, relating to the cervix	cervix, cervical
chlor-	green	chlorine, chlorophyll, chloroplast
chore-	relating to dance	choreography, chorus
chrom-	color	chromatic, chrome, chromium, chromosome, monochrome
chron-	time	anachronism, chronic, chronicle, chronology, chronometer, synchronise
circ-	circle, ring	circle, circular, circulate, circus
circum-	around	circumference, circumnavigate, circumstance
cit-	call, start	citation, cite, excite, incite, solicit
civ-	citizen	civic, civil, civilian, civilisation
clam-	cry out	acclaim, claim, clamour, exclamation, proclamation
clar-	clear	clarity, clear, declaration
claud-, -clud-, claus-, -clus-	close, shut	clause, claustrophobia, conclude, exclude, exclusive, include, occlusion, recluse, seclude
clav-	key	clavichord, clavicle, conclave
clement-	mild	clemency, inclement
cogn-	know	cognition, cognitive, connoisseur, incognito, recognise
col-	neck	accolade, collar
co-, col-, com-, con-, cor-	with, together	coagulate, coalescence, collect, collide, compress, comprise, connect, connote, contain, correct, corrode
contra-	against	contraband, contradict, contrast
copi-	plenty	copious, copy, cornucopia
cor-, cord-	heart	accord, cordial, core, concord, courage, discord, encourage

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
corn-	horn	cornea, cornucopia, unicorn
coron-	crown	corona, coronation
corp-, corpor-	body	corporation, corporal, corpse, incorporate
cosm-	universe	cosmic, cosmonaut, cosmopolitan, cosmos, microcosm
-cracy, -crat	government, rule, authority	aristocracy, autocracy, bureaucracy, democracy, theocracy
cred-	believe, trust	accreditation, credentials, credibility, credo, creed, discredit, incredible
cresc-, crease, cru-, crew-	grow, rise	accrue, concrete, crescendo, crescent, decrease, increase, recruit
crit-, crisi-	judge, separate	crisis, criterion, critic, critical, diacritic, endocrine, hypocrisy
cruc-	cross	crucial, crucify, excruciating
crypt-	hidden	apocryphal, cryptic, cryptography
culp-	blame, fault	culpable, culprit, exculpate
cur-	care for	accurate, curator, cure, curious, manicure
cur-, curs-	run, course	concur, corridor, courier, course, currency, cursive, occur
curv-	bent	curb, curvature, curve
cul-, col-	cultivate, till, inhabit	colony, cult, cultivate, cultivation, culture
cut-	skin	cutaneous, cuticle
cycl-	circular	bicycle, cycle, cyclic, cyclone, unicycle
damn-, -demn-	to inflict loss upon	condemn, damnation, indemnify
de-	down, away from, removing	decay, declare, decline, dedicate, deduce, delude, dementia, depress, descend, destroy
dec-	ten	decade, decahedron, decathlon, decimal
decor-	ornament	decorate, decorous, decorum
del-	delete	delete, deletion, indelible

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
dem-	people	democracy, demographic, endemic, epidemic
dens-	thick	condense, dense, density
dent-	tooth	dental, dentures
derm-	skin	dermatology, hypodermic, taxidermy
dextr-	right	ambidextrous, dexterity, dextrose
di-	two	digraph, dichotomy
dia-	through	diagram, dialysis, diameter, diarrhoea
dict-	say, speak	dictate, dictionary, dictum, edict, verdict
doct-	teach/learn	docile, doctor, doctrine, document, indoctrinate, indoctrination
dog-, dox-	opinion, tenet	dogma, orthodox, paradox
dol-	pain	condolence, doleful, indolence
domin-	master	dame, domain, dominate, dominion, domino
don-	give	condone, donate, donation, donor, pardon
dorm-	sleep	dormant, dormitory
dors-	back	dorsal, dorsum, dossier, endorse
drom-	run	dromedary, hippodrome, palindrome, syndrome
du-	two	deuce, dual, duo, duplicity
dub-	doubtful	doubt, dubious
duc-	lead	abduct, deduce, dux
dur-	hard	duration, duress, endure
dyna-	power	dynamic, dynamite, dynamo, dynasty
dys-	badly, ill	dysentery, dysplasia, dystrophy
eco-	house	ecology, economics
ecto-	outside	ectoderm, ectoplasm
ed-, es-	eat	edible, obesity

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
ego-	self, I (first person)	egotism
em-, empt-	buy	exemption, preempt, redeem
em-, en-	put into or on	embody, embellish, emblem, enclose, envelop, enshrine
endo-	inside, within	endocrine, endomorph
epi-	upon	epicenter, epidemic, epitaph, epiphany
equ-	even, equal, level	equate, equilibrium, equinox, inequity
erg-	work	energy, ergonomic
err-	stray	aberration, error
etym-	true	etymology
eu-	well, good	eugenics, euphoria, euthanasia
extra-	outer	extra, extraordinary, strange
fal-	false, deceive	fail, fallacy, fallible, false, fault
famili-	a close attendant	familiar, family
fari-, fat-	say, speak	affable, confess, fable, preface
fatu-	foolish, useless	fatuous, infatuation
feder-	treaty, agreement, contract, league, pact	confederacy, confederation, federal, federate, federation
fel-	cat	feline
felic-	happy, merry	felicity, felicitiations
fem-, femin-	women, female	feminine, feminist
fend-, fens-	strike	defend, fend, fence, offend
fer-	to bear, carry	circumference, confer, ferry, offer, prefer, refer, transfer, vociferous
ferv-	boil, glow	ferment, fervent, fervour, fever
fid-, fis-	faith, trust	confidence, diffident, faith
fil-	thread	defile, filament, file, filigree, fillet, profile
fili-	son	affiliation

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
fin-	end	definite, final, finish
fix-	attach	affix, fix, fixation, fixture, prefix, suffix
flect-, flex-	bend	deflect, flexible, inflection, reflect, reflection, reflex
flig-, flict-	strike	afflict, conflict, inflict, profligate
flor-	flower	floral, florid, florist
flu-, fluv-, flux-	flow	affluent, fluctuate, fluent, fluid, flush, influence
foli-	leaf	defoliant, exfoliate, folio
font-	spring	font, fountain
form-	shape	conform, deform, formula, uniform
fort-	strong	forte, fortify, fortitude
fract-, frag-	break	fraction, fracture, fragile, fragment, fray, infraction, infringe, refrain
fric-, frict-	rub	dentifrice, friction
frig-	cold	frigid, refrigerator
fug-, fugit-	flee	centrifuge, fugitive, refuge
fund-	bottom	founder, foundation, fund, fundamental, profound
fus-	pour	diffuse, effusive, profuse, transfusion
fur-, furt-	thief, steal	ferret, furtive
gam-	marriage, wedding	monogamy, polygamy
gamb-	leg	gam, gambit, gambol, gammon
gar-	chatter	gargle, garrulous, jargon
gastr-	stomach	gastric, gastronomic, gastropod
geo-	earth	geography, geology, geometry
gen-	born, of a specified kind	congenial, engender, gender, generate, genital, genus, indigenous, progeny
ger-	old	geriatric, gerontology
ger-, gest-	bear, carry	congest, digest, gestation, register, suggest

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
germ-	seed	germ, germane, germinate, wheatgerm
glob-	sphere	global, globe, globule
gloss-, glot-	tongue	epiglottis, glossary, polyglot
gnosc-, -gnit-	know	acquaint, agnostic, connoisseur, ignorant, noble, prognosis
gon-	corner, angle, knee	genuflect, polygon, trigonometry
grad-, gred-, gress-	walk, step, go	aggression, egress, grade, gradual, graduate, progress, regress, transgress
gram-	letter, writing	anagram, diagram, grammar, hologram, monogram, programme
gran-	grain	granary, granite, granola, granule
graph-	draw, write	autograph, digraph, graph, grapheme, graphic, orthography, paragraph, photograph
grat-	thank, please	congratulate, grace, grateful, ingratiate
grav-	heavy	aggravate, grave, gravitate, gravity
greg-	flock, herd	aggregate, congregation, gregarious, segregation
gust-	taste	disgust, gusto
gyn-, gynaec-	woman	gynaecology, misogynist
hab-, -hib-	have	habit, prohibition
haem-	blood	haemophilia, haemoglobin, haemorrhage
hal-	breathe	inhale, halitosis
helio-	sun	heliocentric, heliotrope, helium
hemi-	half	hemicycle, hemisphere
hept-	seven	heptagon, heptathlon
hered-	heir	heir, heiress, hereditary, heredity, heritage, inherit
here-, hes-	cling, stick	adhere, adhesive, cohere, coherent, cohesive, hesitate, inherent
herb-	grass	herbal, herbicide, herbivore

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
heres-, heret-	take, choose	heresy, heretic, heretical
herp-	creep	herpes, herpetology
heter-	different, other	heterogeneous, heterosexual
hex-	six	hexagon, hexahedron
hier-	sacred	hierarchy, hieroglyphics
hippo-	horse	hippodrome, hippopotamus
hol-	whole	holistic, holography
homo-	same	homogeneous, homophone, homonym, homosexual
homeo-	like	homeostasis, homeopathy
hor-	boundary	aphorism, horizon
hospi-	host	hospice, hospital, hospitality, inhospitable
hum-	ground	exhume, exhumation, human, humane, humanity, humus
hydr-	water	dehydrate, hydrant, hydraulics, hydrous
hypo-	under	hypothermia, hypotonic
hyper-	above, over	hyperbole, hypertonic
hypn-	sleep	hypnosis, hypnotherapy, hypnotise
iatr-	doctor	iatrogenic, psychiatrist
id-	shape	idol, idolatry, idyll
ide-	idea, thought	ideogram, idea, ideology
idio-	own, peculiarity	idiolect, idiom, idiopathic, idiosyncrasy, idiot
ign-	fire	igneous, ignite
imag-	copy	image, imagine
in-, il-, im-	in, on	illuminate, illustrious, import, impinge, incur, intend, invite
in-, il-, im-, + ir-	not, un- (negation)	illicit, impossible, inimical, irrational
infra-	below, under	infrastructure, infrared

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
insul-	island	insular, insulate
inter-	among, between	international, intermission, intersection
intra-	within	intramural, intranet
ira-	anger	irascible, irate, ire
iso-	equal, same	isobar, isometric, isosceles, isotonic
iter-	again	reiterate
jac-	lie	adjacent
jac-, -ject-	cast, throw	adjective, inject, object, project, reject, subject, trajectory
janu-	door	janitor, January
jud-	judge	adjudicate, jusdge, judicial, judiciary
jug-	yoke	conjunction, subjugate
jud-, jus-, jur-	law, justice	jury, justice, perjury
juven-	young, youth	juvenile, rejuvenate
kilo-	thousand	kilobyte, kilogram, kilometer
kine-, cine-	movement, motion	cinema, kinaesthetic, kinetic, telekinesis
klept-	steal	kleptomania
laps-	slide, slip	elapse, relapse
labi-	lip	labial
labor-	work	collaboration, elaborate, laboratory
lact-	milk	lactate, lactation, lactose
lamin-	layer, slice	laminate, lamination
lapid-	stone	dilapidate, lapidary
lat-	broad, wide	latitude
later-	side	bilateral, unilateral
laud-	praise	laudable
lav-	wash	laundry, lava, lavatory, lavender, lotion
lax-	loose	laxative, relax

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
leg-, lect-	read, gather	collect, lecture, legend, legible, legion, religion, select
leg-	law	legal, legitimate, privilege
leps-, lept-	grasp, seize	epilepsy, neuroleptic
leuc-, leuk-	white	leucocyte, leukaemia
lev-	lift, light, raise	alleviate, elevate, lever, levity, levy, relieve
liber-	free	liberal, liberate, liberty
libr-	book	librarian, library
lig-	bind	ligament, ligature
lingu-	language, tongue	bilingual, linguistics
liqu-	flow	liqueur, liquid, liquor
liter-	letter	alliteration, illiterate, literacy, literal, obliterate
lith-	stone	monolith, Neolithic, Paleolithic
loc-	place	allocate, local, location, locomotion, locum
log-	word, reason, speech, thought	analogy, apology, biology, dialogue, etymology, logarithm, logic, morphological, neologism, trilogy
loqu-, loc-	speak	colloquial, elocution, eloquent, soliloquy
luc-	light	lucid, Lucifer, translucent
lud-, lus-	play	allude, delude, elude, illusion, ludicrous
lumin-	light	illumination, luminary, luminous
lun-	moon	lunar, lunatic
lysi-	dissolve	analysis, hydrolysis
macer-	lean	emaciate, meager
macro-	long	macrobiotic, macroeconomics, macron
magn-	great, large	magnanimous, magnificent, magnify, magnum
maj-	greater	majesty, major, mayor

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
mal-	bad, wretched	dismal, malady, malevolent, malfunction, malice
man-	stay	mansion, permanent, remain
man-	hand	emancipate, manacle, manage, manicure, manual, manuscript
mand-, -mend-	order, commit	command, commend, demand, mandate, recommend, remand
mania	mental illness	kleptomania, mania
mar-	sea	marinate, marine, maritime
mater-, matr-	mother	maternal, matrimony, matron
maxi-	most	maxim, maximum
medi-, -mid-	middle	immediate, intermediary, mean, media, mediocre, medium
mel-	honey	caramel, mellifluous
mem-	remember	commemorate, memoir, memory, remembrance
mens-	measure	commensurate, dimension, immense
ment-	mind	comment, dement, dementia, mental, mentality, mention
merc-	reward, wages, hire	commerce, commercial, market, merchant, mercy
merg-, mers-	dip, plunge	emerge, immerse
meta-	above, among, beyond	metabolism, metamorphosis, metaphor, method
meteor-	raised up, high	meteorology
meter-, metr-	measure	barometer, diameter, parameter, perimeter, thermometer
micro-	small	microcosm, microphone, microscope
migr-	wander	immigrant, migrant, migrate
milit-	soldier	militant, military, militia
mill-	thousand	mile, millennium, million

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
mim-	repeat	mime, mimic, pantomime
min-	jut	eminent, imminent, prominent
min-	less, smaller	minority, minuscule, minute
mir-	wonder, amazement	admire, miracle, mirror
mis-	hate	misandry, misanthropy, misogyny
miser-	unhappy, wretched	commiseration, miser, miserable
mito-, miss-	send	commit, emit, missile, mission, omit, permit, submit, transmit
mit-	thread	mitochondrion, mitosis
mne-	memory	amnesia, amnesty, mnemonic
mod-	measure, change	mode, model, moderate, moderation, modern, modify
mon-	alone, one	monarchy, monastery, monogram, monolith, monopoly, monotone
mon-	warn	admonish, monitor, monster, monument, premonition, summon
monstra-	show	demonstrate, muster, remonstrate
mor-	foolish, dull	moron, oxymoron, sophomore
mor-	disposition	moral, morose
mora-	pause, delay	demur, moratorium
mord-	bite	mordacious, morsel, remorse
morph-	form, shape	endomorph, metamorphosis, morpheme, morphology
mort-	death	immortal, morbid, mortal, mortuary
mov-, mot-	move, motion	commotion, emotion, mobile, momentum, motion, motive, motor, move
multi-	many, much	multilingual, multiple, multiplex, multitude
mund-	world	mundane
mur-	wall	intramural, mural
mut-	change	immutable, mutation

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
my-	shut (the eyes)	myopia
myth-	story	mythology
narc-	numb	narcolepsy, narcotic
narr-	tell	narrative, narrate
nas-, nat-	born	innate, nascent, natal, native, renaissance
naut-	ship	Argonaut, astronaut, nautical
nav-	ship	navy, navigate
ne-, neo-	new	neologism, neon, neophyte
neb-, nub-	cloud	nebula, nebulous, nuance
necr-	dead	necrophobia, necrosis
nect-, nex-	join, tie	connect, nexus
neg-	say no	negative, neglect
nerv-	sinew, nerve	enervate, nerve, nervous
nes-	island	Polynesia, Micronesia
neur-	nerve	neurology, neuron, neurotic
nihil-	nothing	annihilation, nihilism
noc-	hurt, harm	innocent, innocuous, nuisance
noct-	night	equinox, nocturnal
nom-	arrangement, law, order	astronomy, autonomous, economy, metronome, taxonomy
nomen-, nomin-	name	nomenclature, nominate, ignominy
non-	not	none and the millions of words formed using this prefix
not-	letter, note, paper	annote, connote, denote, notary
nov-	new	innovate, innovation, nova, novel, novice, renovate
nox-, noc-	harmful	noxious, obnoxious
nub-, nupt-	to marry, to wed	connubial, nubile, prenuptial
nuc-	nut	nuclear, nucleus

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
numer-	number	enumerate, innumerable, numeral
nutri-	nourish	malnutrition, nutrient
ob-, oc-, of-, op-	against	object, obstinate, occipital, occur, offend, offense, oppose, oppress
oct-	eight	octagon, octopus
ocul-	eye	ocular, oculus
od-	path, way	anode, diode, odometer
offic-	duty	office, officer, official, officious
-oid	like	asteroid, humanoid
olig-	few	oligarchy
-oma	morbid growth, tumor	melanoma, carcinoma
omni-	all	omnipotence, omnipresent, omniscient, omnivore
oner-	burden	exonerate, onerous
onom-	name	onomatopoeia
ont-	existing	ontogeny, ontology
-onym	name	anonymous, antonym, pseudonym, synonym
oper-	work	cooperate, opera, operate, opus
opt-	choose	adopt, co-opt, optional
or-	mouth	oral, orifice
ora-	pray, plead	adore, adoration, orator
orb-	circle	orb, orbit
ordin-	order	ordinal, ordinary
orth-	straight	orthodontist, orthodox, orthopaedic
ov-	egg	oval, ovary, ovule
pac-	peace	appease, pacify
pact-	fasten	compact, impact, pact

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
paed-	child	paediatric, pedagogy
pall-	be pale	pallid, pallor
palp-	touch	palp, palpable, palpate, palpitation
pan-, pam-	all	panacea, pandemic, pandemonium, panoply
par-	equal	compare, disparage, par, parity
para-	beside, near	parable, paradox, parallel, parameter, parody
parv-	little	parvovirus
pas-	feed	pastor, pasture, repast
path-	feeling, disease	apathy, empathy, pathetic, pathogen, sympathy
pater-, patr-	father	paternity, patriot, patron
pati-, pass-	suffer, feel, endure, permit	passion, passive, patience
pecc-	sin	impeccable, peccadillo
pecu-	property	peculiar, pecuniary, pecunious
ped-	foot	centipede, impede, pedal, pedestrian
pel-, pul-	drive, push	compel, dispel, expel, propulsion, pulse, repulsive
pen-	almost	peninsula, penultimate, penumbra
pen-, pun-	punish	impunity, penalty, penance, punish, punitive, repent
pend-, pens-	hang	pendant, pending, pendulum, pensive, suspense
penn-, pinn-	feather	pen, pinnacle
pent-	five	pentagon, pentagram
pept-	digest	dyspepsia, peptic, peptide
per-	thoroughly, through	perfection, permeate, pernicious, persistence, peruse, pervade
peri-	around	perihelion, perimeter, peripheral, periscope

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
pet-	strive toward	appetite, compete, competition, impetus, petition
phag-	eat	phagocyte, sarcophagus
pharma-	drug, medicine	pharmaceuticals, pharmacy
phan-, phen-	to show, visible	emphasis, epiphany, fantasy, phenomenon, sycophant
pher-, phor-	bear, carry	metaphor, pheromone
phil-, -phile	love, friendship	bibliophile, philanthropy, philharmonic, philosophy
phleg-	heat, inflammation	phlegm, phlegmatic
phob-	fear	claustrophobia, hydrophobia
phon-	sound	homophone, microphone, phonetic, phonics
phos-, phot-	light	phosphorus, photo
pi-	kind, devout, pity	piety, pious, pity
pil-	hair	depilatory, epilator
pisc-	fish	Pisces, piscine
plac-	calm	implacable, placate
plan-	flat	explanation, planar, plane
plas-	mould	plasma, plastic
platy-	flat, broad	plaice, plateau, platitude, platypus
plaud-	approve, clap	applaud, plausible
ple-, plet-	fill	complement, complete, deplete, implement, supply
plen-	full	plenary, plenitude, plenty, replenish
plic-	fold	appliance, application, apply, complex, ply
plum-	feather	plumage, plumate
plumb-	lead	plumber
plur-, plus-	more	plural, plus, quadruple, surplus

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
plut-	wealth	plutocracy
pneu-	air, breath, lung	apnoea, pneumatic, pneumonia
pod-	foot	arthropod, podiatry, tripod
poie-	make	poet, onomatopoeia
pole-, poli-	city	acropolis, cosmopolitan, metropolis, police, policy, politics
poly-	many	polygamy, polygon
pon-, posit-	put	component, deposit, expose, position, positive, postpone, repose
pont-	bridge	pontoon
popul-	people	population, popular, populous
porc-	pig	porcine, pork
port-	carry	comportment, deport, export, import, port, portable, portal, porter, portfolio, rapport, report, support, transport
post-	after, behind	posterior, posterity, postscript
pot-	power	despot, potent, potential
pot-	drink	potable, potion
potam-	river	hippopotamus, Mesopotamia
pre-	before	prepare, prefix, previous
prec-	pray	deprecation, imprecation, pray, prayer, precarious
pred-	prey	predator, prey
prend-	grasp	apprehend, comprehend, comprehensive, enterprise, prehensile
prim-	first	primal, primary, prime, primeval, primitive
priv-	separate	deprivation, privilege, privy
pro-	before, in front of	prologue
pro-	for, forward	procrastinate, produce, propel
prob-	worthy, good	approbation, approve, proof, reprobate

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
propri-	property, one's own	appropriate, proper, property, proprietary, proprietor, propriety
prot-	first	protagonist, protocol, prototype
proxim-	nearest	approximate, proximity
pseud-	false	pseudonym
psych-	mind	psyche, psychiatry, psychology, psychosis
pter-	wing, fern	helicopter, pterodactyl
pude-	shame	impudent, repudiate
pug-, pugn-	fight	impugn, pugilism, pugnacious, repugnant
pung-, punct-	prick	acupuncture, expunge, punctual, punctuation, puncture, pungent
pup-	doll	pupa, pupate, puppet
pur-	pure	impurity, pure, puree, purge, purify, purity
purg-	cleanse	expurgate, purgatory, purge
put-	prune, reckon	amputation, compute, dispute, impute, putative, reputation
quadr-	four	quadrangle, quadrilateral, quadruped
quart-	fourth	quartary, quarter, quartile
quer-, -quir-	ask, seek	inquisition, query
quiesc-	rest	acquiesce, quiet, requiem
quot-	how many, how great	quota, quotient
rad-, ras-	scrape, shave	abrasion, erasure, razor
radi-	beam, spoke	radiance, radiation, radius
radic-	root	eradicate, radical, radish
ranc-	rancidness, grudge, bitterness	rancid, rancour
re-,	again, back	recede, refine, replay
reg-, rex-	king	anorexia, regal, royal

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
regul-	rule	regular, regulate, regulation, rule
retro-	backward, behind	retrograde, retrospective, retrovirus
rhe-	flow	diarrhoea
rhin-	nose, snout	rhinoceros, rhinoplasty
rhod-	rose	rhododendron
rid-, ris-	laugh	deride, ridiculous, risible
robur-	strength	corroborate, corroboration, robust
rod-, ros-	gnaw	corrode, erosion, rodent
rog-	ask	arrogant, derogatory, interrogation, surrogate
ruber-, rubr-	red	rubric, ruby
rudi-	unskilled, rough, unlearned	erudite, rude, rudimentary
rug-	wrinkle	corrugation, rough
rupt-	break	abrupt, corrupt, disrupt, erupt, interrupt, rupture
sacr-	sacred	sacrament, sacred
sagac-	wise	sagacious, sage
salu-	health, welfare	salubrious, salute
salv-	save	salvage, salvation, salve
sanc-	holy	saint, sanctify, sanction, sanctuary
sapi-, -sipi-	taste, wise	homo sapien, insipid, sapient
sati-	enough	sate, satisfy, saturate
scand-, -scend-	climb	ascend, descend, transcendent
sci-	know	conscience, conscious, conscientious, science
scop-, scept-	look at, examine, view, observe	horoscope, kaleidoscope, microscope, periscope, sceptic
scrib-, script-	write	describe, manuscript, prescribe, scribble, scribe, script, scripture, subscribe

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
se-, sed-	apart, aside, away	secede, seditious, seduce
sec-, sect-, seg-	cut	section, segment
sed-	settle, calm	sedative
sed-, -sid-, sess-	sit	insidious, obsess, preside, president, reside, sediment, session, subside, supersede
sema-	sign	semantics, semaphore
semi-	half	semicolon, semifinal
semin-	seed	insemination, seminal
sen-	old man	senator, senile, senior
senti-, sens-	feel	consensus, consent, dissent, resent, sense, sentence, sentient, sentiment
sequ-, secut-	follow	consecutive, consequence, prosecute, pursue, second, sequel
ser-	attach, join	dissertation, exert, insert, serial
serv-	save, protect, serve	conserve, reserve, service
sicc-	dry	desiccate
sider-	star	consider, sidereal
sign-	sign	design, signal, signature, significant
simil-, simul-	likeness, imitating	assimilate, ensemble, resemble, simile, simulate, simulation, simultaneous
sist-	cause to stand	assist, consist, desist, exist, insist, persist, resist
soci-	group	associate, social, society
sol-	sun	solar, solstice
sol-	comfort, soothe	consolation, console, solace
sol-	alone, only	desolate, solitary, solo
sole-	accustomed	insolent, obsolete
solv-, solut-	loosen, set free	absolute, absolve, soluble
soma-	body	somatic, chromosome

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
somn-	sleep	insomnia, somnambulist, somnolent
son-	sound	assonance, consonant, dissonance, resonance
soph-	wise	philosophy, sophism, sophisticated, sophomore
sord-	dirt	sordid
spars-, -spers-	sprinkle	disperse, intersperse, sparse
spec-, -spic-, spect-	look	aspect, conspicuous, expect, inspect, perspex, species
spir-	breathe	aspire, conspire, expire, inspire, perspire, spirit
stell-	star	constellation, stellar
stern-, strat-	spread, strew	consternation, prostrate, stratify, stratus, street
still-	drip	distillation, instill
string-, strict-	tight, upright, stiff	constrain, constrict, strain, strict, stringent
stroph-	turning	apostrophe
stru-, struct-	to make up, build	construct, construe, destroy, structure
stu-	wonder	stupid, stupor
suav-	sweet	assuage, suave
sub-, suf-, sug-, sup-, sus-	below	submarine, suffix, suggest, support, suspect
sum-, sumpt-	take	assume, consume, presume
super-	above, over	soprano, sovereign, summit, surplus, surround, survive
surg-	rise	insurgent, surge
syn-, sy-, syl-, sym-	with	symbol, symmetry, sympathy, synchronous, synonym, system
ultim-	farthest	ultimate, ultimatum
tac-, -tic-	be silent	reticent, tacit, taciturn

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
tach-	swift	tachometer, tachycardia
tang-, -ting-, tact-, tag-	touch	contact, contagious, contingent, contingency, tactile, tangible
tard-	slow	retardant, tardy
techn-	art, skill	technician, technology
tele-	far, end	telegram, television
tempor-	time	contemporary, tempo, temporary
temn-/tomn-	cut	anatomy, appendectomy, atom, dichotomy, tome
ten-, -tin-, tent-	hold	contain, content, continue, countenance, tenacious, tenet, untenable
tend-, tens-	stretch, strain	attend, extend, ostentatious, tendency, tension
tenu-	slender, thin	attenuate, extenuate, tenuous
ter-, trit-	rub	attrition, contrite, detritus, trite
terg-, ters-	polish, wipe	detergent, terse
termin-	boundary, limit, end	determine, terminal, termination
terr-	earth	inter (v.), subterranean, terrace, terrarium, terrestrial, territory
test-	witness	attest, contest, detest, protest, testament, testify, testimony
tex-, text-	weave	context, pretext, texture
thel-	nipple	epithelium, thelium, thelial
theo-, thus-	god	atheism, enthusiasm, theology
theori-	speculation	theorem, theory
therm-	heat, warm	thermal, hypothermia, thermometer
tim-	be afraid	intimidate, timid, timorous
ton-	stretch	isotonic, monotone, tone
top-	place	isotope, topiary, topic, utopia
torn-, tourn-	turn or rotate	tornado, tournament, tourniquet, turn

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
torpe-	be numb	torpedo, torpid, torpor
torqu-, tort-	twist	contort, retort, torque, torture
tox-	arrow	intoxicate, toxic
trah-, tract-	draw, pull	attract, contract, subtract,tractor
trans-	across	tradition, transport
tri-	three	triangle, tripod
trib-	rub	diatribe, tribulation
tribu-	pay	contribute, retribution, tribute
ultra-	beyond	ultrasonic, ultraviolet
umbr-	shade, shadow	penumbra, umbrage, umbrella
un-	one	union, unit, universe
unda-	water, wave	abundant, redundant, undulate
ungul-	claw, hoof	ungulate
urb-	city	suburb, urban
ut-, us-	use	abuse, use, usual, utility
vac-	empty	evacuate, vacant, vacuum
vacc-	cow	vaccine
vad-, vas-	go	evade, pervasive
vag-	wander	vagabond, vague
val-	strength, worth	equivalent, evaluate, valid, value
van-	empty, vain, idle	evanescent, vain, vanish
vari-	vary	variety, various, vary
veh-	carry	invective, vehement, vehicle
ven-	vein	intravenous, vein
ven-, vent-	come	adventure, avenue, convenient, event, venue
vend-	sell	vend, vendor
vent-	wind	vent, ventilation

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
ver-	true	aver, veracious, verdict, verify, very
verb-	word	verb, verbatim
verm-	worm	vermin, worm
vers-, vert-	turn	adverse, avert, convert, diverse, divert, extrovert, universe, vertical
vest-	clothing, garment	divest, invest, vest
vestig-	trace	investigate, vestige
veter-	old	inveterate, veteran
vi-	way	deviate, obviate, obvious, via
vic-	change	vicar, vice versa, vicissitude
vid-, vis-	see	envy, evidence, provide, providence, video, vision, vista
vigil-	watchful	survey, vigil
vil-	cheap	revile, vile, vilify
vill-	country house	villa, village, villain
vin-	wine	vine, wine
vinc-, vict-	conquer	convict, convince, evict, vanquish, victory
vir-	man	triumvirate, virile
visc-	thick	viscosity
viscer-	internal organ	eviscerate, visceral
vit-	life	vital, vitamin
viti-	fault	vice, vitiate, vituperate
vitr-	glass	vitreous, vitriol
viv-	live	survive, viable, vital, vivacious, vivid, vivisection
voc-	call, voice	advocate, vocal, vociferous
vol-	fly	volant, volatile
vol-	will	benevolent, volunteer, voluptuous
volv-, volut-	roll	evolve, revolve, valve, vault, volume

Morpheme	*Meaning*	*Examples*
vom-	discharge	vomit
vor-, vorac-	swallow	carnivorous, devour, voracious
vulg-	crowd	divulge, vulgar
vulner-	wound	vulnerable
xen-	foreign, strange	xenophobia
xyl-	wood	xylophone
ze-	boil	eczema, eczematous
zo-	animal, living being	Mesozoic, protozoa, zodiac, zoo

Appendix 3 Mnemonics

Mnemonics now erase man's oldest nemesis: insufficient cerebral storage.

The processes involved in spelling and how to teach them is the subject of another book: *Spelling for Life* (Stone, 2014). Some words are better learned through memory tricks called mnemonics and in *Spelling for Life* there is a whole chapter dedicated to these. Some of these mnemonics require prior knowledge, especially in the area of spelling rules and grammar. Do make sure that the concepts required are taught first.

Mnemonics lend themselves very well to visual explanation, which is why so many are available, complete with beautiful illustrations, for view on the Lifelong Literacy YouTube channel. Please do stop by and have a look.

- **accommodation** 2 cottages and 2 mansions (how many c's and m's)
- **across** There's only one sea (c) to get across
- **address** You ADD your ADDress
- **affect/effect** Affect is the Action, effect is the rEsult
- **again** If you eat again and again you're bound to GAIN
- **aggravate** Three angry *a's* and two growling *g's*
- **angle/angel** Angels have *gel* in their hair
- **ascertain** When you *ascertain* you need to be AS CERTAIN as you can
- **assassin** An assassin needs two donkeys—one to carry his guns and one to make a quick getaway. That's why he has two asses in his den (ASS ASS IN)
- **autumn/column/hymn/solemn** These words can be taught together with the sentence *He sang a solemn hymn between the columns in autumn*
- **balloon** The two *o's* in this word are balloons holding the *ball* away from the *n*
- **beautiful** Say the names of the first four letters very clearly while writing on the board. 'Beee-eeee-aaaaa-u-tiful!'
- **beauty** Bad Eggs Are Useless To You
- **beginning** Beg at the inn
- **believe** You wouldn't *beLIEve* a LIE, would you?
- **biscuit** Breakfast Is Semi-Complete Unless I Taste *biscuits*
- **business** There is a BUS IN business

- **calendar** March has an AR, just like the end of the word CALENDAR (see also *Months of the Year*)
- **ceiling** Covers Everything Inside
- **chiefs** Cowboys Have Indian Eggs For Supper
- **colleague** The double *l* can be remembered by picturing two colleagues side by side
- **come/some** Taught together with *Rome, some* and *home*: 'When we open the bird-cage, some fly to Rome and some come home'
- **comparative** There's a rat in comparative (just like in)
- **complement/compliment** *ComplEment* adds something to make it Enough. A *compLIMEnt* puts you in the LIMElight
- **could/would/should** You don't hear the O or the L in these words: 'cud/wud/shud'. When taught together they are much easier to learn
- **could/should** Can Our Uncle Learn Dancing? Should Her Old Uncle Learn Dancing?
- **currant/current** There is an ANT eating the currANT bun. So *currant* is the food and *current* is the flow
- **dalmatian** *Dalmatians* are covered in spots, and this word is spotted with the letter *a*
- **definitely** This word has *finite* in the middle. So often misspelled as 'definAtely'
- **desert** (like the Sahara) and **dessert** (like ice-cream), remember: the sweet one has two sugars (the letter *s* representing sugar)
- **diarrhoea** Dash In A Real Rush, Hurry Or Else Accident!
- **disappoint** Don't disappoint your proud papa
- **disastrous** There was a disastrous loss of the letter *e* when *disaster* became *disastrous*
- **disease** Spell disease with *ease*
- **dissatisfied** The prefix *dis* doesn't change and neither does the base word *satisfied,* thus leaving a double *s*
- **eight** Every Insect Goes Home Tonight
- **embarrass** Two rosy red cheeks (the two R's in the middle) and two shy smiles (the two S's)
- **environment** A new envIRONment made of *iron*
- **every** If you brush your teeth *every* EVE you will have a VERY nice smile
- **familiar** That *liar* looks familiar
- **fascinate** It's *fascinating* to see the *c* in fascinate
- **first** First Is Right before Second and Third

- **forty** Imagine a fairground for kids only. 'You can be four or fourteen, but u can't be forty!'
- **friend** My friend likes roast pork, but only if I FRY the END. Fri-end
- **generally** A GENERAL is your best ALLY
- **hear** You hEAR with your EAR
- **hypotenuse** Three sections that are words/word parts in their own right: HYPO. . .TEN. . .USE
- **immediately** We ate immediATEly
- **island** An island IS LAND surrounded by water
- **laugh** Laugh And U Get Happy
- **leopard** Silent *o*, like the word *people.* 'When people see a leopard they say *o*!'
- **lose/loose** Lose lost an *o*
- **meat/meet** I like to eat meat
- **millennium** A Lot Longer than Ninety Nine years (Two L's, two N's)
- **Mississippi** Say the letters out loud and you get an unforgettable rhythm. 'M…I…SS…I…SS…I…PP…I'
- **misspell** Imagine a very prim, old-style schoolmistress called Miss Pell. 'Miss Pell would never misspell'

The months of the year

First some generalisations:

- There are three months of the year with a surprising letter *u*: JanUary, FebrUary, AugUst
- January and February both end with the same syllable *ary*

Then the tricky ones individually:

- **February** (Said in best Scottish accent) BR! Its FeBRuary in Scotland!
- **April** Don't be ILL in April (but leave the second L)

- **necessary** Not Every Cat Eats Sardines—Some Are Really Yummy. And don't forget that the cat has one collar and two socks (one *c* and two *s*'s)
- **occasion** (often misspelled 'ocassion') There is no ass in occasion
- **ocean** Only Crabs' Eyes Are Narrow

- **one** A small mouse lives alone in a big old abandoned house. He's lonely, and every night he can be heard calling for a friend in the huge, echoing dining room, 'Oh any *one*!' (Spell out the letters O-N-E and 1 as you say this)
- **other** 'That's my mother's other brother!' To which the response is 'O!'
- **our** 'Oh, you ARE our puppy!' While writing O-U-R
- **people** *See leopard*
- **pie** A PIEce of PIE
- **potassium** Just remember one tea (the letter *t*), two sugars (the letter *s*)
- **principal** The principal is your PAL
- **psychology** People Study You . . .
- **queue** There are two Ugly Elves in the queue (ue and ue)
- **quiet** Please keep quiet about my diet
- **rhyme** Remember How You begin to RHYme
- **rhythm** *ACTIVITY:* 'Have you ever been really cheeky and said *Nyah-nyah-nyah-nyaaaaah-nyaaah!'*(Put your thumbs on your temples and waggle your fingers while you're saying it.) 'Well if you stand up and move your hips to the *rhythm* of that ever-so-cheeky statement, you'll cause much more offense!' (Have your students stand up and act this out.) This is because . . . Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move
- **said** Play/played . . . say/sayed, only we drop the *y* and add *id*
- **secretary** Your SECRETary will keep your SECRET
- **separate** 'Separate me from that room! There's A RAT in it!'
- **sheriff** The sheriff has one rifle (one *r*) but fires twice (two *f's*)
- **special** The CIA have speCIAl agents
- **temperature** Don't lose your TEMPER AT high temperatures
- **they** They Have Eleven Yoyos
- **together** Is made up of the words TO GET HER
- **tomorrow** Tomorrow I will go with Tom or Row on Tuesday
- **truly** It's truly hot in July
- **want** The biggest ant in the colony, known as W. Ant, wants everything!
- **was** Worms And Snakes
- **what**—What hat? Oh, *that* hat!
- **where** (As in *there* above) 'Where?' 'Here!'
- **which/witch** Which is a question word, just like *why, what, where, when and who*, so it begins with the question phonogram *wh*. To remember the word *witch*, don't forget it's not a question word and she has a broomstick (the letter *t*)

- **you** 'Y-O-U spells *you.*' This is how my kids learned it
- **your** Adding *r* to show ownership, as in t
- **genius** Geniuses Eat Noodles In Unusual Spaces
- **genre** Generally Entertainers Need Radio Exposure
- **haphazard** Hal And Phil Had A Zany Afternoon Riding Dogs
- **herd** Herds of Elephants Run Daily
- **hoarse** Hoarse needs an *oar* as much as a row boat
- **information** Inform + ation or the soldiers were *in formation*
- **laugh** Lazy Ants Under Green Hats
- **liaise** You must l i a i se with colleagues in Italy And Ireland
- **Maori** Who will wash the dishes, Ma or I?
- **mortgage** My Uncle *Mort* has a *mortgage*
- **movable/moving** The *e* in move is very *movable* and disappears when you add a vowel ending (but not a consonant ending, such as *movement)*
- **parallel** Don't forget the *parallel* lines in the middle, but not at the end
- **parliament** The *ia* in the middle can be remembered thus: 'I AM a member of Parliament!'
- **professor** One frog (f), two snakes(s)
- **rode/road** Rode on *de* engine and road has an a = asphalt
- **scissors** A great way to remember this word is to mispronounce it, by saying the silent *c*—'skissors'
- **stationery/stationary** You go to a baker, a butcher, a grocer—there's no question of the last two letters denoting their profession being 'er'. So it is with stationer—a person who provides stationEry.To go even further in the distinction—the suffix 'ary' denotes a state of being, such as primary, exemplary and of course, stationAry. I think you only need to explain the first to then derive the second, but as we know, there are no guarantees in life!
- **tendency** The robber had a *tendency* to put *ten* bars of gold in his *den*
- **through** Termites Hop Right Over Ugly Grass-Hoppers
- **ukulele** Ukuleles Keep Us Lively, Enthralled Listeners Entertained
- **work/walk** In Work they have dug a hole-the o. In walk there are two legs walking (the letter l and the line in the letter k)
- **yacht** Yachts are costly, huge travelers

Non-spelling mnemonics

Long division

- Don't Miss The Bus.

  This stands for:

  Divide
  Multiply
  Take away
  Bring Down

- 7 basic roman numerals (I, V, X, L, C, D and M):
  M's 'mille' (or **1000** said)
  D's half (**500**—quickly read!)
  C's just a **100** (century!)
  and **L** is half again—**50**!
  So all that's left is **X** and **V**
  (or **10** and **5**)—and **I**—easy!

  Or . . .

  '**L**ucy **C**an't **D**rink **M**ilk'
  (L,C,D,M—50, 100, 500 and 1000)

- Measurement:

kilo-	**hecto-**	**deca-**	**meter**	**deci-**	**centi-**	**milli-**
x1000	x100	x10	1	1/10th	1/100th	1/1000th
Km	Hm	Dm	m	dm	cm	mm

  Remember: Killer Hound Dog Meets Deadly Cat Man

- Chemistry:

  LITTLE BERYL BROWN CHEWS NUTS ON FRIDAYS NEVER

  for the second row of the Periodic Table (Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Fluorine, Neon).

- Geography:
  Latitude 'Lat is Fat'—*Latitude* goes around the equator belt.

- The Colours of the Rainbow:

  Let us introduce our painter friend Roy G. Biv. He uses all the colours of the rainbow when he paints, that is, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

- Music:

  Treble Clef: Lines from bottom up: Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge.
  Treble Clef: Spaces from bottom up: F-A-C-E.
  God is in Heaven—top space (G) and the Devil is in Hell—bottom space (D).
  Bass Clef: Lines from bottom up: Good Boys Deserve Fudge Always.
  Bass Clef: Spaces from bottom up: All Cows Eat Grass.
  Birds in the Sky—top space (B) and Fish in the Sea—bottom space (F).

- The days of the week:

  When learned together, the days of the week are much easier to spell as they can be associated with each other, illustrating the very useful neurological principal 'neurons that fire together wire together'!

  First, the 'er' sounds in the days of the week are spelled *ur:* Sat**ur**day and Th**ur**sday. From there we can link Thursday to Tuesday as they both begin with *t* and have *u* in the first syllable. Then we introduce the fact that the days of the week are named after Germanic gods and heavenly bodies.

  Monday is named after the moon.
  Tuesday was originally Tyr's day (the god of war).
  Wednesday, which should be sounded out as 'Wed-nes-day' was the god Woden (also known as Odin)'s day. He was the chief of the gods.
  Thursday is Thor's day (the god of thunder).
  Friday, on which (friends fry food, see *friend*) was Fryga's day. She was the goddess of love.
  Saturday is named after the planet Saturn.
  Sunday is named after the sun.

Glossary

Adjective A word which modifies a noun.

Adverb A word which modifies verbs, adjectives and other modifiers.

Affix A meaningful letter or letters attached to a root word to alter the root word's meaning. From *ad-* 'to' + *fix* 'fasten'.

Alphabetic principle The understanding that speech can be turned into print and that print can be turned into speech.

Anglophone English-speaking. There are two main varieties of English: American English and British English. There are also many sub-varieties of English, spoken as a first language in Jamaica, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Anguilla and Saint Helena, to name but a few.

Auditory processing disorder Also known as central auditory processing disorder (CAPD), it is a language impairment whereby people can hear sounds adequately but have trouble making sense of them, to varying degrees. The disorder can have a negative impact on comprehension, humour, social skills and following directions. It is generally classified as one of the two main barriers to literacy, the other being dyslexia.

Auxiliary verb A word from a closed set that accompanies a main verb to help it express such things as tense and voice.

Case A form of a noun, pronoun or adjective to show its relationship to other words, e.g. the pronoun *you* is expressed in the possessive case by using *your*.

Clause Any syntactic unit whose structure is, or is seen as reduced from, that of a sentence. Thus, in particular, one which includes a verb and the elements that accompany it.

Closed set A category of words with a small, unchanging membership. For example, there are no new personal pronouns being added to our language today. They form a closed set: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they*.

Constituent A word or group of words that go together to form a unit and can be replaced by a single word.

Determiner Words which come before and limit a noun phrase. The most common determiners in English are the indefinite article *the* and the definite article *a/an*. The view in this book is that pronouns, such as *my*, *you*, *those*, etc., are also determiners.

Dialect The word choice, use and pronunciation exclusive to a particular geographical region or social/professional group. The Australian dialect differs from the English dialect in numerous ways. These dialects can be categorised into further sub-dialects. People from Tasmania have a different word choice and pronunciation to people from Queensland, but they are both distinctively different Australian dialects.

Dyslexia A pervasive, lifelong condition which impairs a person's ability to understand print but does not affect intelligence.

Grammar The way in which words and sentences are constructed, according to certain rules, so that people can understand one another.

Idiolect The unique speech habits, including vocabulary, pronunciation and word usage that every human develops and uses.

Intransitive verb Verbs that do not have a direct object. Shown as *vi.* in dictionaries. Examples: sneeze, expire, etc. (see Intransitive verbs list in Verbs chapter).

Lexicon The unique store of words possessed by an individual.

Linguistics The systematic and scientific study of the structure of language. Linguistics can be described as dealing with three basic subjects: *phonetics and phonology* (the study of human speech sounds)*, syntax* (the study of sentence structure)*, semantics and pragmatics* (the study of logic and meaning)*.*

Main verb The verb that carries the semantic content. The *meaning* verb, as opposed to the auxiliary verb that gives any old verb its tense.

Modifier A word which adds meaning or colour to another word. Traditionally these are known as adjectives and adverbs but can also incorporate possessive pronouns, number words and determiners.

Morpheme The smallest meaningful word-unit. 'Eating' has two morphemes, the root word 'eat' and the suffix '-ing'.

Neologism A new word invented through slang usage or jargon which has caught on and is in use in a group of people.

Object The noun in a sentence which receives the energy of a verb. E.g. *I like cats*, in which the noun *cats* receives my liking.

Open set A class of words that frequently acquires new members. Nouns, verbs and adjectives are open-set words. New coinages are adding to the list of these words continually.

Parsing The task of assigning words to their parts of speech.

Parts of speech Also known as *word classes* or *lexical categories*. The names we give words based on how they are used and how they relate to other words in utterances.

Phoneme The smallest possible unit of sound. The word 'pat' has three phonemes, in that it can be broken into three separate units. The word 'path' also has three phonemes, the units /p-a-th/.

Phonemic awareness The ability to perceive the number, order, sameness and difference of sounds within words.

Phonology The study of the sound system of a language and the relationships within.

Phrase Any group of words that is not a clause but has a function as a whole in a larger utterance. E.g. in *My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge*, there are at least two phrases: *My big green dragon* and *slowly ate the teacher on a bridge*. The second phrase can be broken down further into *slowly ate the teacher* and *on a bridge***.**

Preposition A word which connects a preceding noun or verb to a following noun.

Pronoun A word which stands for or makes you think of nouns or noun phrases. E.g. in *She came,* the pronoun stands for any one of the more specific expressions *Fiona, Lady GaGa, man in the cornershop,* etc.

Received Pronunciation (RP) The standard form of a standard English accent.

Register The variety of language used according to the perceived social setting, ranging from formal to informal.

Semantics In linguistics, the study of logic and meaning.

Sentence A group of words which expresses a complete thought, having a subject (either apparent or implied) and a verb. For example: *The dog* is a subject, but has no verb. It is therefore not considered to be a sentence. *Slept* is a verb, but without a noun, is also incomplete and not a sentence. *The dog slept* has a verb and a noun and is therefore a sentence.

Standard A form of language used as a measure or model for comparison.

Standardisation The formation of agreed standards of a language.

Subject The part of the sentence that is performing the action of the verb.

Suffix A meaningful letter or letters placed at the end of a root word with the purpose of changing the root word's meaning.

Syllable A unit of sound produced with one impulse of the voice.

Syntactic unit A word or group of words which function as a constituent of an utterance.

Syntax The study of grammatical relations between words and other units within the sentence.

Tense The time of an event in relation to the time of speaking. In English, verbs are used to show tense.

Transitive verb A verb which has an object. In sentence *The mice ate the cheese*, the verb *ate* is transitive, as it carries the action of eating straight to the cheese.

Universal Something that is true for all languages, e.g. nouns and verbs appear in all languages. They can be considered universal.

Utterance Thing which is said without interruption, either in speech or writing.

Voice A verb's form that shows how it is related to the subject. Most recognisable are active and passive voice. The verb *ate* in *The mice ate the cheese* is active. If we were to make *cheese* the subject of the sentence, then the verb would have to change its form to passive voice: *The cheese was eaten by the mice*.

Word Grammar Model of grammar developed in the 1980s by R.A. Hudson. Word Grammar has provided the chief inspiration for the units on the parts of speech in this book.

Bibliography

Bryson, B. (1990) *Mother tongue*. London: Penguin.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (1999). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cran, W., MacNeil, R. and McCrum, R. (1986) *The story of English*. London: Faber and Faber.

Crystal, D. (2008) '2b or not 2b?' *The Guardian*.

Crystal, D. (1976) *Child language, learning and linguistics*. London: Edward Arnold.

Crystal, D. (2006) *The fight for English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crystal, D. (1974) *What is linguistics?* London: Edward Arnold.

Denham, K. and Lobeck, A. (eds) (2010) *Linguistics at school*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Economist style guide (2005). London: Profile Books.

Ellis, A.W. (1993) *Reading, writing and dyslexia: A cognitive analysis* (second edn). Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Engelmann, S., Haddox, P. and Bruner, E. (1983) *How to teach your child to read in 100 easy lessons*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Graven, S. and Browne, J. (2008) 'Auditory development in the fetus and infant'. *Newborn & Infant Nursing Reviews*, *8*(4): 187.

Haegeman, L. (1991) *Introduction to government and binding theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Hattie, J. and Yates, G. (2014) *Visible learning and the science of how we learn*. Oxford: Routledge.

Heffer, S. (2014) *Simply English*. London: Random House.

Higbee, K. L. (1996) Your memory: How it works and how to improve it (second edn). Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Hudson, R. (1981) '83 things linguists can agree about', *Journal of Linguistics*, *17*:179.

Hudson, R. (2010) *An introduction to Word Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kamm, O. (2015) *Accidence will happen: The non-pedantic guide to English usage*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Labov, W. (1994) *Principles of linguistic change, internal factors*. Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Liberman, A. (2005) *Word origins . . . and how we know them: Etymology for everyone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Matthews, P.H. (1997) *The Oxford concise dictionary of linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moats, L.C. (1998, Spring/Summer). 'Teaching decoding'. *American Educator*: 1–9.

Nagy, W. and Anderson, R.C. (1984) 'How many words are there in printed school English?' *Reading Research Quarterly*, *19*: 304–330.

Nagy, W., Anderson, R., Schommer, M., Scott, J. and Stallman, A. (1989) 'Morphological word families in the internal lexicon', *Reading Research Quarterly*, *24*: 262–282.

Pinker, S. (1994) *The language instinct*. New York: Penguin.

Pinker, S. (1997) *How the mind works*. New York: Penguin.

Pinker, S. (2014) *The sense of style*. New York: Penguin.

Shaywitz, S. (2005) *Overcoming dyslexia*. New York: Vintage.

Shillcock, R. and Monaghan, P. (2003) *An anatomical perspective on sublexical units: The influence of the split fovea*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.

Smith, N. (1989) *The Twitter machine*. Oxford and Massachusetts, MA: Blackwell.

Stone, L. (2014) *Spelling for life*. Oxford: Routledge.

Trask, R.L. (1996) *A dictionary of phonetics and phonology*. London: Routledge.

Westwood, P. (1997) *Commonsense methods for children with special needs* (third edn). London and New York: Routledge.

Wolf, M. (ed.) (2001) *Dyslexia, fluency and the brain*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Yates, F.A. (1966) *The art of memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Index

abstract nouns 16
adjective-forming suffixes 170, 172
adjectives 70–5, 119–22: prepositions 97, 100; worksheet 76–8
adverbs 79–83, 85–7: tree 120–2; worksheet 84
agreement 52–7, 60–1: worksheet 57–9
alliteration 238
alphabet 143–4
ampersand 196
apostrophe 166–7, 173, 194
assonance 238
auditory processing disorder 215–6
auditory sensation 200–4
auxiliary verbs 46

beginners 5–6
being 42–4, 47, 50
Blaiklock, K. xvi
bound root words 176
braces 192–3
brackets 192–3
Bullock Report 220–1

caret 196
case 166–7
change 218–25
clauses 129–34
code-switching 223–4
collective nouns 16
colon 191
comma 190–1
common nouns 15
comparison 167–8
complete my thought 39
complex prepositions 95
compound: adjectives 72; nouns 11–2; pronouns 24, 36; subjects 60–1; verbs 38, 40, 46
conditional clause 130
conjunctions 102–6, 110, 132–4: trees 122–3; worksheet 107–9
context 204–7
coordinating conjunctions 103–4, 132
correlative conjunctions 103, 105–6
countable nouns 16
Crystal, D. 225

dash 192–3
definitions 149
demonstrative pronouns 24, 34
dependent clauses 130, 132–4, 136, 138
derivational suffixes 168–70
descriptive information 82–3
descriptivism 225
deterioration 220–1
determiners 8, 20–2, 118–22
dialect 221–4, 227–8
dictionaries 139–41, 143–50, 154–5: worksheet 151–3
disagreement 56
double quotation marks 189–90
dyslexia 209–15

Ebonics 228
ellipsis 194–5
em dash 192
en dash 193
Engelmann, S. 210
entries 145, 151

etymology 150, 153
exclamation mark 189

figurative language 235–9
first process 200–1
full stop 188
future tense 66

German 11–2, 15
glossary 282–5
good 231
grammar 1–8, 228–9, xvii
group words 57
guide words 145, 151

habitual action 64–5
having 44, 48
heartfelt 12–3
Hudson, R.A. 1–2, 3
hybrids 177–8
hyperbole 238
hyphen 193–4

idiolect 222
idioms 239
implied subjects 45, 48
indefinite pronouns 24, 35, 60
independent clause 131–2, 135, 137
indicators 186, 194–5
inflectional suffixes 165–8, 171, 174
information 82–3
interrobang 195
interrogative pronouns 24, 33
intransitive verbs 49–50
invariable root words 175–6
-ize/-ise 240–1

joiners 186, 193–4

labels 149, 153–4
L'Academie Francaise 221
language: change 218–25; context 204–7; deterioration 220–1; figurative 235–9; myths 226–31
language impairment 208–9, 216–7: auditory processing 215–6; dyslexia 209–15
lessons 5, 8
literacy 199–207

main clause 131–2, 135, 137
marking 25
mass nouns 16
Matthew effect 201
metaphor 237
mnemonics 275–81
modifying 81
morphemes 246–74
morphology 157; *see also* prefixes; root words; suffixes
myths 220–1, 226–31

nouns 11–5: classes 15–6; phrase 22; plurals 155; and prepositions 97, 100; suffixes 169, 171; worksheet 17–9; *see also* agreement; phrases
number 53–4, 165, 202

of 93–4
onomatopoeia 238
order 202
-our/-or 241–2

pacing 7
parentheses 192–3
parts of speech 4–5, 69, 88, 110–1, 148, 152
past tense 65–6
person 53–4, 166
personal pronouns 24, 30
personification 237

phonemic awareness 201–4
phonological awareness 203–4
phrases 112–6, 235–6: activities 116–23; worksheet 124–8
pilcrow 195
Pinker, S. 221, 226
place prepositions 90–1
plurals 155
pointing 12
portmanteau 178–9
position game 144
possession 44, 48: apostrophe 186–7; pronouns 24, 30–1
prefixes 159–63
prepositions 89–95, 100–1, 229: tree 121–2; worksheet 96–9
prescriptivism 218–24, 240–1
present tense 64
pronouns 23–7, 30–1, 34, 36, 230: adjectives 74–5; worksheet 28–9, 32–3, 35
pronunciation 146–8, 151, 183–7: activities 188–96
proper nouns 15

question mark 188
quotation marks 189–90

reading xv–xvi, 204
reciprocal pronouns 24, 36
redundancy 232–4
reflexive pronouns 24, 31
relative clause 130
relative pronouns 24, 32
replacement 24–5
reversal 134
root words 175–9: worksheet 180–1
rules 218–24

-'s 166–7, 173, 187
semicolon 191
sentence adverbs 83
sentence starts 229
separators 185–6, 190–3
simile 236
simple tree 116–8
single quotation marks 190
sound 200–4
speech, parts of 4–5, 69, 88, 110–1, 148, 152
spelling xv, 240–2
split infinitives 228
state of being 42–4, 47, 50
strong bonds 94
strong syllables 148, 152
subject-verb 41–2, 47, 52–61
subjects, implied 45, 48
subordinate clause 130, 132–4, 136, 138
subordinating conjunctions 103, 105, 133–4
suffixes 164–70: worksheet 171–4
syllables 147–8, 152, 154
syntactic tree; *see also* phrases
syntax 3–4

teaching 2, 209, 242
tense 62–9, 166
terminators 185, 188–90
test sentences 13–4, 26–7
texting 224–5
tilde 196
time prepositions 92
to be 55, 58–9
tonality 227
tree; *see also* phrases
tricky pronouns 27
Truss, L. 184
truth 64
two laws 221–3

unbound root words 176

universals 8–9, 52–61; *see also* nouns; verbs
usage 149, 153, 155

variable root words 175–6
variants 146–7, 151–2, 154
verbs 8, 37–45, 49–51: and prepositions 97, 101; suffixes 170, 172; tense 62–9; worksheet 46–9; *see also* agreement; phrases
visual processing 204
Vonnegut, K. 191

who/whom 231
word cards 245
Word Grammar 3
words xvii, 2–3, 148–50: formation 177–9; order 80–1
worksheet: adjectives 76–8; adverbs 84; conjunctions 107–9; determiners 22; dictionaries 151–3; nouns 17–9; phrases 124–8; prefixes 160–3; prepositions 96–9; pronouns 28–9, 32–3, 35; root words 180–1; tense 67–8; verbs 46–9
writing 199–204