

Grammar and Syntax Reference Guide

The most important concept to understand when dealing with grammar and syntax is that language is based on context.

Prepositions – show a relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word in the sentence.

- Common Prepositions – aboard, about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, barring, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, besides, between, beyond, but, by, concerning, considering, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, opposite, out, outside, over, past, regarding, round, since, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, without
- Prepositions cannot stand alone, without an object, unless the lone preposition is functioning as an adverb. Other than approved compound prepositions, prepositions must be separated an object of the preposition.
- Compound Preposition – according to, ahead of, apart from, as of, aside from, because of, by means of, in addition to, in back of, in front of, in place of in regard to, in spite of, instead of, in view of, next to on account of, out of, owing to, and prior to.
- Object of the Preposition – Follows the preposition and tells “what?”
- Prepositional Phrase – group of words beginning with a preposition and ending with a noun or pronoun that act as either adjectives or adverbs

Types of Verbs:

1. **Action Verbs** – show action
2. **State of Being Verbs** – am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been
3. **Helping Verbs** (help an action or linking verb) – have, has, had, do, does, did, shall, will, should, would, may, might, must, can, could
4. **Linking Verbs** (link two words together) – state of being verbs can be linking and forms of appear, become, feel, grow, look, remain, seem, sound, smell, stay, taste, turn
5. **Verb Phrase** – the combination of being and/or helping verbs connected to a main verb.
6. **Compound Verb** – has two or more verbs or verb phrases joined by a coordinating conjunction and connected to the same subject.

Verb Usage:

1. **Regular Verbs** – form the past tense and past participle by adding the suffixes **-ed** or **-d** to the present tense
2. **Irregular Verbs** – form the past and past participle by not following the regular verb pattern

The following list includes examples of commonly used irregular verbs:

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Past</u> | <u>Past Participle</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Be | Was, Were | Been |
| Burst | Burst | Burst |
| Dream | Dreamed, Dreamt | Dreamt |
| Drink | Drank | Drunk |
| Lay | Laid | Laid |
| Lie | Lay | Lain |
| Sit | Set | Sat |
| Set | Set | Set |
| Swim | Swam | Swum |
| Wind | Wound | Wound |

| | | |
|-------|-------|---------|
| Write | Wrote | Written |
|-------|-------|---------|

3. **Transitive** – takes a direct object
4. **Intransitive** – does not take a direct object
5. **Verb Voice**
 - a. Active – the subject is performing the action
 - b. Passive – the action is performed upon the subject
6. **Verb Tenses**
 - a. Emphatic Verb forms – (only occurs in the present and past tenses) connect the helping verbs “do”, “does”, and “did” to an action verb to show emphasis
 - b. Progressive Verb Form – It shows an action that happened in the past and is continuing to happen. To make the progressive forms of a tense, use the appropriate tense of the verb “be” with the present participle of the main verb, for example: Maria will be working. (future progressive)
 - c. Verb Tenses (forms are base, present participle, past, past participle, emphatic, and progressive)
 1. Present – happening now (jump, jumps)
 2. Past – happening previously (jumped)
 3. Future – will happen in the future (will jump)
 4. Present Perfect – existing or happening sometime before now; may be continuing now (has/have jumped)
 5. Past Perfect – existing or happening before a specific time in the past (had jumped)
 6. Future Perfect – existing or happening before a specific time in the future (will/shall have jumped)
7. Verbal – verb not behaving like a verb
 - a. Gerund – verb acting like a noun
 1. Ends in –ing
 2. Reading is fun. (subj.) I enjoy shopping. (direct object) Use pencils for drawing. (object preposition)
 3. Gerund phrase – gerund plus its modifiers and objects (Writing long essays can be fun. [subj.])
 4. Objects of gerunds – follows gerund and tells “what?” (I like eating pizza. “to eat what?” pizza [object of gerund]).
 5. One identification test to determine whether the verbal is a participle or gerund is to replace the verbal with “it”. The sentence will not continue to make sense if the verbal is functioning as a participle.
 - b. Participle – verb acting like adjective
 1. Ends in –ing or –ed (or other past tense form)
 2. I have running shoes. Frightened, I ran down the street. It’s an unspoken rule.
 3. Participle phrase – participle plus its modifiers and objects (Running down the hill, he bumped into the principal. [modifying “he”/ Which “he”?])
 - c. Infinitive – to + verbal
 1. Can act like a noun (I like to eat.)
 2. Can act like an adjective (It’s the best place to eat. [Which place?])
 3. Can act like an adverb (I need a pen to write a letter. [For What Purpose?])
 4. Object of Infinitive – follows infinitive and tells “what?” (I want to eat pizza. “eating what?” pizza [object of infinitive])
 5. Infinitive phrase – infinitive plus its modifiers and objects (He likes to eat pepperoni pizza. [direct object])

6. When let is used at the beginning of an imperative sentence, it is functioning as a bare infinitive (without to) and the subject is understood you.

Nouns – person, place, thing, or idea

Types of Nouns:

- Common – names any one of a class of people, places, or things.
- Proper – names a specific person place or thing.
- Possessive – shows ownership/possession
- Compound – a noun that is made up of more than one word
- Abstract – name things that cannot be seen, touched, or recognized through any of the five senses.
- Concrete – name things that can be seen, touched, or recognized through any of the five senses.
- Collective – A collective noun is singular and agrees with a singular verb when the group it names is considered to be a single unit. It is plural and agrees with a plural verb when the group it names is considered to be individuals with different feelings or points of view. A collective noun can also be plural when multiple units agree with a plural verb.

- Complements:
 - Direct Object – is a noun or pronoun that follows an action verb and is never a prepositional phrase. To find it, say, “Subject,” “Verb,” “Whom or What?”
 - Indirect Object – is a noun or pronoun that comes before a direct object that is never a prepositional phrase. To find it, say, “Subject,” “Verb,” “Direct Object,” “To or For Whom or What?”
 - Predicate Nominatives – follow a linking verb and rename the subject of the sentence
 - Predicate Adjectives – follow a linking verb and modify the subject of the sentence
- Appositive – noun or pronoun that follows and renames, identifies, or explains another noun or pronoun
- Appositive Phrase – noun or pronoun with modifiers, placed next to a noun or pronoun to add information and details

Subjects:

- Must be a noun, pronoun (nominative case if personal), gerund, or infinitive.
- Can never be in a prepositional phrase.
- There and here are never the subject of the sentence. (There is my battered suitcase. Or My battered suitcase is there.) (Here is a patch for your sleeve. Or A patch for your sleeve is here.)
- The subject can be “understood you”: Bring me the remote control, please. (You bring it.)
- A compound subject has two or more simple subjects that are joined by a coordinating conjunction and share the same verb.

Pronouns – takes the place of a noun/ the noun being replaced is the antecedent

Types of Pronouns: (“Who” will function as the subject and “whom” will function as an object.)

- Personal (1st person: pronouns dealing with “me”; 2nd person: pronouns dealing with “you”; 3rd person: pronouns dealing with everyone else.)
 - Singular Nominative: I, you, he, she, it
 - Plural Nominative: we, you, they
 - Singular Objective: me, you, him, her, it
 - Plural Objective: us, you, them

- Singular Possessive: my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its
- Plural Possessive: our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs
- Reflexive (reflect back to “self”) (a pronoun ending with –self or –selves that adds information to a sentence by pointing back to a noun or pronoun near the beginning of the sentence)
 - Myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves
 - NOT WORDS: hisself, ourself, theirselves
- Intensive (adds emphasis to another noun or pronoun that has already been named) (if an intensive pronoun is omitted, the meaning of the sentence does not change.)
 - Myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves
 - NOT WORDS: hisself, ourself, theirselves
- Relative (start dependent clauses)
 - That (person or thing), which (thing), who (person), whom (person), whose, whoever, whomever, whichever, whatever
- Interrogative (ask a question)
 - Which? Whose? What? Whom? Who?
- Demonstrative (demonstrate which one)
 - This, that, these, those
- Indefinite (do not refer to a definite person or thing)
 - Each, either, neither, few, some, all, most, several, few, many, none, one, someone, no one, everyone, anyone, somebody, nobody, everybody, anybody, more, much, another, both, any, other, anything, everything, little, nothing, something, others

Adverbs – Modify adjectives (really cute), verbs (extremely fast), and other adverbs (very easily)

- Adverb Questions
 - When?
 - Where?
 - How?
 - To What Extent?
 - For What Purpose?
 - In What Manner?
- No, not, and n’t are always adverbs.
- Intensifiers – an adverb that emphasizes or intensifies an adjective or adverb.
 - Almost, extremely, just, nearly, practically, quite, rather, really, so, somewhat, such, too, fairly, literally, simply, completely, absolutely, heartily, and very
- Adverb Degrees
 - In general, regular form adverbs for the comparative (two) are formed by adding –er to the ending or placing “more” before the adverb. As well, regular form adverbs for the superlative degree (more than two) are formed by adding –est to the ending or placing “most” before the adverb.
 - Regular form adverbs with three or more syllables will form the comparative or superlative by placing “more” or “most” before the adverb.
 - Regardless of the number of syllables, regular form adverbs ending in –ly must form the comparative or superlative by placing “more” or “most” before the adverb.
 - Irregular Degrees of Adverbs:

| Adverb | Comparative | Superlative |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Well | Better | Best |
| Badly | Worse | Worst |
| Little (amount) | Less | Least |

| | | |
|----------------------|------|------|
| Much Many Some | More | Most |
|----------------------|------|------|

Adjectives – Modify nouns and pronouns

- Adjective Questions
 - What Kind?
 - Which One?
 - How Many?
 - How Much?
 - Whose?
- Articles (indefinite – a, an/ definite – the) are always adjectives
- Proper Adjectives – a proper noun that acts as an adjective describing a noun (will always be capitalized)
- Adjective Degrees
 - In general, regular form adjectives for the comparative (two) are formed by adding –er to the ending or placing “more” before the adverb. As well, regular form adjectives for the superlative degree (more than two) are formed by adding –est to the ending or placing “most” before the adverb.
 - Regular form adjectives with three or more syllables will form the comparative or superlative by placing “more” or “most” before the adverb.
 - Irregular Degrees of Adjectives:

| Adjective | Comparative | Superlative |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Good | Better | Best |
| Bad | Worse | Worst |
| Late | Later | Later |
| Many Much Some | More | Most |
| Little | Less | Least |
| Far (distance) | Farther | Farthest |
| Far (degree) | Further | Furthest |

Interjection – a word that expresses feeling or emotion and functions independently of a sentence

- Examples: (Hurray! We won!, Aha! I found the missing cuff link, Whew! That was hard work. She said that, alas, she had lost her way., Well, we should leave anyway. Darn! I left my subway pass at home!)

Conjunctions – joins words, phrases, and clauses

- Coordinating Conjunctions – For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So
- Subordinate Conjunctions – begin dependent clauses (must be followed by a subject and verb) after, although, as, as if, as long as, as soon as, as though, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order that, lest, now that, since, so that, than, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, while
- Correlative Conjunctions – (always used in pairs) both...and, either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also, whether...or
- Conjunctive Adverbs – an adverb that acts as a conjunction to connect complete ideas. Examples: accordingly, again, also, besides, consequently, finally, for example, furthermore, however, in addition, indeed, moreover, nevertheless, on the other hand, otherwise, then, therefore, thus. The follow is an

example of punctuating a conjunctive adverb: Teaching is a privilege that I enjoy each day; however, I am looking forward to Thanksgiving break.

Parenthetical Expressions - A parenthetical expression is simply a string of words that is included in a sentence but that breaks the flow of the original sentence. Let's look at an example of how parenthetical expressions work in a sentence:

The tortoise, *as far as we know*, has been on earth for thousands of years

The parenthetical expression *as far as we know* conveys to the reader that this statement is not a concrete fact. However, the grammatical meaning of the sentence would not be affected by the parenthetical expression's removal.

Other phrases commonly used as parenthetical expressions include the following: *however, nevertheless, in fact, therefore, for instance, consequently, for example, accordingly, moreover, hence.*

Example 1: Use commas to separate parenthetical expressions which occur at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.

For example, the fruit fly can breed up to ten times in one hour.

The fruit fly, **for example**, can breed up to ten times in one hour.

Note how the addition of punctuation causes the reader to mentally pause and add emphasis to the phrase as they read.

Example 2: Commas *may* be used to punctuate mild parenthetical expressions.

I was fired from my last job and **consequently** must look for a new one.

Or

I was fired from my last job and, **consequently**, must look for a new one.

Capitalization and Punctuation:

Capitalization

- Capitalize all proper nouns and proper adjectives
- Capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence

Semicolon

- Joins two clauses without a coordinating conjunction (He likes apples; she likes oranges. He goes to Harvard; however, she goes to Yale.)

- Can be used in a series with commas for clarity (We went to London, England; Paris, France; Madrid, Spain; and Rome, Italy.)

Apostrophe

- Use apostrophes to make words possessive and to make contractions.
- Do not use apostrophes to make words plural.
- Possessive pronouns do not use apostrophes. (hers, his, its, yours, ours, etc.)
- If the word is plural and ends in –s, add apostrophe only: dogs’ owner.
- Treat singular nouns ending in –s just like any other singular noun: boss’s Brutus’s

Underlining/ Italicizing

- Underlining and italicizing are the same thing.
- Underline or italicize titles of long text: newspapers, magazines, CDs, movies, novels, plays, musical compositions, etc.
- Underline or italicize names of ships, planes, trains, and artwork.
- Underline or italicize foreign expressions.

Quotation Marks

- Quote titles of short text: short stories, poems, songs, articles, episodes of TV shows, etc.
- Quote dialogue and words copied from other sources.
- Commas and periods that follow quoted words always go inside the closing quotation marks. (I said, “Go home.”)
- Colons and semicolons that follow quoted words always go outside the closing quotation marks. (We’re “friends”; we do not date.)
- Use single quotation marks only to enclose quotes within quotes, but use double quotation marks in all other situations.

Commas

1. Adverb dependent clause before independent clause (comma) (If it rains, we’ll go inside.)
2. Independent clause before adverb dependent clause (no comma) (We’ll go inside if it rains.)
3. Two independent clauses separated by a comma and coordinating conjunction (Joe likes pizza, but Fred likes tacos.)
4. Compound verb (no comma)
5. Compound subject (no comma)
6. Introductory participial phrase (comma) (Running down the hall, he tripped and fell.)
7. Introductory Prepositional Phrase with less than four words (comma is dependent upon clarity [Does the introductory prepositional phrase hinder the fluency of the sentence? If so, a comma is needed.]) (After English class, we go to lunch. Upon arrival the teacher welcomed each student.)
8. Introductory Prepositional Phrase with more than three words or back to back prepositional phrases (comma) (After the student performance, the parents and students were invited to a reception. Under the tree behind the house, you will find my dog’s hiding spot.)
9. Non-essential (restrictive) appositive (comma) (We read *The Great Gatsby*, a novel, in class. [non-essential or restrictive] We read the novel *The Great Gatsby* in class. [essential or non-restrictive])
10. Non-essential (restrictive) adjective clause (comma) (Jane, who drives a red car, is nice. [non-essential or restrictive] All students who skip school should be suspended. [essential or non-restrictive])

11. Items in a series or adjectives (that share no relationship) (Please buy apples, oranges, and bananas. I like the warm, fuzzy blanket. [if you can insert 'and' between adjectives and the sentence maintains clarity, a comma is needed to separate the adjectives.])
12. Noun of direct address (comma) (Tom, would you hand me the phone? Please do not sit there, Georgia.)
13. Day of week, month, and year (comma) (The baby is expected on Sunday, February 27, 2012, in Georgia.)
14. City, State (comma) (We moved to Peachtree City, Georgia, in 1975.)
15. Subtle Interjections and Introductory Words (comma) (Well, I hope these rules come in handy. However, you must use them.)
16. Parenthetical expressions (interrupt a clause) (comma) (These rules, I think, will help you if you use them.)

Clauses

- Each clause must have a subject and verb.
- Types
 - Independent clauses
 - Every sentence must have at the least one independent clause.
 - An independent clause can stand alone.
 - An independent clause does not begin with a subordinate conjunction or relative pronoun.
 - Dependent clauses
 - The dependent clause can never stand alone.
 - A dependent clause begins with a subordinate conjunction or relative conjunction.
 - Types
 - Adverb
 - Usually begins with a subordinate conjunction
 - Acts like an adverb
 - We will eat when the bell rings. (modifies eat)
 - We will eat... is an independent clause.
 - Adjective
 - Usually begins with a relative pronoun
 - Acts like an adjective
 - She likes the guy who sits in front of her. (modifies guy)
 - She likes the guy... is an independent clause.
 - Noun
 - Usually begins with a relative pronoun.
 - Acts like a noun.
 - I hope that you understand the examples. (acts as a direct object)
 - I hope... is an independent clause.

Sentence Types:

- Simple – one independent clause
- Compound – two or more independent clauses
- Complex – one independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses
- Compound-Complex – two or more independent clauses plus one or more dependent clauses

Sentence Purpose:

- A declarative sentence makes a statement and ends with a period.
- An interrogative sentence asks a question and ends with a question mark.
- An imperative sentence gives a command and ends with a period.
- An exclamatory sentence expresses strong feeling and ends with an exclamation point.

Parallel Structure:

Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of coordinating conjunctions such as "and" or "or."

Words and Phrases

With the -ing form (gerund) of words:

Parallel: Mary likes **hiking**, **swimming**, and **bicycling**.

With infinitive phrases:

Parallel: Mary likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **to ride** a bicycle.

OR

Mary likes to **hike**, **swim**, and **ride** a bicycle.

(Note: You can use "to" before all the verbs in a sentence or only before the first one.)

Do not mix forms.

Example 1

Not Parallel:

Mary likes **hiking**, **swimming**, and **to ride** a bicycle.

Parallel:

Mary likes **hiking**, **swimming**, and **riding** a bicycle.

Example 2

Not Parallel:

The production manager was asked to write his report **quickly**, **accurately**, and **in a detailed manner**.

Parallel:

The production manager was asked to write his report **quickly**, **accurately**, and **thoroughly**.

Example 3

Not Parallel:

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and **his motivation was** low.

Parallel:

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and **lacked** motivation.

Clauses

A parallel structure that begins with clauses must keep on with clauses. Changing to another pattern or changing the voice of the verb (from active to passive or vice versa) will break the parallelism.

Example 1

Not Parallel:

The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **to do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

Parallel:

The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **that they should do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

— or —

Parallel:

The coach told the players that they should **get** a lot of sleep, not **eat** too much, and **do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

Example 2

Not Parallel:

The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that questions would be asked** by prospective buyers. (**passive**)

Parallel:

The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that prospective buyers would ask** him questions.

Lists After a Colon

Be sure to keep all the elements in a list in the same form.

Example 1

Not Parallel:

The dictionary can be used for these purposes: to find **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings,** and **looking up irregular verbs.**

Parallel:

The dictionary can be used for these purposes: to find **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings,** and **irregular verbs.**