Grammar Rules: Parts of Speech

Words are classed into eight categories according to their uses in a sentence.

1. **Noun**
   Name for a person, animal, thing, place, idea, activity.
   John, cat, box, desert, liberty, golf

2. **Pronoun**
   Alternate name for a noun.
   he, she, it

3. **Adjective**
   Modifies a noun or pronoun.
   big, good, full

4. **Verb**
   Expresses action or existence.
   went, purred, is

5. **Adverb**
   Modifies a verb, adverb, or adjective.
   quickly, loudly, here

6. **Conjunction**
   Connects words, phrases, or clauses.
   and, or, but

7. **Preposition**
   Precedes phrase that acts as a modifier or noun.
   with, for, at

8. **Interjection**
   Expresses emotion.
   Gosh! Wow! Super!

BrainAid

N PA VAC PI
Noun-Pronoun-Adjective
Verb-Adverb-Conjunction
Preposition-Interjection

That’s my Pa!

To memorize the 8 parts of speech, imagine that N’s PA VACuums Ple!
1. Noun = Name

Compound Noun: Made of two or more words: ice water, notebook, brother-in-law
Appositive: Noun or noun phrase that identifies a nearby noun or pronoun. My son Bill is happy.

2. Pronoun = Pro-Name

Professional or alternate names used by nouns to enhance their careers.

Types of Pronouns

Personal: I, me, mine, my / you, your / he, him, his / she, her / we, our, us / they, them, their / it...
Indefinite (not specific): all, any, anyone, both, each, either, everyone, few, many...
Interrogative (ask questions): what?, which?, who?, whom?, whose?...
Demonstrative (point out): this, that, these, those...
Reflexive (reflect back): myself, yourself, himself, herself, themselves...
Relative (link dependent clauses): that, which, who, whoever, whom, whose...

Antecedent: The noun or noun phrase a pronoun refers to. John made his bed. Ante means “before.” Cede means “to go.” An antecedent in a sense “goes before” or existed before the pronoun, although it can occur afterwards in a sentence. It was John’s bed.
3. **Adjective Advertises**

Advertises details about a noun or pronoun by telling what kind, which one, how many....

Articles *(the, a, an)* are also adjectives.

**Proper Adjectives** are Proper Nouns used as adjectives: *Boston bank, French fries.*

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4. **Verb = moVement or being**

Describes a noun’s movement (action) or being (existence).

**Phrasal Verbs** generally consist of a verb plus a preposition: *Turn up the music.*

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5. **Adverb Adds to verb**

Adds to the meaning of a verb (or an adjective or another adverb) by telling what, when, where, why, how....

**Adverbial Conjunctives** connect independent clauses in a compound sentence: consequently, hence, however, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, therefore...

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Only an adverb can modify an adjective *(very good)* or another adverb *(very loudly).*
6. Conjunction Conjoins

Connects words, phrases, or clauses “at the hip” like conjoined twins.

Coordinating (equal rank items): for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

Subordinating (dependent clauses): after, although, as, as if, because, before, if, once, since, so that, than, that, unless, until, when, where, while

Correlative (item pairs): both-and, either-or, neither-nor

In addition to conjunctions, relative pronouns, adverbial conjunctives, and prepositions are called connectives.

7. Preposition Positions

Precedes a phrase that acts as a modifier or noun by indicating a position in time, location, or manner.

Time: before/after, during, past, until

Location: above/below, across, along, around, behind, beside, between, in/out, into, near/far, on/off, over/under, through, up/down, within

Multipurpose: about, against, as, at, by, of, for, from, to, with, without

Prepositional phrases can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

The noun or pronoun at the end of the phrase is the object of the preposition.

8. Interjection Ignites!

Ignites the message with an exclamation of emotion!

Expletives are interjectory words or expressions. There is no one here! Darn it!
Parts-of-Speech Puzzles

Although there are only eight parts of speech, it can be difficult to classify some words.

Some words are easy to classify: “Is it a person, place, or thing?” (noun); “Does it modify a noun?” (adjective), etc. But many words are less obvious and can be different parts of speech depending on how they are used.

When in doubt, the best option is to consult a dictionary, which lists the various parts of speech for a word in the order of most common usage along with definitions and examples.

But even a dictionary may not make classifying easy when a word’s shades of meaning and usage are nearly identical.

For example, looking up “when” in the *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* © 1996 yielded four parts of speech and ten alternate definitions. Here’s a sampling:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>First Definition</th>
<th>First Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>at what time or period?</td>
<td>When are they to arrive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>at what time</td>
<td>to know when to be silent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>what time</td>
<td>Till when is the store open?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>the time of anything</td>
<td>the when and the where of an act.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table lists a dozen words (in alphabetical order) that can be difficult to classify. The parts of speech are ranked (1, 2, 3...) in the order they are listed in Webster’s dictionary.

### Parts-of-Speech Puzzles Chart

Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Conjunction, Preposition, Interjection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Pron</th>
<th>Adj</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adv</th>
<th>Conj</th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Int</th>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 12 words listed in the Chart:

- Adverbs have the most #1 rankings (7).
- Pronouns have the 2nd most #1 rankings (4).
- “What” can be six parts of speech!
- “Who” can be only one part of speech.
- Only “than” can be used as a preposition.
- No words can be verbs.
Your Turn!

Draw a line from the item to the best matching example.

Proper Noun               peach
Common Noun               glory
Abstract Noun             attorney general
Compound Noun             Sparky, the dog, barked
Appositive                she was happy
Personal Pronoun          the ones who were left behind
Relative Pronoun          it was the best book
Antecedent                an apple
Article                   Georgia peach
Proper Adjective          blow out the candle
Phrasal Verb              however, I did not go
Adverbial Conjunctive     cats and dogs
Coordinating Conjunction  because he left town
Subordinating Conjunction under the bench
Preposition               Oh my!
Interjection              Georgia

Following the example, mark parts of speech above each word of the sentences that follow.
Consult your dictionary as needed.

Int  Pron  Verb  Adj  Adj  Conj  Adj  Noun  Adv  Prep  Adj  Noun
Wow! He kicked the red and white ball high into the air.

Sally slowly digested her food.

Mike rudely chewed and talked with his mouth open.

Hey! Do you think we can get some service at this restaurant?

Finally! They had been waiting forever for good food and drink.

What! Why did you not ask when the kids who went into that house returned?

Why? How was I to know more about where they were then than I do now?

[ Answers follow ]
Answers

Proper Noun ► peach
Common Noun ► glory
Abstract Noun ► attorney general
Compound Noun ► attorney general
Appositive ► attorney general
Personal Pronoun ► she
Relative Pronoun ► who
Antecedent ► the ones
Article ► an
Proper Adjective ► Georgia
Phrasal Verb ► blow out
Adverbial Conjunctive ► however
Coordinating Conjunction ► because
Subordinating Conjunction ► under
Preposition ► Oh my
Interjection ► Georgia

Noun Adv Verb Pron Noun
Sally slowly digested her food.

Noun Adv Verb Conj Verb Prep Pro Noun Adj
Mike rudely chewed and talked with his mouth open.

Int Verb Pro Verb Pro Verb Verb Adj Noun Prep Adj Noun
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