

A decorative graphic consisting of three blue circles of varying sizes and two thin blue lines. One line starts from the top left and goes towards the top-right circle. The other line starts from the top right and goes towards the bottom-right circle. The circles are arranged in a vertical line, with the largest at the top, a medium one in the middle, and the largest at the bottom right.

Grammar

Learning English grammar

Learning about nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections with exercises for you to complete

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Nouns

A noun is the word that refers to a person, thing or abstract idea. A noun can tell you who or what.

There are several different types of noun:-

- There are common nouns such as dog, car, chair etc.
- Nouns that refer to things which can be counted (can be singular or plural) are countable nouns.
- Nouns that refer to some groups of countable nouns, substances, feelings and types of activity (can only be singular) are uncountable nouns.
- Nouns that refer to a group of people or things are collective nouns.
- Nouns that refer to people, organizations or places are proper nouns, only proper nouns are capitalized.
- Nouns that are made up of two or more words are called compound nouns.
- Nouns that are formed from a verb by adding *-ing* are called gerunds

EXERCISES:

1. The book was heavy.
2. The child is happy.
3. The box was empty.
4. The synopsis is accurate.
5. The tomato was being baked.

ANSWERS:

1. The books were heavy.
2. The children are happy.
3. The boxes were empty.
4. The synopses are accurate.
5. The tomatoes were being baked.

Verb

The verb is perhaps the most important part of the sentence. A **verb** or compound verb asserts something about the subject of the sentence and express actions, events, or states of being. The verb or compound verb is the critical element of the predicate of a sentence.

In each of the following sentences, the verb or compound verb is **highlighted**:

Transitive Verbs followed by Adverbs

back up: support

I will **back up** your story.

bail out: rescue

If you run into difficulties, who will **bail you out**?

break in: make something new fit for use

I **broke in** my new hiking boots.

breathe in: inhale

We **breathed in** the fresh air.

breathe out: exhale

I **breathed out** a sigh of relief.

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bring back: return

bring around: persuade

bring up: raise

butter up: flatter

call in: ask to assist

call off: cancel

call up: telephone

cheer on: cheer, encourage

chop down: fell

clean up: tidy

fend off: repel

ferret out: find with difficulty

figure out: solve, understand

fill in: complete

fill out: complete

fill up: make full

give back: return

give off: send out

hand down: give to someone younger

hand in: give to person in authority

hand on: give to another person

hand over: transfer

hang up: break a telephone connection

hold back: restrain, delay

iron out: remove

knock out: make unconscious

lap up: accept eagerly

lay off: put out of work

leave behind: leave, not bring

leave out: omit

let down: disappoint

live down: live so that past faults are forgotten

look up: find (information)

make up: invent

pass up: not take advantage

pension off: dismiss with a pension

phase in: introduce gradually

She **brought back** her library books.

We gradually **brought her around** to our point of view.

Bringing up children is never easy.

We **battered him up**, hoping that he would agree to our proposal.

I think it is time we **called in** an expert.

We **called off** the meeting.

Why don't you **call him up**?

I will be there to **cheer you on**.

They **chopped down** the dead tree.

The mayor asked everyone to help **clean up** the city streets.

The goalie **fended off** every attack.

We managed to **ferret out** the information.

I can't **figure out** what happened.

Please **fill in** this form.

I **filled out** the form.

We **filled up** the glasses with water.

I **gave back** the bicycle I had borrowed.

Skunk cabbage **gives off** an unpleasant odor.

The tradition **was handed down** from father to son.

The students **handed** their assignments **in** to the teacher.

I am not sorry to **hand** the responsibility **on** to you.

We had to **hand** the evidence **over** to the police.

After receiving a busy signal, I **hung up** the phone.

He is so enthusiastic; it is hard to **hold him back**.

I am sure we can **iron out** every difficulty.

Boxers **are** often **knocked out**.

The public **lapped up** the story.

The company **laid off** seventy workers.

I accidentally **left** my umbrella **behind**.

Tell me what happened. Don't **leave** anything **out**!

We will **let him down** if we don't arrive on time.

This will be hard to **live down**!

We **looked up** the word in a dictionary.

She likes to **make up** stories.

I couldn't **pass up** such an opportunity.

He was **pensioned off** at the age of sixty.

The new program will be **phased in** over the next six months.

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phase out: cease gradually

pick up: collect

pin down: get a commitment

play down: de-emphasize

point out: draw attention to

polish off: finish

pull down: demolish

pull off: succeed

put away: put in proper place

put back: return to original location

put off: postpone

reel off: recite a long list

rope in: persuade to help

rub out: erase

rule out: remove from consideration

scale down: reduce

sell off: dispose of by selling

set back: delay

shout down: stop from speaking by shouting

shrug off: dismiss as unimportant

single out: select from others

size up: assess

sort out: organize

sound out: talk with to learn the opinion of

stammer out: stammer

sum up: summarize

summon up: gather

take in: absorb

take out: invite to a restaurant

The practice will gradually be **phased out**.

You may **pick up** the papers at the office.

When the guest speaker is **pinned down**, we can set a date for the conference.

He **played down** the importance of the news.

She **pointed out** the advantages of the proposal.

We **polished off** the rest of the apple pie.

Many old buildings are **pulled down** to make way for new ones.

Do you think she can **pull off** her plan?

It is time to **put** the toys **away**.

Please **put** the book **back** on the shelf.

We cannot **put off** the meeting again.

She **reeled off** a long list of names.

We **roped in** everyone we could to help with the work.

Be sure to **rub out** all the pencil marks.

None of the possibilities can be **ruled out** yet.

Because of lack of funds, we had to **scale down** our plans.

We **sold off** all the books and furniture.

This could **set back** the project by several years.

The crowd **shouted down** the speaker.

He attempted to **shrug off** the mistake.

You have been **singled out** for special attention.

I quickly **sized up** the situation.

It will take some time to **sort out** this mess.

We attempted to **sound him out**.

They **stammered out** their apologies.

He **summed up** the discussion in a few well-chosen words.

I attempted to **summon up** my courage.

We tried to **take in** the new information.

May I **take you out** for supper?

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take over: assume control	They will take over at the beginning of June.
talk over: discuss	Let us talk it over before we decide.
tear up: destroy by tearing	She tore up the letter.
think over: consider	I need some time to think it over .
think up: invent	What will they think up next?
track down: search for and find	We finally tracked him down at the bookstore.
trade in: give as part payment	Why don't you trade in your old vacuum cleaner for a new one?
try on: test clothes by putting them on	I tried on the new suit, but it didn't fit me.
try out: test by using	Would you like to try out my fountain pen?
turn away: refuse admission	The event was so popular that many people had to be turned away .
turn back: reverse direction	Every fall the clocks must be turned back by one hour.
turn off: deactivate by using a switch	I turned off the radio.
turn on: activate by using a switch	Please turn on the light.
water down: dilute	The soup has been watered down .
wear out: gradually destroy by wearing or using	My jacket is wearing out , although it is only a year old.
write down: make a note	I wrote down the instructions.
write off: cancel, regard as	They were forced to write off several irretrievable debts.
write up: compose in writing	I used my notes to write up the report.

Adjectives

Adjectives describe or give information about nouns.

The good news is that the form of adjectives does not change; it does not matter if the noun being modified is male or female, singular or plural, subject or object.

Some adjectives give us factual information about the noun - age, size colour etc (fact adjectives - can't be argued with). Some adjectives show what somebody thinks about something or somebody - nice, horrid, beautiful etc (opinion adjectives - not everyone may agree).

EXERCISE:

1. Yesterday she heard _____ news. (to surprise)
2. The _____ tools must be returned by five o'clock. (to rent)

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3. The _____ rabbit stayed perfectly still. (to frighten)
4. We had a _____ experience. (to frighten)
5. The play is _____. (to entertain)

ANSWERS:

1. surprising
2. rented
3. frightened
4. frightening
5. entertaining

Preposition

A **preposition** links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.

A preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence as in the following examples:

The book is **on** the table.

The book is **beneath** the table.

The book is leaning **against** the table.

The book is **beside** the table.

She held the book **over** the table.

She read the book **during** class.

In each of the preceding sentences, a preposition locates the noun "book" in space or in time. A prepositional phrase is made up of the preposition, its object and any associated adjectives or adverbs. A prepositional phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The most common prepositions are "about," "above," "across," "after," "against," "along," "among," "around," "at," "before," "behind," "below," "beneath," "beside," "between," "beyond," "but," "by," "despite," "down," "during," "except," "for," "from," "in," "inside," "into," "like," "near," "of," "off," "on," "onto," "out," "outside," "over," "past," "since," "through," "throughout," "till," "to," "toward," "under," "underneath," "until," "up," "upon," "with," "within," and "without."

Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a preposition:

The children climbed the mountain **without** fear.

In this sentence, the preposition "without" introduces the noun "fear." The prepositional phrase "without fear" functions as an adverb describing how the children climbed.

There was rejoicing **throughout** the land when the government was defeated.

Here, the preposition "throughout" introduces the noun phrase "the land." The prepositional phrase acts as an adverb describing the location of the rejoicing.

The spider crawled slowly **along** the banister.

The preposition "along" introduces the noun phrase "the banister" and the prepositional phrase "along the banister" acts as an adverb, describing where the spider crawled.

The dog is hiding **under** the porch because it knows it will be punished **for** chewing up a new pair **of** shoes.

Here the preposition "under" introduces the prepositional phrase "under the porch," which acts as an adverb modifying the compound verb "is hiding."

The screenwriter searched **for** the manuscript he was certain was somewhere **in** his office.

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Similarly in this sentence, the preposition "in" introduces a prepositional phrase "in his office," which acts as an adverb describing the location of the missing papers.

Conjunction

You can use a **conjunction** to link words, phrases, and clauses, as in the following example:

I ate the pizza **and** the pasta.

Call the movers **when** you are ready.

Coordinating Conjunctions

You use a **coordinating conjunction** ("and," "but," "or," "nor," "for," "so," or "yet") to join individual words, phrases, and independent clauses. Note that you can also use the conjunctions "but" and "for" as prepositions.

In the following sentences, each of the **highlighted** words is a coordinating conjunction:

Lilacs **and** violets are usually purple.

In this example, the coordinating conjunction "and" links two nouns.

This movie is particularly interesting to feminist film theorists, **for** the screenplay was written by Mae West.

In this example, the coordinating conjunction "for" is used to link two independent clauses.

Daniel's uncle claimed that he spent most of his youth dancing on rooftops **and** swallowing goldfish.

Here the coordinating conjunction "and" links two participle phrases ("dancing on rooftops" and "swallowing goldfish") which act as adverbs describing the verb "spends."

Subordinating Conjunctions

A **subordinating conjunction** introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

The most common subordinating conjunctions are "after," "although," "as," "because," "before," "how," "if," "once," "since," "than," "that," "though," "till," "until," "when," "where," "whether," and "while."

Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a subordinating conjunction:

After she had learned to drive, Alice felt more independent.

The subordinating conjunction "after" introduces the dependent clause "After she had learned to drive."

If the paperwork arrives on time, your cheque will be mailed on Tuesday.

Similarly, the subordinating conjunction "if" introduces the dependent clause "If the paperwork arrives on time."

Gerald had to begin his thesis over again **when** his computer crashed.

The subordinating conjunction "when" introduces the dependent clause "when his computer crashed."

Midwifery advocates argue that home births are safer **because** the mother and baby are exposed to fewer people and fewer germs.

In this sentence, the dependent clause "because the mother and baby are exposed to fewer people and fewer germs" is introduced by the subordinating conjunction "because."

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Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions always appear in pairs -- you use them to link equivalent sentence elements. The most common correlative conjunctions are "both...and," "either...or," "neither...nor," "not only...but also," "so...as," and "whether...or." (Technically correlative conjunctions consist simply of a coordinating conjunction linked to an adjective or adverb.)

The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are correlative conjunctions:

Both my grandfather **and** my father worked in the steel plant.

In this sentence, the correlative conjunction "both...and" is used to link the two noun phrases that act as the compound subject of the sentence: "my grandfather" and "my father".

Bring **either** a Jello salad **or** a potato scallop.

Here the correlative conjunction "either...or" links two noun phrases: "a Jello salad" and "a potato scallop."

Corinne is trying to decide **whether** to go to medical school **or** to go to law school.

Similarly, the correlative conjunction "whether ... or" links the two infinitive phrases "to go to medical school" and "to go to law school."

The explosion destroyed **not only** the school **but also** the neighboring pub.

In this example the correlative conjunction "not only ... but also" links the two noun phrases ("the school" and "neighboring pub") which act as direct objects.