

# TERMS

## Parts of Speech

**Noun:** a word that names a person, place, thing, quality, or idea (examples: *Maggie*, *Alabama*, *clarinet*, *satisfaction*, *socialism*).

**Pronoun:** a word used in place of a noun (examples: *he*, *she*, *they*, *ours*, *somebody*). See “Types of Pronouns” below.

**Verb:** a word or group of words indicating the action or state of being of a subject (examples: *jump*, *hop*, *skip*, *run*, *is*, *are*, *were*, *will be*, *will have been*).

**Preposition:** a word that starts a prepositional phrase. In the following examples of prepositional phrases, the first word is a preposition: *around* the house, *under* the car, *in* the back, *through* the roof.

**Articles:** the words *a*, *an*, and *the*.

**Adjective:** a word used to modify a noun (example: the *red* wagon) or pronoun (example: *ordinary* one).

**Adverb:** a word used to modify a verb (*warmly* greet), an adjective (*only* three people), or another adverb (*quite* seriously damaged).

**Conjunction:** a word that links parts of a sentence to each other. See “coordinating conjunction,” “subordinating conjunction,” and “correlative conjunction” under “Types of Conjunctions, Transitional Words, and Transitional Phrases” below.

## Sentence Structure Terms

### Phrase:

A phrase is a group of words that lacks a subject, a complete verb, or both.

Examples:  
In the dark  
Finding the answer

### Clause:

A clause is a group of related words with both a subject and a predicate (verb).

### **Independent Clause:**

An independent clause (also called a main clause) is a group of words that has a subject and a verb and does not start with a subordinating conjunction.

Example: I ate raspberries.

### **Dependent Clause:**

A dependent clause (also called a subordinate clause) is a group of words that has a subject and a verb and starts with a subordinating conjunction. A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Example: After I ate raspberries

## **Types of Sentences**

### **Simple Sentence:**

A simple sentence consists of one independent clause.

Example: I ate raspberries.

### **Compound Sentence:**

A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses separated by a comma and a coordinating conjunction or by a semicolon.

Example: I ate raspberries, and I developed a rash.

Example: I ate raspberries; I developed a rash.

### **Complex Sentence:**

A complex sentence consists of at least one dependent clause and one independent clause.

Example: Because I ate raspberries, I developed a rash.

### **Compound-complex Sentence:**

A compound-complex sentence consists of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Example: Although I am allergic to raspberries, I ate them, so I developed a rash.

## Types of Pronouns

### Indefinite Pronouns:

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a definite person, place, object, idea, or emotion. Most indefinite pronouns are singular, so they require a third-person singular verb. A pronoun that refers to an indefinite pronoun that is singular is also singular.

#### *Common Indefinite Pronouns*

##### Always Singular

*-one* words

anyone  
everyone  
no one  
one  
someone

*-body* words

anybody  
everybody  
nobody  
somebody

*-thing* words

anything  
everything  
nothing  
something

other words

each  
either  
neither  
much

##### Always Plural

both  
few

many  
several

##### Singular or Plural

all  
any  
more

most  
none  
some

## Miscellaneous Terms

### Antecedent

An antecedent is the noun or pronoun to which a pronoun refers.

Example:

My *cat* hid under the bed when *she* had *her* kittens. (*Cat* is the antecedent of *she*; *she* is the antecedent of *her*.)

### **Modifier:**

A modifier is a word that “describes” another word. It may be a single word or a phrase.

Examples:

I ate some *delicious* raspberries.

I ate some raspberries *in the park*.

I ate some raspberries *that were really delicious*.

### **Participle and participial phrase:**

A participle is a form of a verb which is used as an adjective (descriptive word) or is part of a verb phrase. A participle cannot function alone as a main verb of a sentence or a clause. Verbs have two participles: present and past. The present participle ends in *-ing*. (*loving, helping*). The past participle of most verbs ends in *-d*, or *-ed* (*loved, helped*). The past participle of irregular verbs has different patterns (*taken, been, ridden*).

Examples:

*Looking* out the window, the *smiling* child waved to her mother.

The *excited* woman clutched her *winning* lottery ticket.

*Caught* in the act, the burglar surrendered to the police.

### **Predicate:**

A predicate is the part of the sentence or clause, including the verb, that explains what the subject is or does.

## **Types of Conjunctions, Transitional Words, and Transitional Phrases**

### **Subordinating Conjunction:**

A subordinating conjunction is a word that begins a dependent (subordinate) clause.

*Common Subordinating Conjunctions*

after

although

as

even if

even though

how

since

so

so that

when

whenever

where

as if	if	than	wherever
as soon as	in order that	that	while
because	provided that	unless	why
before	rather than	until	

### Coordinating Conjunction:

A coordinating conjunction connects words or word groups of the same kind: nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, phrases, clauses, or whole sentences. You can use the acronym FANBOYS to remember the seven coordinating conjunctions.

For  
And  
Nor  
But  
Or  
Yet  
So

### Conjunctive Adverb:

A conjunctive adverb is a transitional word or phrase that begins a sentence. It is part of the sentence it begins. Conjunctive adverbs are *not* conjunctions: they *are* adverbs. Conjunctive adverbs show relationships such as addition, cause and effect, comparison, contrast, emphasis, or time.

#### *Common Conjunctive Adverbs*

##### **addition**

also  
besides  
further  
in addition  
incidentally  
moreover

##### **cause or effect**

accordingly  
as a result in  
consequently  
therefore  
thus

##### **comparison or contrast**

however  
comparison  
in contrast  
instead  
likewise  
nevertheless  
nonetheless  
otherwise  
similarly

##### **emphasis**

certainly  
indeed  
in fact  
still  
undoubtedly

##### **time**

finally  
meanwhile  
next  
now  
then

## **Correlative Conjunction:**

A correlative conjunction is a two-part conjunction.

### *Common Correlative Conjunctions*

as...as  
both...and

just as...so  
neither...nor

not only...but also  
whether...or