THE FARLEX GRAMMAR BOOK

COMPLETE ENGLISH GRAMMAR RULES

Examples, Exceptions, Exercises & **Everything You Need to Master Proper Grammar**

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The Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rules

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Table of contents

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Preface

Grammar is without a doubt one of the most daunting aspects of the English language, an area riddled with complexities, inconsistencies, and contradictions. It has also been in a state of flux for pretty much its entire existence. For native speakers of English, as well as for those learning it as a new language, grammar presents a very serious challenge to speaking and writing both accurately and effectively.

Having a single, reliable, go-to reference guide should therefore be indispensable to those trying to learn, improve, or perfect their speech or writing. This book is that guide: a clear, unambiguous, and comprehensive source of information that covers all the relevant topics of English grammar, while still being easy to understand and enjoyable to read.

Every topic in the book has been broken down into basic units. Each unit can be read and understood in its own right, but throughout the book you will find cross-references to other sections and chapters to help make it clear how all the pieces fit together. If you're having trouble understanding something, try going back (or forward) to other related topics in the book.

Finally, it must be mentioned that, because English is such a flexible, inconsistent language, the "rules" that are often bandied about are usually not rules at all, but rather guides that reflect how the language is used. Accordingly, the guidelines contained within this book are just that—guidelines. They are not intended to provide constrictive or proscriptive rules that confine everyone to a particular way of speaking or writing.

Learning how the English language works will enhance your engagement with speech and writing every day, from the books you read, to the e-mails you write, to the conversations you have with friends and strangers alike.

As such, mastering grammar is not an exercise that is confined to the classroom. While it is certainly important to learn the structures, styles, and rules that shape the language, the key to truly learning English is to read and listen to the way people write and speak every day, from the most well-known authors to the people you talk to on the bus. Take the information you find in this book and carry it with you into the world.

-P. Herring

Editor's Note

This book is written according to the standard styles and spellings used in American English. While major differences between American and British English are usually addressed, some information in the book might not coincide with the styles, tendencies, or preferences of other English-speaking communities.

English Grammar

Grammar refers to the way words are used, classified, and structured together to form coherent written or spoken communication.

This guide takes a traditional approach to teaching English grammar, breaking the topic into three fundamental elements: **Parts of Speech**, **Inflection**, and **Syntax**. Each of these is a discrete, individual part, but they are all intrinsically linked together in meaning.

Parts of Speech

In the first part of the guide, we will look at the basic components of English—words. The **parts of speech** are the categories to which different words are assigned, based on their meaning, structure, and function in a sentence.

We'll look in great detail at the seven main parts of speech—**nouns**, **pronouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, **adverbs**, **prepositions**, and **conjunctions**—as well as other categories of words that don't easily fit in with the rest, such as **particles**, **determiners**, and **gerunds**.

By understanding the parts of speech, we can better understand how (and why) we structure words together to form sentences.

Inflection

Although the parts of speech provide the building blocks for English, another very important element is **inflection**, the process by which words are *changed* in form to create new, specific meanings.

There are two main categories of inflection: **conjugation** and **declension**. Conjugation refers to the inflection of verbs, while declension refers to the inflection of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Whenever we change a verb from the **present tense** to the **past tense**, for example, we are using **conjugation**. Likewise, when we make a noun **plural** to show that there is more than one of it, we are using **declension**.

Syntax

The third and final part of the guide will focus on **syntax**, the rules and patterns that govern how we **structure** sentences. The grammatical structures that constitute syntax can be thought of as a hierarchy, with sentences at the top as

the largest cohesive unit in the language and words (the parts of speech) at the bottom.

We'll begin the third part by looking at the basic structural units present in all sentences—**subjects and predicates**—and progressively move on to larger classes of structures, discussing **modifiers**, **phrases**, and **clauses**. Finally, we will end by looking at the different structures and categories of **sentences** themselves.

Using the three parts together

The best way to approach this guide is to think of it as a cross-reference of itself; when you see a term or concept in one section that you're unfamiliar with, check the other sections to find a more thorough explanation. Neither parts of speech nor inflection nor syntax exist as truly separate units; it's equally important to examine and learn about the different <u>kinds</u> of words, how they can **change** to create new meaning, and the guidelines by which they are **structured** into sentences.

When we learn to use all three parts together, we gain a much fuller understanding of how to make our speech and writing not only proper, but natural and effective.

Parts of Speech

Definition

The **parts of speech** are the primary categories of words according to their function in a sentence.

English has seven main parts of speech. We'll look at a brief overview of each below; continue on to their individual chapters to learn more about them.

Nouns

Nouns are words that identify or name people, places, or things. Nouns can function as **the subject** of a clause or sentence, an object of a verb, or an object of a preposition. Words like *cat, book, table, girl,* and *plane* are all nouns.

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that <u>represent</u> nouns (people, places, or things). Grammatically, pronouns are used in the same ways as nouns; they can function as subjects or objects. Common pronouns include *I, you, she, him, it, everyone,* and *somebody*.

Verbs

Verbs are words that describe the actions—or states of being—of people, animals, places, or things. Verbs function as the root of what's called **the predicate**, which is required (along with a subject) to form a complete sentence; therefore, every sentence must include at least one verb.

Verbs include action words like *run, walk, write,* or *sing,* as well as words describing states of being, such as *be, seem, feel,* or *sound*.

Adjectives

Adjectives are words that <u>modify</u> (add description to) nouns and (occasionally) pronouns. They can be a part of either the subject or the predicate. Common adjectives are *red, blue, fast, slow, big, tall,* and *wide*.

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or even entire clauses. Depending on what they modify (and how), adverbs can appear anywhere in the sentence. Adverbs are commonly formed from adjectives by adding "-ly" to the end, as in *slowly, quickly, widely, beautifully,* or *commonly*.

Prepositions

Prepositions are words that express a relationship between a noun or pronoun (known as the **object of the preposition**) and another part of the sentence. Together, these form **prepositional phrases**, which can function as adjectives or as adverbs in a sentence. Some examples of prepositional phrases are: ***on** the table,* ***in** the shed,* and ***across** the field*. (The prepositions are in **bold**.)

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that connect other words, phrases, or clauses, expressing a specific kind of relationship between the two (or more) elements. The most common conjunctions are the **coordinating conjunctions**: *and, but, or, nor, for, so*, and *yet*.

Other Parts of Speech

In addition to the seven parts of speech above, there are several other groupings of words that do not neatly fit into any one specific category—**particles**, **articles**, **determiners**, **gerunds**, and **interjections**.

Many of these share characteristics with one or more of the seven primary categories. For example, **determiners** are similar in many ways to **adjectives**, but they are not completely the same, and most **particles** are identical in appearance to **prepositions** but have different grammatical functions.

Because they are harder to classify in comparison to the seven primary categories above, they've been grouped together in this guide under the general category **Other Parts of Speech**.

Nouns
Definition

Nouns are words that indicate a person, place, or thing.

In a sentence, nouns can function as **the subject** or the **object** of a **verb** or **preposition**. Nouns can also follow **linking verbs** to rename or re-identify the subject of a sentence or clause; these are known as **predicate nouns**.

The Subject

The subject in a sentence or clause is the person or thing <u>doing, performing,</u> or <u>controlling</u> the action of the verb. For example:

• "The **dog** <u>chased</u> its tail." (The noun *dog* is performing the action of the verb *chase*.)

• "**Mary** <u>reads</u> a book every week." (The proper noun *Mary* is performing the action of the verb *read*.)

Objects

Grammatical objects have three grammatical roles: the **direct object** of a verb, the **indirect object** of a verb, or the **object of a preposition**.

Direct objects

Direct objects are what <u>receive</u> the action of the verb in a sentence or clause. For example:

• "The dog <u>chased</u> its **tail**." (The noun *tail* is receiving the action of the verb *chase*.)

• "Mary <u>reads</u> a **book** every week." (The noun *book* is receiving the action of the verb *read*.)

Indirect objects

An **indirect object** is the person or thing who receives the **direct object** of the verb. For instance:

• "Please <u>pass</u> **Jeremy** the *salt*." (The proper noun *Jeremy* is receiving the direct object *salt*, which receives the action of the verb *pass*.)

• "I <u>sent</u> the **company** an *application* for the job." (The noun *company* is receiving the direct object *application*, which receives the action of the verb *sent*.)

Objects of prepositions

Nouns are also used after prepositions to create **prepositional phrases**. When a noun is part of a prepositional phrase, it is known as the **object of the preposition**. For example:

• "Your backpack is <u>under</u> the **table**." (The noun *table* is the object of the preposition *under,* which creates the prepositional phrase *under the table*.)

• "I am looking <u>for</u> **work**." (The noun *work* is the object of the preposition *for*, which creates the prepositional phrase *for work*.)

Predicate Nouns

Nouns that follow linking verbs are known as **predicate nouns** (sometimes known as **predicative nouns**). These serve to rename or re-identify the subject. If the noun is accompanied by any direct modifiers (such as **articles**, **adjectives**, or **prepositional phrases**), the entire noun phrase acts predicatively.

For example:

• "Love <u>is</u> **a *virtue*.**" (The noun phrase *a virtue* follows the linking verb *is* to rename the subject *love*.)

• "Tommy <u>seems</u> like **a real *bully*.**" (The noun phrase *a real bully* follows the linking verb *seems* to rename the subject *Tommy*.)

• "Maybe this <u>is</u> **a *blessing* in disguise**." (The noun phrase *a blessing in disguise* follows the linking verb *is* to rename the subject *this*.)

(Go to the section on **Subject Complements** in the part of the guide that covers **Syntax** to learn more about predicate nouns.)

Categories of Nouns

There are many different kinds of nouns, and it's important to know the different way each type can be used in a sentence. Below, we'll briefly look at the different categories of nouns. You can explore the individual sections to learn more about each.

Common and Proper Nouns

Nouns that identify general people, places, or things are called **common nouns**—they name or identify that which is *common* among others.

Proper nouns, on the other hand, are used to identify an absolutely **unique** person, place, or thing, and they are signified by capital letters, no matter where they appear in a sentence.

Common Nouns	Proper Nouns
"He sat on the **chair**."	"Go find **Jeff** and tell him dinner is ready."
"I live in a **city**."	"I'll have a **Pepsi**, please."
"We met some **people**."	"**Prince William** is adored by many."

Nouns of Address

Nouns of address are used in **direct speech** to identify the person or group being directly spoken to, or to get that person's attention. Like **interjections**, they are grammatically unrelated to the rest of the sentence—they don't modify or affect any other part of it. For example:

• "**James**, I need you to help me with the dishes."

• "Can I have some money, **Mom**?"

• "This, **class**, is the video I was telling you about."

• "Sorry, **Mr. President**, I didn't see you there."

Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns name people, places, animals, or things that are physically tangible—that is, they can be seen or touched, or have some physical properties. **Proper nouns** are also usually concrete, as they describe unique people, places, or things that are also tangible. For example:

- table
- rocks
- lake
- countries
- people
- Africa
- MacBook

- Jonathan

Abstract nouns, as their name implies, name intangible things, such as concepts, ideas, feelings, characteristics, attributes, etc. For instance:

- love
- hate
- decency
- conversation
- emotion

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Countable nouns (also known as **count nouns**) are nouns that can be considered as individual, separable items, which means that we are able to <u>count</u> them with numbers—we can have one, two, five, 15, 100, and so on. We can also use them with the indefinite **articles** *a* and *an* (which signify a single person or thing) or with the **plural form** of the noun.

Single Countable Nouns	Plural Countable Nouns
a cup	two **cups**
an ambulance	several **ambulances**
a phone	10 **phones**

Countable nouns contrast with **uncountable nouns** (also known as **non-count** or **mass nouns**), which cannot be separated and counted as individual units or elements. Uncountable nouns cannot take an indefinite article (*a/an*), nor can they be made plural.

✓ Correct	✗ Incorrect
"Would you like **tea**?"	"Would you like *a* **tea**?"
"Do you have any **information**?"	"Do you have *an* **information**?"
"We bought new camping **equipment**."	"We bought new camping **equipments**."

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are nouns that refer to a collection or group of multiple people, animals, or things. However, even though collective nouns refer to multiple individuals, they still function as singular nouns in a sentence. This is because they still are technically referring to one thing: the group as a whole. For example:

• "The **flock** of birds flew south for the winter."

• "The **organization** voted to revoke the rules that it had previously approved."

• "The **set** of tablecloths had disappeared. "

Attributive Nouns (Noun Adjuncts)

Attributive nouns, also called **noun adjuncts**, are nouns that are used to modify other nouns. The resulting phrase is called a **compound noun**. For example:

• "The boy played with his *toy* **soldier**."

In this sentence, *toy* is the noun adjunct, and it modifies the word *soldier*, creating the compound noun *toy soldier*.

To learn more about attributive nouns, go to the section on **Adjuncts** in the chapter on **The Predicate**.

Compound Nouns

A **compound noun** is a noun composed of two or more words working together as a single unit to name a person, place, or thing. Compound nouns are usually made up of two nouns or an adjective and a noun.

• water + bottle = **water bottle** (a bottle used for water)

• dining + room = **dining room** (a room used for dining)

• back + pack = **backpack** (a pack you wear on your back)

• police + man = **policeman** (a police officer who is a man)

Noun Phrases

A **noun phrase** is a group of two or more words that function together as a noun in a sentence. Noun phrases consist of a noun and other words that modify the noun. For example:

• "He brought **the <u>shovel</u> with the blue handle**."

In this sentence, *the shovel with the blue handle* is a noun phrase. It collectively acts as a noun while providing modifying words for the head noun, *shovel*. The modifiers are *the* and *with the blue handle*.

Nominalization (Creating Nouns)

Nominalization refers to the creation of a noun from **verbs** or **adjectives**.

When nouns are created from other parts of speech, it is usually through the use of **suffixes**. For example:

• "My fiancée is an **actor**." (The verb *act* becomes the noun *actor*.)

• "His **acceptance** of the position was received warmly." (The verb *accept* becomes the noun *acceptance*.)

• "The **hardness** of diamond makes it a great material for cutting tools." (The adjective *hard* becomes the noun *hardness*.)

• "This project will be fraught with **difficulty**." (The adjective *difficult* becomes the noun *difficulty*.)

Quiz
(answers start on page 610)

1. A noun can be which of the following?

a) The subject
b) An object
c) Predicative
d) A & B
e) B & C
f) All of the above

2. What category of nouns is used to identify the person or group being directly spoken to?

a) Common nouns
b) Nouns of address
c) Attributive nouns
d) Abstract nouns

3. Identify the type of noun (in **bold**) used in the following sentence:

"Your **indifference** is not acceptable."

a) Proper noun
b) Countable noun
c) Collective noun
d) Abstract noun

4. What category of nouns is used to modify other nouns?

a) Common nouns
b) Nouns of address
c) Attributive nouns
d) Abstract nouns

5. Which of the following is commonly used to create a noun from a verb or adjective?

a) Prefix
b) Suffix
c) Attributive noun
d) Predicative noun

Common and Proper Nouns

Nouns fall into one of two broad categories: **common nouns** and **proper nouns**.

Common Nouns

All nouns serve to name a person, place, or thing.

Those that identify general people, places, or things are called **common nouns**—they name that which is *common* among others.

For example:

• "He sat on the **chair**."

• "I live in a **city**."

• "We met some **people**."

• "She went into **politics**."

• "Our **teacher** is angry."

• "Let's go down to the **lake**."

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns, on the other hand, are used to identify a **unique** person, place, or thing. A proper noun names someone or something that is one of a kind, which is signified by the use of a capital letter, no matter where it appears in a sentence.

Names

The most common proper nouns are names, as of people, places, or events. For example:

• "Go find **Jeff** and tell him dinner is ready."

• "I lived in **Cincinnati** before I moved to **New York**."

• "My parents still talk about how great **Woodstock** was in 1969."

Brands

Proper nouns are also used for commercial brands. In this case, the object that's being referred to is not unique in itself, but the brand it belongs to is. For example:

• "Pass me the **Hellmann's** mayonnaise."

• "I'll have a **Pepsi**, please."

• "My new **MacBook** is incredibly fast."

Appellations

When a person has additional words added to his or her name (known as an appellation), this becomes part of the proper noun and is also capitalized. (Some linguists distinguish these as **proper names**, rather than **proper nouns**.) For example:

• "**Prince William** is adored by many."

• "Italy was invaded by **Attila the Hun** in 452."

Job Titles and Familial Roles

Many times, a person may be referred to according to a professional title or familial role instead of by name. In this case, the title is being used as a **noun of address** and is considered a proper noun, even if it would be a common noun in

other circumstances. For example:

• "How are you doing, **Coach**?"

• "I need your advice, **Mr. President**."

• "**Mom**, can you come with me to the playground?"

• "Pleased to meet you, **Doctor**."

Quiz

(answers start on page 610)

1. Common nouns identify people, places, or things that are _____?

a) Especially unique or one-of-a-kind
b) Generic among other similar nouns
c) Addressed by the speaker
d) Uncountable

2. Things referred to by their brand use which kind of nouns?

a) Common nouns
b) Proper nouns

3. Nouns of address are used in the same way as which kind of nouns?

a) Common nouns
b) Proper nouns

Nouns of Address

Definition

Nouns of address (technically called **vocatives**, but also known as **nominatives of address** or **nouns of direct address**) identify the person or group being directly spoken to. Like **interjections**, they are grammatically unrelated to the rest of the sentence—that is, they don't modify or affect any other part of it. Instead, they are used to let the listener or reader know who you are addressing, or to get that person's attention. For example:

• "**James**, I need you to help me with the dishes."

• "Can I have some money, **Mom**?"

• "This, **class**, is the video I was telling you about."

- "**Mr. President**, I didn't see you there."
- "Hey, **guy in the red shirt**, can you help me?"

Punctuation

Nouns of address are found in the initial, middle, or final position in a sentence. No matter where they occur, they are normally set apart from the rest of the sentence by one or two commas. If they occur in the initial position, they are followed by a comma. If they occur in the middle position, they are enclosed between two commas, and if they occur in the final position, they are preceded by a comma. For example:

- "**James**, I was wondering if you could help me with the dishes."
- "I was wondering, **James**, if you could help me with the dishes."
- "I was wondering if you could help me with the dishes, **James**."

- "**Class**, this is the video I was telling you about."
- "This, **class**, is the video I was telling you about."
- "This is the video I was telling you about, **class**."

Capitalization

Proper nouns

Proper nouns, such as the name or title of a person, are the most frequent nouns of address. These nouns are always capitalized, no matter where they appear in a sentence. If a professional title is used with the name, it is capitalized as well. For example:

- "Can you help me, **James**?"

- "Thank you, **Mrs. Smith**, for being here."

- "It's so nice to meet you, **Doctor Jenner**."

- "Hey, Coach Frank, how are you doing today?"

Common nouns in place of titles

Common nouns can also be used as nouns of address. If the common noun is the <u>title</u> of a job or family member *and* is used <u>in place of</u> a person's name, it should always be capitalized. For example:

- "How are you doing, **Coach**?"

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**To'liq qismini Shu tugmani
bosish orqali sotib oling!**