



# Grammar Glossary

An **abstract noun** is a feeling or concept that you cannot touch, such as happiness or education.

A phrase is a small group of words that does not contain a verb. An **adverbial phrase** is built around an adverb and the words that surround it, for example: very slowly, as fast as possible.

A sentence is written in **active voice** when the **subject** of the sentence is performing the action (for example, "The cat chased the mouse.")

An **adjective** is a word used to describe and give more information about a noun, which could be a person, place or object.

An **adverb** is a word which modifies a verb, which means that it tells you how, when, where or why something is being done.

**Apostrophes** are punctuation marks used to show possession and to show contraction (also known as omission).

**Articles** are words which tell us whether a noun is general (any noun) or specific. There are three articles: 'the' is a **definite article** and 'a' and 'an' are **indefinite articles**.

**Clauses** are the building blocks of sentences, groups of words that contain a subject and a verb. Clauses can be main or subordinate.

A **common noun** describes a class of objects (car, friend, dog); unlike proper nouns it does not have a capital letter (Honda, Jenny, Smudge).

The **comparative** form of an adjective or adverb is used to compare one person, thing, action or state to another. Examples of comparatives: sadder, lighter, more famous, worse, more angrily. The comparative is usually formed by adding the **suffix** -er.

A **complex sentence** is formed when you join a main clause and a subordinate clause with a connective.

A **compound sentence** is formed by joining two main clauses with a connective.

A **concrete noun** is something you can touch, such as a person, an animal, a place or a thing. Concrete nouns can be common nouns (man, city, film) or proper nouns (Mr Edwards, London, Gone with the Wind).

A **conjunction** is a type of **connective** ('connective' is an umbrella term for any word that connects bits of text). Co-ordinating connectives include the words and, but and so; subordinating connectives include the words because, if and until.

A **connective** is a word that joins one part of a text to another. Connectives can be **conjunctions**, **prepositions** or **adverbs**.

**Contracted words** are short words made by putting two words together. Letters are missed out in the contraction and replaced by an apostrophe, for example I'm (I am) or it's (it is).

A **determiner** is a word that introduces a **noun** and identifies it in detail. Determiners can be **articles** (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that), possessives (your, his), quantifiers (some, many), numbers (six, sixty).

**Direct speech** is a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in speech marks (quotation marks or inverted commas). **Indirect speech** or reported speech is when the general points of what someone has said are reported, without actually writing the speech out in full.

An **embedded clause** is a **clause used in the middle of another clause**. It is usually marked by commas.

**Fronted adverbials** are words or phrases at the beginning of a sentence, used like **adverbs** to describe the action that follows.

**Homophones** are words that sound the same but have different meanings. Some homophones are pronounced the same way and spelled the same way but have different meanings; others are pronounced the same way but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

A **modal verb** is a special type of verb which changes or affects other verbs in a sentence. Modal verbs are used to show the level of possibility, indicate ability, show obligation or give permission.

A **multi-clause sentence** is another term for a complex sentence.

A **noun** is a naming word. It is a thing, a person, an animal or a place. Nouns can be common, proper, abstract or collective.

A phrase is a small group of words that does not contain a verb. A **noun phrase** includes one noun as well as words that describe it, for example: the red shoe.

The **object** of a sentence is the thing or person that is involved in an action, but does not carry it out ("The cat chased **the mouse**").

A sentence is written in **passive voice** when the **subject** of the sentence has something done to it by someone or something. For example: "The mouse was being chased by the cat."

The **past continuous** is the **verb tense** we use to describe actions that continued for a period of time in the past (I was walking / I was singing).

The **past perfect** is the **verb tense** we use to describe actions that were completed by a particular time in the past.

A **personal pronoun** is a word which can be used instead of a person, place or thing: I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, him, her, us and them.

A **phrase** is a small group of words that does not contain a **verb**.

**Possessive pronouns** are used to show ownership. Some can be used on their own (mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, whose); others must be used with a noun (my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose).

A **prefix** is a string of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word, changing its meaning.

**Prepositions** are linking words in a sentence. We use prepositions to explain where things are in time or space.

A phrase is a small group of words that does not contain a verb. **Prepositional phrases** contain a preposition, for example: on the mat, in the morning, under the chair, during the film.

The **present continuous** is the **verb tense** we use to describe actions that continue for a period of time (I am walking / I am singing).

The **present perfect** is the **verb tense** we use to describe actions that are completed by the present.

A **pronoun** is a word used to replace a noun. Examples of pronouns are: he, she, it, they. Pronouns can be personal and possessive.

A **proper noun** identifies a particular person, place, or thing (for example, James or Brazil or Monday or Glasgow). Proper nouns always start with a capital letter.

A **relative clause** is a type of **subordinate clause that adapts, describes or modifies a noun by using a relative pronoun** (who, that or which).

A **root word** is a basic word with no prefix or suffix added to it. By adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word we can change its meaning.

A **sentence** is one word or a group of words that makes sense by itself (a grammatical unit). Sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation point. Sentences usually contain a subject (doing something) and a verb (what is being done).

A **simple sentence** has a subject and one verb. A **compound sentence** is formed when you join two main clauses with a connective. A **complex sentence** is formed when you join a main clause and a subordinate clause with a connective.

The **subject** of a sentence is the thing or person who is carrying out the action described by the verb ("The cat chased the mouse.").

The **subjunctive** is a verb form used to express things that could or should happen, for example: If I *were* to go... / I demand that he *answer!*

A **subordinate clause** needs to be attached to a main clause because it cannot make sense on its own, although it contains a subject and a verb.

A **suffix** is a string of letters that go at the end of a word, changing or adding to its meaning. Suffixes can show if a word is a noun, an adjective, an adverb or a verb.

The **superlative** form of an adjective or adverb is used to compare one person, thing, action or state to all the others in its class. Examples of superlatives: saddest, lightest, most famous, worst, most angrily. The superlative is usually formed by adding the **suffix** -est.

**Time connectives** are words or phrases which tell the reader when something is happening. They can also be called temporal connectives.

A **verb** expresses a physical action, a mental action or a state of being. Powerful verbs are descriptive, rich words.

**Verb tenses** tell us the time when an action took place, in the past, the present or the future.