

LESSON 5

Identifying the Parts of Speech

Each word in a sentence performs a basic function or task. Words perform four basic tasks: they name, modify, express action or state of being, or connect. By the arrangement of words in a sentence and the task that each word performs within a sentence, you can understand a sentence's meaning. To illustrate how parts of speech work together, try to decipher the following nonsense sentence.

EXAMPLE

The borjavoy, shalinka, and bspito neely skittums maricketed in a drago.

What nonsense noun is the subject of the sentence? What adjectives modify the word *skittums*? Which nonsense verb expresses the action in the sentence?

If you substitute real words for the nonsense words but keep the same arrangement of words, you can identify the nouns, verb, and adjectives in the sentence.

EXAMPLE

The brown, gray, and black newborn kittens slept in a pile.

There are eight basic parts of speech. Each part of speech is defined in the following chart.

Part of Speech	Definition
noun	A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea.
pronoun	A pronoun is used in place of a noun.
verb	A verb expresses action or a state of being.
adjective	An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun. The most common adjectives are the articles <i>a</i> , <i>an</i> , and <i>the</i> .
adverb	An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.
preposition	A preposition shows the relationship between its object—a noun or a pronoun—and another word in a sentence. Common prepositions include <i>after</i> , <i>around</i> , <i>at</i> , <i>behind</i> , <i>beside</i> , <i>off</i> , <i>through</i> , <i>until</i> , <i>upon</i> , and <i>with</i> .
conjunction	A conjunction joins words or groups of words. Common conjunctions are <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>nor</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>so</i> , <i>yet</i> , <i>either . . . or</i> , and <i>not only . . . but also</i> .
interjection	An interjection is a word used to express emotion. Common interjections are <i>oh</i> , <i>ah</i> , <i>well</i> , <i>hey</i> , and <i>wow</i> .

EXAMPLES

noun	The students in the class made patchwork quilts for the exhibit .
pronoun	My brother wanted to have his friend stay over at our house.
verb	The spring snowstorm covered the daffodils and froze the cherry blossoms.
adjective	The children took small sips of the hot, sweet, frothy drink.
adverb	Alan carefully scored the pattern onto the glass and then tapped the glass gently to separate the piece from the sheet.
preposition	Up the tree and over the roof scurried the squirrels.
conjunction	Both Nathaniel and I are good athletes, but he is a better tennis player.
interjection	Oh no! I've lost my necklace!

EXERCISE 1

Identifying the Parts of Speech in Literature

Identify the part of speech of each underlined word in the following passage. Write your answers on the corresponding lines below.

¹Manuel walked on stage and ²the song ³started ⁴immediately. Glassy-eyed from the ⁵shock ⁶of being in front of so many people, Manuel moved ⁷his lips and ⁸swayed in a ⁹made-up dance step. He couldn't see his parents, ¹⁰but ¹¹he could see his brother Mario, who was a year younger, thumb-wrestling ¹²with a friend. Mario was wearing Manuel's favorite ¹³shirt; he would deal with Mario ¹⁴later. He ¹⁵saw some ¹⁶other kids get up and head ¹⁷for the drinking fountain, ¹⁸and a baby sitting in the middle of an aisle sucking ¹⁹her thumb and watching him ²⁰intently.

*from "La Bamba," page 112
Gary Soto*

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

EXERCISE 2

Understanding the Parts of Speech

Write a sentence using each word as the indicated part of speech.

EXAMPLES

tie (noun) His gaudy tie, printed with purple and orange flowers, captured everyone's attention.

tie (verb) We tie our running shoes with red laces for good luck.

1. us (pronoun)

2. balance (noun)

3. balance (verb)

4. then (adverb)

5. around (preposition)

6. around (adverb)

7. yes (interjection)

8. tidy (adjective)

9. for (conjunction)

10. for (preposition)

EXERCISE 3

Using the Parts of Speech in Your Writing

For a school newspaper, write a review of a movie or a novel you have recently seen or read. Be sure to include the setting, characters, and conflict, but don't give away the ending of the movie or novel. Include in your review at least three examples of each part of speech. Use your own sheet of paper for this exercise.