absolute clause
An absolute clause is an adverbial clause that either has a non-finite verb (as in [1] below) or no verb at all (as in [2] below) but has its own subject:

[1] The work having been finished, the gardener came to ask for payment.

active
Sentences and verb phrases with transitive verbs are either active or passive. The active is more commonly used. The passive involves differences in the structure of the verb phrase: the passive verb phrase has the addition of a form of the verb be, which is followed by an -ed participle:

active  loves  passive  is loved
will proclaim  will be proclaimed
is investigating  is being investigated

The passive sentence differs from the corresponding active sentence in that the active subject corresponds to the passive object:

active  The police (S) are investigating the crime (O).
passive  The crime (S) is being investigated.

If the active subject (here The police) is retained in the passive sentence it is put into a by-phrase:

The crime is being investigated by the police.

adjective
An adjective is a word that typically can modify a noun and usually can itself be modified by very; for example, (very) wise, (very) careful. Adjectives are called 'attributive' when they are used as pre-modifier in a noun phrase (a conscientious student). They are called 'predicative' when they are used as subject complement (She is conscientious) or object complement (I considered her conscientious). Adjectives that can be used both attributively and predicatively are 'central adjectives'.

adjective phrase
The main word in an adjective phrase is an adjective. Other constituents that often appear in the phrase are pre-modifiers (which come before the adjective) and post-modifiers (which come after the adjective):

quite (pre-mod.) hungry (adj.)
very (pre-mod.) happy (adj.) to see you (post-mod.)
adverb
An adverb is a word that is used chiefly as a modifier of an adjective (extremely in extremely pale), or a modifier of another adverb (very in very suddenly), or as an adverbial (frequently in I visit my family frequently).

adverb phrase
The main word in an adverb phrase is an adverb. Other constituents that often appear in the phrase are pre-modifiers (which come before the adverb) and post-modifiers (which come after the adverb):

quite (pre-mod.) neatly (adv.)
very (pre-mod.) luckily (adv.) for me (post-mod.)

adverbial
An adverbial is an optional element that is chiefly used to convey information about the circumstances of the situation depicted in the basic structure of the sentence. There may be more than one adverbial in a sentence:

Every year (A1) they rented a car for two weeks (A2) to tour some European country (A3).

In the above sentence, the adverbials convey information on frequency (A1), duration (A2), and purpose (A3).

We should distinguish the adverbial from the adverb. Like a noun, an adverb is a member of a word class.

An adverbial complement is an element that conveys the same information as some adverbials but is required by the verb:

I am now living in Manhattan.

The verb that most commonly requires an adverbial complement to complete the sentence is the verb be, as in ‘She is on the way to New Zealand’. An adverbial complement (aC) is also required by some transitive verbs to follow a direct object (dO). See Object:

I put my car (dO) in the garage (aC).

adverbial clause
An adverbial clause is a clause that functions as adverbial in sentence structure.

adverbial complement
An adverbial complement is an obligatory element in sentence structure. See Adverbial.

alternative question
An alternative question is a question that presents two or more choices and asks the hearer to choose one of them:

Do you want a biscuit or (do you want) a piece of cake?
antecedent
The antecedent of a pronoun is the unit that the pronoun refers to. The antecedent usually comes before the pronoun:

*The brakes were defective when I examined them.*

anticipatory it
The pronoun *it* is called ‘anticipatory it’ when the sentence is so structured that the pronoun takes the position of the subject and the subject is moved to the end:

*It is a pity that Sue is not here.* (Cf. ‘That Sue is not here is a pity.’)

*It’s good to see you.* (Cf. ‘To see you is good.’)

apposition
Apposition is a type of relation between two or more units:

*Peter, your youngest brother,* has just arrived.

Typically, the two units are identical in the kind of unit (here two noun phrases), in what they refer to (*Peter* and *your youngest brother* refer to the same person), and in having the same potential function, so that either can be omitted (*Peter has just arrived* and *Your youngest brother has just arrived* are both acceptable). See also Appositive clause.

appositive clause
An appositive clause is a type of clause that functions as a post-modifier in a noun phrase:

*the reason that I am here today*

The conjunction *that* does not function in the clause (cf. Relative clause). Since the clause is in apposition to the noun phrase, the two units correspond to a sentence structure in which they are linked by a form of the verb *be*:

*The reason is* that I am here today.

aspect
Aspect is the grammatical category in the verb phrase that refers to the way that the time of the situation is viewed by the speaker. There are two aspects: perfect and progressive. The perfect combines a form of auxiliary *have* with the -ed participle: *has shouted, had worked, may have said.* The progressive combines a form of auxiliary *be* with the -ing participle: *is shouting, was working, may be saying.*

auxiliary
Auxiliary (‘helping’) verbs typically come before the main verb (see in the following examples) in a verb phrase: *can see, has been seeing, should have been seen.* The auxiliaries are:

1. **modals:** e.g. *can, could, may, might, should, will, would*
2. **perfect auxiliary:** *have*
3. **progressive auxiliary**: *be*
4. **passive auxiliary**: *be*
5. **dummy operator**: *do*

**base form**
The base form of the verb is the form without any inflection. It is the entry word for a verb in dictionaries.

**basic sentence structure**
The seven basic sentence or clause structures are:

- **SV**: subject + verb
- **SVA**: subject + verb + adverbial (complement)
- **SVC**: subject + verb + (subject) complement
- **SVO**: subject + verb + (direct) object
- **SVOO**: subject + verb + (indirect) object + (direct) object
- **SVOA**: subject + verb + (direct) object + adverbial (complement)
- **SVOC**: subject + verb + (direct) object + (object) complement

See 1.13. One or more optional **adverbials** may be added to the basic structures.

**case**
Case is a distinction in nouns and pronouns that is related to their grammatical functions. Nouns have two cases: the common case (*child, children*) and the genitive case (*child's, children's*). The genitive noun phrase is generally equivalent to an *of*-phrase:

- the child's parents
- the parents of the child

In *the child's parents*, the genitive phrase is a dependent genitive: it functions like a **determiner**. When the phrase is not dependent on a following noun, it is an independent genitive:

The party is at Susan's.

**Personal pronouns** and the pronoun *who* have three cases: subjective (*e.g. I, we, who*), objective (*e.g. me, us, whom*), and genitive (*e.g. my, mine, our, ours, whose*). The two genitive forms of the personal pronouns have different functions: *My* is a possessive determiner in *my parents*, and *mine* is a possessive pronoun in *Those are mine*.

The distinctions in case are neutralised in some personal pronouns. For example, *you* may be either subjective or objective. See **Subjective case**.

**chiasmus** See **Parallelism**.

**clause**
A clause is a sentence or sentence-like construction that is contained within another sentence. Constructions that are sentence-like are non-finite clauses or verbless clauses. Non-finite clauses have a non-finite verb phrase as their verb, whereas verbless
clauses do not have a verb at all. They are like sentences because they have sentence elements such as subject and direct object.

We can parallel the non-finite clause in [1] with the finite clause in [1a]:

[1] Being just a student, I’d . . .
[1a] Since I’m just a student, I’d . . .

We can show similar parallels between the verbless clause in [2] and the finite clause in [2a]:

[2a] Though they were fearful of the road conditions, they . . .

In a wider sense, a clause may coincide with a sentence, since a simple sentence consists of just one clause.

cleft sentence
A cleft sentence is a sentence divided into three parts. The first has the subject *it* and a form of the verb *be*; the emphasised part comes next, and the final part is what would be the rest of the sentence in a regular pattern.

It was *Betty* that I wanted to see. (cf. ‘I wanted to see Betty.’)
It was *after lunch* that I phoned John. (cf. ‘I phoned John after lunch.’)

collective noun
A collective noun refers to a group, e.g. *audience, class, family, herd, jury*.

comma splice See Run-on sentence.

comparative clause
Comparative clauses are introduced by *than* or *as* and involve a comparison.

Adam is happier than he used to be.
Paul is as good a student as you are.

complement
A complement is the unit that may or must be introduced to complete the meaning of a word. For example, a preposition (e.g. *for*) is normally followed by a noun phrase (e.g. *my best friend*) as its complement, as in *for my best friend*. See Object, Object complement, Subject complement.

complex sentence
A complex sentence is a sentence that contains one or more subordinate clauses. The subordinate clause may function as a sentence element [1] or as a post-modifier in a phrase [2] and [3]:

[1] Jean told me that she would be late.
[2] This is the man who was asking for you.
[3] We are glad that you could be here.
compound
A compound is a word formed from the combination of two words: handmade, user-friendly.

compound sentence
A compound sentence is a sentence that consists of two or more clauses linked by a coordinator. The coordinators are and, or and but:

She is a superb administrator and everybody knows it.
We can go in my car or we can take a bus.
He felt quite ill but he refused to leave his post.

See 4.12.

conditional clause
A conditional clause is a clause that expresses a condition on which something else is dependent:

If they hurry, they can catch the earlier flight.

The sentence conveys the proposition that their ability to catch the earlier flight is dependent on their hurrying.

corner
The two classes of conjunctions are coordinators (or coordinating conjunctions) and subordinators (or subordinating conjunctions). The coordinators are and, or and but. They link units of equal status (those having a similar function), e.g. clauses, phrases, pre-modifiers. Subordinators (e.g. because, if) introduce subordinate clauses:

The baby is crying because she is hungry.

corner
Conversion is the process by which a word is changed from one class to a new class without any change in its form. For example, the verb bottle (‘put into a bottle’) is derived by conversion from the noun bottle.

coordination
Coordination is the linking of two or more units with the same function. The coordinators (or coordinating conjunctions) are and, or and but:

There is a heavy duty on cigarettes, cigars and pipe tobacco.
They pierced their ears or noses.
We waited, but nobody came.

corner
See Conjunction.

count noun
Count nouns refer to things that can be counted, and they therefore have a singular and a plural: college, colleges. Non-count nouns have only the singular form: information, software.
dangling modifier
A dangling modifier is an adverbial clause that has no subject, but its implied subject is not intended to be identified with the subject of the sentence:

*Being blind*, a dog guided her across the street.

The implied subject of *being blind* is not intended to be *a dog*.

declarative
A declarative sentence is a type of sentence structure used chiefly for making statements. In declaratives, the *subject* generally comes before the *verb*.

Sandra is on the radio.
I’m not joking.
I’ll send you an email.
Much more work will be required to analyse the data before we can announce our conclusions.

declarative question
A declarative question has the form of a declarative sentence but the force of a question:
She agrees with us?

definite
Noun phrases are definite when they are intended to convey enough information, in themselves or through the context, to identify uniquely what they refer to:

You’ll find the beer in the refrigerator.

A likely context for using the definite article here is that this beer has been mentioned previously and that it is obvious which refrigerator is being referred to. Noun phrases are indefinite when they are not intended to be so identifiable:

You’ll find a beer in the refrigerator.

definite article
The definite article is *the*. Contrast indefinite article.

demonstrative
The demonstrative pronouns are *this, these, that, those*. The same forms are demonstrative determiners.

dependent genitive See Case.

descriptive rules See Grammar.

determiner
Determiners introduce noun phrases. They fall into several classes: the definite and indefinite articles, demonstratives, possessives, interrogatives, relatives, indefinites.
**directive**
The major use of imperative sentences is to issue directives, that is, requests for action. Directives include a simple request [1], a command [2], a prohibition [3], a warning [4] and an offer [5]:

[1] Please send me another copy.
[2] Put your hands up!
[3] Don’t move!
[4] Look out!

You can convey a directive through sentence types other than imperatives:

I want you to send me another copy, please.
Would you please send me another copy?
I need another copy.

**direct object** See **Object**.

**direct speech**
Direct speech quotes the actual words that somebody has said. Indirect speech reports what has been said but not in the actual words used by the speaker:

[1] Judith asked me, ‘Have you any friends?’ (direct speech)
[2] Judith asked me whether I had any friends. (indirect speech)

In both [1] and [2], *Judith asked me* is the reporting clause.

**discourse particle**
The term ‘discourse particle’ is applied to items such as *I mean*, *you know*, *you see* and *well*. Discourse particles are very common in speech, where they perform a range of functions, including signalling a change of topic.

**dummy operator**
The dummy operator is the verb *do*. It is used to perform the functions of an operator when an operator is otherwise absent:

*Does (op)* Paul know?

The three verb forms are *do* and *does* for the present tense and *did* for the past tense.

**dynamic** See **Stative**.

**element**
A sentence or clause element is a constituent of sentence or clause structure. Seven elements combine to form the **basic sentence structure**:

subject S
verb V
object O direct object dO
indirect object iO

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complement  C  subject complement  sC
object complement  oC
adverbial complement  aC

In addition, the adverbial (A) is an optional element.

**end-focus**
The principle of end-focus requires that the most important information come at the end of a sentence or clause.

**end-weight**
The principle of end-weight requires that a longer unit come after a shorter unit whenever there is a choice of relative positions.

**exclamative**
An exclamative sentence is a type of sentence structure used chiefly to express strong feeling. Exclamatives begin with *what* or *how*. *What* is used with a noun phrase and *how* elsewhere:

> What a great time we had! (‘We had a great time.’)
> How well she plays! (‘She plays well.’)

**finite**
Finite is a term used in contrast with non-finite in the classification of verbs, verb phrases, and clauses. A finite verb allows contrasts in **tense** and **mood**. All verb forms are finite except **infinitives** and **participles**. A verb phrase is finite if the first or only verb is finite; all the other verbs are non-finite. A finite clause is a clause whose verb is a finite verb phrase:

[1] Marian *has been working* hard.

A finite clause can constitute an independent sentence, as in [1]. Contrast the non-finite clause in *to work hard* in [2]:

[2] Daniel was reluctant *to work hard*.

**foregrounding**
Foregrounding refers to the features that stand out in language, especially in literary language.

**formal definition**
A formal definition defines a grammatical term, such as adverb, by the form of members of the category. For example, most adverbs end in *-ly*. In a wider sense, form includes **structure**. The form or structure of a noun phrase may be described as consisting of a noun or pronoun as the main word plus other possible constituents, such as determiners and modifiers. See **Structure**. Formal definitions are contrasted with **notional definitions**.

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GLOSSARY
fragmentary sentence
Fragmentary sentences are irregular sentences from which some part or parts are missing that are normally present in corresponding regular sentences. We can ‘regularise’ the fragmentary sentence in the kitchen in this exchange:

A: Where are you?
B: In the kitchen.

In the kitchen corresponds to the regular sentence I am in the kitchen.

front-focus
Front-focus is a device for fronting an expression from its normal position so that it will acquire greater prominence:

Ronald I like, but Doris I respect.

Here the two direct objects have been fronted from their normal position after the verb.

function
The function of a unit refers to its use within another unit. For example, the function of your sister is subject in [1] and object in [2]:

[1] Your sister is over there.
[2] I have already met your sister.

gender
Gender is a grammatical distinction among words of the same word class that refers to contrasts such as masculine, feminine, neuter. In English this distinction is found mainly in certain pronouns and in the possessive determiners.

generic
Noun phrases are generic when they refer to a class as a whole:

Dogs make good pets.

They are non-generic when they refer to individual members of a class:

My dogs are good with children.

genitive case See Case.

gradable
Words are gradable when they can be viewed as being on a scale of degree of intensity. Adjectives and adverbs are typically gradable: they can be modified by intensifiers such as very (extremely hot, very badly), and they can take comparison (happier, more relevant).

grammar
Grammar is the set of rules for combining words into larger units. For example, the rules for the grammar of standard English allow:

Home computers are now much cheaper.
They disallow:

[1] Home computers now *much* are cheaper.
[2] Home computers *is* now much cheaper.

They disallow [1] because *much* is positioned wrongly. They disallow [2] because the subject and the verb must agree in number, and the subject *Home computers* is plural whereas the verb *is* is singular.

Such rules are descriptive rules: they describe what speakers of the language actually use. There are also prescriptive rules, which advise people what they *should* use. These are found in style manuals, handbooks and other books that advise people how to use their language, telling people which usages to adopt or avoid. The prescriptive rules refer to usages that are common among speakers of standard English, perhaps mainly when they are speaking informally, for example:

Don’t use *like* as a conjunction, as in *Speak like I do*.

**grammatical sentence**
A grammatical sentence in English is a sentence that conforms to the rules of the grammar of *standard English*. In a wider sense, grammatical sentences are sentences that conform to the rules of any variety, so that it is possible to distinguish between grammatical and non-grammatical sentences in different varieties of non-standard English.

**homograph** See *Homonym*.

**homonym**
Homonyms are two or more words that are identical in sound or spelling but different in meaning: the verb *peep* refers either to making a kind of sound or to taking a kind of look. Homophones share the same sound but not necessarily the same spelling, e.g. *weigh* and *way*. Homographs share the same spelling but not necessarily the same sound, e.g. *row* (‘line of objects’ when it rhymes with *no*, or ‘quarrel’ when it rhymes with *now*).

**homophone** See *Homonym*.

**hypotaxis**
Hypotaxis refers to the grammatical relationship between clauses based on coordination or subordination. Compare: *Parataxis*.

**imperative**
An imperative sentence is a type of sentence structure used chiefly for issuing a directive. The imperative verb has the base form. The subject is generally absent, and in that case the missing subject is understood to be *you*:

Take off your hat.
Make yourself at home.

There are also first and third person imperative sentences with *let* and a subject:

Let’s go now.
Let no one move.
indefinite article
The indefinite article is a or (before a vowel sound) an. Compare: Definite article.

indefinite pronoun
Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that refer to the quantity of persons or things. They include sets of words ending in -one and -body (someone, nobody, everybody), many, few, both, either, neither, some, any. Some of these pronouns have the same form as indefinite determiners.

independent genitive See Case.

indicative See Mood.

indirect object See Object.

indirect speech See Direct speech.

infinitive
The infinitive has the base form of the verb. It is often preceded by to (to stay, to knock), but the infinitive without to is used after the central modals (may stay, will knock) and after dummy operator do (did say).

inflection See Suffix.

interrogative
An interrogative sentence is a type of sentence structure used chiefly for asking questions. In interrogatives the operator comes before the subject or the sentence begins with an interrogative word (e.g. who, how, why) or with an interrogative expression (e.g. on which day, for how long):

Did you hear that noise?
Why is Pat so annoyed?
At which point should I stop?

interrogative pronoun
The interrogative pronouns are who, whom, which and what.

intransitive verb
An intransitive verb does not require another element to complete the sentence:

Peter yawned.
The baby laughed.
It has been raining.

Intransitive verbs contrast with transitive verbs, which take an object; for example, the transitive verb take is followed by the object my book in this next sentence:

Somebody has taken my book.

Many verbs may be either intransitive or transitive, for example play:

They were playing.
They were playing football.
irregular sentence See Regular sentence.

linking verb See Subject complement.

main clause

A simple sentence [1] or a complex sentence [2] consists of one main clause:

[1] You should be more careful.
[2] You should be more careful when you cross the street.

A compound sentence [3] consists of two or more main clauses:

[3] I know that you are in a hurry, but you should be more careful when you cross the street.

In [3], but joins the two main clauses.

main verb

A main verb is the main word in a verb phrase. Regular main verbs have four forms: the base, -s, -ing and -ed forms. The base form (e.g. talk) has no inflection; the other three forms are named after their inflections (talks, talking, talked). Some irregular verbs have five forms, two of them corresponding to the two uses of the regular -ed form: past (spoke) and -ed participle (spoken); others have four forms, but the -ed form is irregular (spent); others still have only three forms, since the base and the -ed forms are identical (put). The highly irregular verb be has eight different forms. See 2.11 and 3.12.

medium

The medium is the channel in which the language is used. The main distinction is between speech and writing.

modal

The central modals (or central modal auxiliaries) are can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must.

mood

Mood is the grammatical category that indicates the attitude of the speaker to what is said. Finite verb phrases have three moods: indicative, imperative and subjunctive. The indicative is the usual mood in declarative, interrogative and exclamative sentences. The imperative mood is used in imperative sentences. The subjunctive mood commonly conveys uncertainty or tentativeness. See 3.19.

morphology

Morphology deals with the structure of words. Words may be combinations of smaller units. For example, books consists of the stem book and the inflection -s. Sometimes is a compound formed from the two stems some and times. Review consists of the prefix re- and the stem view, and national consists of the stem nation and the suffix -al.
multiple sentence See Simple sentence.

multi-word verb
Multi-word verbs are combinations of a verb and one or more other words. The major types are phrasal verbs (give in), prepositional verbs (look at), and phrasal-prepositional verbs (put up with).

neutralisation
Neutralisation involves reducing distinctions to one form. For example, you represents both the subjective form (You saw them) and the objective form (They saw you).

nominal clause
Nominal clauses are subordinate clauses that have a range of functions similar to that of noun phrases. For example, they can function as subject [1] or direct object [2]:

[1] That it’s too difficult for him should be obvious to everyone.
[2] I think that you should take a rest now.

Nominal relative clauses are introduced by a nominal relative pronoun. The pronoun functions like a combination of antecedent and relative pronoun:

You can take whatever you want. (’anything you want’)

nominal relative clause See Nominal clause.

nominal relative pronoun
The nominal relative pronouns are who, whom (formal), which, whoever, whomever (formal), whichever, what and whatever. They introduce nominal relative clauses. Several of these pronouns have the same form as nominal relative determiners.

non-count noun See Count noun.

non-finite See Finite.

non-generic See Generic.

non-restrictive apposition See Restrictive apposition.

non-restrictive relative clause. See Restrictive relative clause.

non-sentence
A non-sentence may be perfectly normal even though it cannot be analysed as a sentence. For example, the greeting Hello! is a non-sentence grammatically, and so is the written sign Exit.

non-specific See Specific.

non-standard English See Standard English.

notional definition
A notional definition defines a grammatical term, such as a noun, by the meaning that members of the category are said to convey. For example, a traditional notional
definition of a noun is ‘the name of a person, thing or place’. Notional definitions can help to identify a category such as a noun by indicating typical members of the category, but the definitions are usually not comprehensive. Nouns include words such as happiness, information and action that are not covered by the traditional notional definition. Notional definitions are contrasted with formal definitions.

noun
Proper nouns are names of people (Helen), places (Hong Kong), days of the week (Monday), holidays (Christmas), etc. The noun phrases in which common nouns function refer to people (teachers), places (the city), things (your car), qualities (elegance), states (knowledge), actions (action), etc. Most common nouns take a plural form: car, cars.

noun phrase
The main word in a noun phrase is a noun or a pronoun. If the main word is a noun, it is often introduced by a determiner and may have modifiers. Pre-modifiers are modifiers that come before the main word and post-modifiers are modifiers that come after it:

an (det.) old (pre-mod.) quarrel (noun) that has recently flared up again (post-mod.)

number
Number is a grammatical category that contrasts singular and plural. It applies to nouns (student, students), pronouns (she, they) and verbs (he works, they work).

object
Transitive verbs require a direct object to complete the sentence as in [1]:

[1] Helen wore a red dress (dO).

Some transitive verbs allow or require a second element: indirect object, which comes before the direct object [2]; object complement [3]; adverbial complement [4].

[2] Nancy showed me (iO) her book (dO).
[3] Pauline made him (dO) her understudy (oC).
[4] Norma put the cat (dO) in the yard (aC).

The direct object typically refers to the person or thing affected by the action. The indirect object typically refers to the person who receives something or benefits from the action. The object in an active structure (whether the object is direct or indirect) usually corresponds to the subject in a passive structure:

The sentry fired two shots (dO).
Two shots (S) were fired.
Ted promised Mary (iO) two tickets (dO).
Mary (S) was promised two tickets.
Two tickets (S) were promised to Mary.
object complement
Some transitive verbs require or allow an object complement to follow the direct object:
The heat has turned the milk (dO) sour (oC).
The relationship between the direct object and the object complement resembles that between the subject and subject complement:
The milk (S) turned sour (sC).
See Object.

objective case See Subjective case.

operator
The operator is the part of the predicate that (among other functions) interchanges with the subject when we form questions [1] and comes before not or contracted n’t in negative sentences [2] and [3]:

[1] Have (op) you (S) seen my pen?
[2] I have (op) not replied to her letter.
[3] I haven’t replied to her letter.
The operator is usually the first auxiliary in the verb phrase, but the main verb be is the operator when it is the only verb in the verb phrase, as in [4], while the main verb have may serve as operator, as in [5], or take the dummy operator, as in [6]:

[4] Are you ready?
[5] Have you a car?
[6] Do you have a car?

orthographic sentence
An orthographic sentence is a sentence in the written language, signalled by an initial capital letter and a final full-stop (period), question mark or exclamation mark.

orthography
Orthography is the writing system in the language: the distinctive written symbols and their possible combinations.

parallelism
Parallelism is an arrangement of similar grammatical structures. In parallel structures at least some of the words have similar or contrasting meanings:
It was too hot to eat; it was too hot to swim; it was too hot to sleep.
They tended the wounded and they comforted the dying.
The more you talk, the madder I get.

Chiasmus is a form of parallelism in which the order of parts of the structures is reversed:
I respect Susan, but Joan I admire.
parataxis
Parataxis refers to the loose ‘stringing together’ of (usually) clauses, without any grammatical relation between them: *It was midnight. It was dark. The door opened.* Compare: **Hypotaxis.**

particle
A particle is a word that does not change its form (unlike verbs that have past forms or nouns that have plural forms) and, because of its specialised functions, does not fit into the traditional classes of words. Particles include *not, to* as used with the infinitive, and words like *up* and *out* that combine with verbs to form **multi-word verbs**, for example, *blow up* and *look out.*

participle
There are two participles, the *-ing* participle (*playing*) and the *-ed* participle. The *-ing* participle always ends in *-ing*. In all regular verbs and in some irregular verbs, the *-ed* participle ends in *-ed*. In other irregular verbs the *-ed* participle may end in *-n* (*speak – spoken*), or may have a different vowel from the base form (*fight – fought*), or may have both characteristics (*wear – worn*), or may be identical with the base form (*put – put*).

Speaking before the game, Keegan was upbeat and optimistic.

When captured, he refused to give his name.

See **Aspect, Active, Finite.**

passive See **Active.**

perfect See **Aspect.**

person
Person is the grammatical category that indicates differences in the relationship to the speaker of those involved in the situation. There are three persons: the first person refers to the speaker, the second to those addressed, and the third to other people or things. Differences are signalled by the **possessive determiners** (*my, your*, etc.), some pronouns (*e.g. I, you*), and by verb forms (*e.g. I know versus She knows*).

personal pronoun
The personal pronouns are:

1. subjective case: *I, we, you, he, she, it, they*
2. objective case: *me, us, you, him, her, it, them*

See **Subjective case.**

phonetics
Phonetics deals with the physical characteristics of the sounds in the language, their production and their perception.
phonology
Phonology is the sound system in the language: the distinctive sound units and the ways in which they may be combined.

phrasal-prepositional verb See Multi-word verb.

phrasal verb See Multi-word verb.

phrase
A phrase is a unit below the clause. There are five types of phrases:

- **noun phrase**  
  *our family*

- **verb phrase**  
  *was talking*

- **adjective phrase**  
  *quite old*

- **adverb phrase**  
  *very loudly*

- **prepositional phrase**  
  *on the table*

The first four phrases above are named after their main word. The prepositional phrase is named after the word that introduces the phrase. In this book, and in many other works on grammar, a phrase may consist of one word, so that both *talked* and *was talking* are verb phrases. See 3.1.

possessive determiner
The possessive determiners are *my, our, your, his, her, its, their*. See Case.

possessive pronoun
The possessive pronouns are *mine, ours, yours, his, hers, its, theirs*. See Case.

pragmatics
Pragmatics deals with the use of utterances in particular situations. For example, *Will you join our group?* is a question that might be intended as either a request for information or a request for action.

predicate
We can divide most **clauses** into two parts; the **subject** and the predicate. The main parts of the predicate are the verb and any of its objects or complements.

prefix
A prefix is added before the stem of a word to form a new word, e.g. *un-* in *untidy*.

preposition
Prepositions introduce **prepositional phrases**. The preposition links the complement in the phrase to some other expression. Here are some common prepositions with complements in parentheses: *after (lunch), by (telling me), for (us), in (my room), since (seeing them), to (Ruth), up (the road).*

prepositional object
A prepositional object is a word or phrase that follows the preposition of a prepositional verb:
Tom is looking after *my children*.
Norma is making fun of *you*.

**prepositional phrase**
The prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and the complement of the preposition:

for (prep.) your sake (comp.)
on (prep.) entering the room (comp.)

**prepositional verb** See *Multi-word verb*.

**prescriptive rules** See *Grammar*.

**progressive** See *Aspect*.

**pronoun**
A pronoun is a closed class of words that are used as substitutes for a noun phrase or (less commonly) for a noun. They fall into a number of classes, such as personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. See 2.24.

**reciprocal pronoun**
The reciprocal pronouns are *each other* and *one another*.

**reflexive pronoun**
The reflexive pronouns are *myself*, *ourselves*, *yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves*.

**register**
A linguistic register is a variety of language that we associate with a specific use and communicative purpose. For example, conversational English, newspaper English and scientific English are commonly recognised registers.

**regular sentence**
A regular sentence conforms to one of the major sentence patterns in the language (see 1.13). Those that do not conform are irregular sentences. See *Basic sentence structure*.

**relative clause**
A relative clause functions as a post-modifier in a noun phrase:

the persons *who advised me*

The relative word or expression (here *who*) functions as an element in the clause (here as the subject; cf. *They advised me*).

**relative pronoun**
Relative pronouns introduce *relative clauses*. The relative pronouns are *who*, *whom* (formal), *which* and *that*. The relative pronoun is omitted in certain circumstances: *the apartment (that) I live in*. The omitted pronoun is known as a zero relative pronoun. *Which* and *whose* are relative determiners.
GLOSSARY

reporting clause See Direct speech.

restrictive apposition
Apposition may be restrictive or non-restrictive. A restrictive appositive identifies:
the fact that they have two cars
my sister Joan

A non-restrictive appositive adds further information:
the latest news, that negotiations are to begin next Monday . . .
my eldest sister, Joan . . .

See Restrictive relative clause.

restrictive relative clause
Relative clauses may be either restrictive or non-restrictive. A restrictive relative clause
identifies more closely the noun it modifies:
The boy who got the top grade was given a prize.

A non-restrictive relative clause does not identify. It adds further information:
The boy, who got the top grade, was given a prize.

rhetorical question
A rhetorical question has the form of a question but the force of a strong assertion.
How many times have I told you to wipe your feet? (‘I have told you very many times
to wipe your feet.’)

run-on sentence
A run-on sentence is an error in punctuation arising from the failure to use any punc-
tuation mark between sentences. If a comma is used instead of a major mark, the
error is a comma splice. See 8.3.

semantics
Semantics is the system of meanings in the language: the meanings of words and the
combinatory meanings of larger units.

semi-auxiliary
The semi-auxiliaries convey meanings that are similar to the auxiliaries but do not
share all their grammatical characteristics. For example, only the first word of the
semi-auxiliary have got to functions as an operator:
Have we got to go now?

Semi-auxiliaries include have to, had better, be about to, be going to, be able to.

sentence fragment
A sentence fragment is a series of words that is punctuated as a sentence even though
it is not grammatically an independent sentence:
You’re late again. As usual.
simple sentence
A simple sentence is a sentence that consists of one clause:
I'm just a student.

A multiple sentence consists of more than one clause:
I'm just a student, and I’ve not had much work experience.
Since I’m just a student, I’ve not had much work experience.

See Complex sentence and Compound sentence.

specific
Noun phrases are specific when they refer to specific persons, places, things, etc.:
I hired a horse and a guide.

They are non-specific when they do not have such reference:
I have never met a Russian. (non-specific: ‘any Russian’)

standard English
Standard English is the variety of English that normally appears in print. Its relative uniformity is confined to grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. There is no standard English pronunciation. There are some differences in the standard English used in English-speaking countries, so that we can distinguish, for example, between standard English in Britain, in the USA and in Canada. Varieties other than the standard variety are called non-standard.

stative
Stative verbs introduce a quality attributed to the subject (Tom seems bored) or a state of affairs (We know the way). Dynamic verbs are used in descriptions of events (The kettle is boiling; Cathy listened intently). Dynamic verbs can occur with the -ing form, as in is boiling, has been listening.

structure
The structure of a unit refers to the parts that make up the unit. For example, a sentence may have the structure subject, verb, object, as in:
David (S) has written (V) a good paper (O).

Or a noun phrase may have the structure determiner, pre-modifier, noun, as in:
a (det) good (pre-mod.) paper (noun)

subject
The subject is an element that usually comes before the verb in a declarative sentence [1] and after the operator in an interrogative sentence [2]:

[1] We (S) should consider (V) the rights of every class.
[2] Should (op) we (S) consider the rights of every class?
Except in imperative sentences, the subject is an obligatory element. In active structures, the subject typically refers to the performer of the action.

**subject complement**
Linking verbs require a subject complement to complete the sentence. The most common linking verb is be. Subject complements are usually noun phrases [1] or adjective phrases [2]:

[1] Leonard is Mary’s brother.

The subject complement typically identifies or characterises the subject.

**subjective case**
The personal pronouns and the pronouns who and whoever distinguish between subjective case and objective case. The subjective case is used when a pronoun is the subject (I in I know). The objective case is used when a pronoun is a direct object (me in He pushed me) or indirect object (me in She told me the truth) or complement of a preposition (for me). The subject complement takes the subjective case in formal style (This is she), but otherwise the objective case (This is her) is usual.

**subject–operator inversion**
In subject–operator inversion, the usual order is inverted: the operator comes before the subject:

[1] Are (op) you (S) staying?

Subject–operator inversion occurs chiefly in questions, as in [1]. It also occurs when a negative element is fronted, as in [2]:

[2] Not a word did we hear.

Compare [2a] and [2b]:

[2a] We did not hear a word.
[2b] We heard not a word.

**subject–verb agreement**
The general rule is that a verb agrees with its subject in number and person whenever the verb displays distinctions in number and person:

The dog barks. I am thirsty.
The dogs bark. She is thirsty.

**subjunctive**
The present subjunctive is formed using the base form of the verb:
I demanded that Norman leave the meeting.
It is essential that you be on time.
The *were* subjunctive is formed using the verb *were*.

If Tess *were* here, she would help me.

See 3.19.

**subordinate clause** See *Complex sentence*.

**subordinator** See *Conjunction*.

**suffix**
A suffix is added after the stem of a word to form a new word, e.g. *-ness* in *goodness*. A suffix that expresses a grammatical relationship is an inflection, e.g. plural *-s* in *crowds* or past *-ed* in *cooked*.

**superordinate clause**
A superordinate clause is a clause that has a subordinate clause as one of its elements:

I hear (A) *that you know (B) where Ken lives*.

The (A) clause *that you know where Ken lives* is superordinate to the (B) clause *where Ken lives*. The subordinate (B) clause is the direct object in the (A) clause.

**syntax**
This is another term for *Grammar*, as that term is used in this book.

**tag question**
A tag question is attached to a sentence that is not interrogative. It invites agreement:

You remember me, *don’t you*?

Please don’t tell them, *will you*?

**tense**
Tense is the grammatical category that refers to time and is signalled by the form of the verb. There are two tenses: present (*laugh, laughs*) and past (*laughed*).

**there-structure**
In a *there*-structure, *there* is put in the subject position and the subject is moved to a later position:

There is somebody here to see you. (cf. ‘Somebody is here to see you.’)

**transitive verb** See *Object*.

**verb**
A verb is either (like a noun) a member of a word class or (like a subject) an element in sentence or clause structure. As a verb, it functions in a *verb phrase*. The verb phrase *may be playing* is the verb of the sentence in [1]:

[1] She *may be playing* tennis this afternoon.

It is the verb of the *that*-clause in [2]:

GLOSSARY
She says that she may be playing tennis this afternoon.

See **Main verb**.

**verbless clause**
A verbless clause is a reduced clause that does not have a verb:

Send me another one *if possible*. (‘if it is possible’)

*Though in pain, Joan came with us.* (‘Though she was in pain’)

**verb phrase**
A verb phrase consists of a **main** verb preceded optionally by a maximum of four **auxiliaries**.

**voice**
Voice is a grammatical category that applies to the structure of the sentence and to the structure of the verb phrase. There are two voices: the active voice and the passive voice. See **Active**.

**wh-question**
A *wh*-question is a question beginning with an interrogative word or with a phrase containing an interrogative word. All interrogative words except *how* begin with the spelling *wh*: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*.

**yes–no question**
A *yes–no* question is a question that expects the answer *yes* or *no*. *Yes–no* questions require **subject-operator inversion**:  

*Can (op) I (S) have a word with you?*

**zero relative pronoun** See **Relative pronoun**.

[2] She says that she *may be playing* tennis this afternoon.
Further Reading

Grammars

Introductory textbooks

Reference grammars

Usage, spelling and punctuation guides
FURTHER READING


**General books on the English language**

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