

**Parts of Speech**

Traditional grammar recognizes eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

Many words can function as more than one part of speech. For example, depending on its use in a sentence, the word *paint* can be

* a noun (The *paint* is wet.)
* a verb (Please *paint* the ceiling next.)

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**Nouns**: A noun (N) is the name of a person, place, thing, or concept.

 N N N

The *lion* in the *cage* growled at the *zookeeper*.

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**Pronouns**: A pronoun (P) is a word used in place of a noun. Usually, the pronoun substitutes for a specific noun, known as its antecedent (ANT).

 P

*You* know the answer.

ANT P

 When the *battery* wears down, we recharge *it*.

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**Verbs**: A verb is a word used to express action (jump, think) or being (is, become). It is composed of a main verb (MV) preceded by one or more helping verbs (HV).

 MV

The horses *exercise* every day.

 HV MV

The task force report *was* not *completed* on schedule.

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**Adjectives**: An adjective (ADJ) is a word used to modify or describe a noun or pronoun. An adjective usually answers one of these questions: Which one? What kind? How many?

 ADJ

The decision was *unpopular*.

 ADJ ADJ ADJ

I ordered the *special deep-dish, Chicago-style* pizza.



**Parts of Speech**

**Adverbs**: An adverb (ADV) is a word used to modify or qualify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. It usually answers one of these questions: When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?

 ADV

Pull *firmly* on the emergency handle.

 ADV

They use the truck *occasionally*.

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**Prepositions**: A preposition (PREP) is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase that modifies another word in the sentence. The prepositional phrase nearly always functions as an adjective or as an adverb.

 PREP PREP PREP

The road *to* the summit travels *past* craters *from* an extinct volcano.

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**Conjunctions**: Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses, and they indicate the relation between the elements joined.

* Coordinating conjunctions (CC) and correlative conjunctions link words, phrases, or clauses of equal importance: *and, but, or, not, both . . . and, not only . . . but*

 CC CC

*Both* biofeedback *and* relaxation can relieve headaches.

* Subordinating conjunctions (SC) introduce subordinate clauses and indicate the relation of the clause to the rest of the sentence: *after, although, because, before, though, unless, until, where, whether, while*

 SC

*Even though* the parents are illiterate, their children may read well.

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**Interjections**: An interjection is a word or group of words used to express surprise or strong emotion.

* When it stands alone, punctuate an interjection with an exclamation point: *Hooray!*
* As part of a sentence, set off an interjection with a comma or commas: *Hooray, you got the promotion*.

Use interjections sparingly (if at all) in academic writing.

The information for this handout was compiled from the following sources:

Fowler, H. R., & Aaron, J. E. (2010). *The little brown handbook* (11th ed.). New York, NY: Longman.

Hacker, D., & Sommers, N. (2012). *Rules for writers* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Troyka, L. Q., & Hesse, D. (2007). *Quick access: Reference for writers* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.