The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation
A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations
Kate L. Turabian

Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers
Kate L. Turabian

Writing for Social Scientists
Howard S. Becker

The Craft of Translation
John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte, editors

The Craft of Research
Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams

From Dissertation to Book
William Germano

Getting It Published
William Germano

From Notes to Narrative
Kristen Ghodsee

Writing Science in Plain English
Anne E. Greene

Storycraft
Jack Hart

How to Write a BA Thesis
Charles Lipson

Developmental Editing
Scott Norton

The Subversive Copy Editor
Carol Fisher Saller

Legal Writing in Plain English
Bryan A. Garner
To Karolyne
Other Books Written or Edited by Bryan A. Garner

Garner’s Modern English Usage (Oxford Univ. Press, 2016)

“Grammar and Usage,” chap. 5 in The Chicago Manual of Style
   (Univ. of Chicago Press, 16th ed. 2010)


Quack This Way: David Foster Wallace and Bryan A. Garner Talk Language and Writing
   (RosePen, 2013)

Black’s Law Dictionary (Thomson Reuters, 10th ed. 2014)


Guidelines for Drafting and Editing Legislation (RosePen, 2016)

Reading Law: The Interpretation of Legal Texts, with Justice Antonin Scalia
   (Thomson/West, 2012)

Making Your Case: The Art of Persuading Judges, with Justice Antonin Scalia
   (Thomson/West, 2008)

The Winning Brief (Oxford Univ. Press, 3rd ed. 2014)


Garner on Language and Writing, with preface by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (ABA, 2009)

Legal Writing in Plain English (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2nd ed. 2013)

The Elements of Legal Style, with preface by Charles Alan Wright
   (Oxford Univ. Press, 2nd ed. 2002)

The Winning Oral Argument (West, 2009)

Ethical Communications for Lawyers (LawProse, 2009)

Securities Disclosure in Plain English (CCH, 1999)

The Rules of Golf in Plain English, with Jeffrey Kuhn (Univ. of Chicago Press, 4th ed. 2016)

A New Miscellany-at-Law, by Sir Robert Megarry (Hart, 2005)

Texas, Our Texas: Remembrances of the University (Eakin Press, 1984)

Basic Law Terms (West Group, 1999)

Criminal Law Terms (West Group, 2000)

Family Law Terms (West Group, 2001)

Business Law Terms (West Group, 1999)
Grammar is the cradle of all philosophy.
John of Salisbury (ca. 1120–80)

English is not a subject. *English is everything.* For us who speak English, English is everything. English is what we say and what we think.

L. A. G. Strong, *English for Pleasure* (1941)

Nobody who thinks or writes can be above grammar. It is like saying, “I’m a creative genius, I’m above concepts”—which is the attitude of modern artists. If you are “above” grammar, you are “above” concepts; and if you are “above” concepts, you are “above” thought. The fact is that then you are not above, but far below, thought. Therefore, make a religion of grammar.


I take the candid approach because it fits my teaching situation. My students understand very well what social status means, so I simply tell them, “If you speak this way, you go in the back door; if you speak this way, you go in the front door.” I make it very clear that I neither built the house nor did I designate the doors. In this case, I am merely an agent showing off the real estate. I have the key to the front door, and once the student has the concept of usage levels I have given him the key. The back door is always ajar.

V. Louise Higgins, “Approaching Usage in the Classroom” (1960)
Contents

Introduction ................................................................. 1
  1 The field of grammar .............................................. 1
  2 Who killed grammar? .............................................. 2
  3 Why study grammar? ............................................... 5
  4 Overview of the book ............................................. 7

I. The Traditional Parts of Speech ................................. 13
  5 How did we arrive at the canonical eight? ...................... 13

Nouns .............................................................................. 19
  Traditional Classifications .............................................. 19
  6 Nouns generally ...................................................... 19
  7 Common nouns ........................................................ 19
  8 Proper nouns .......................................................... 19
  9 Count nouns ............................................................ 20
 10 Collective nouns ..................................................... 20
 11 Expressions of multitude ........................................... 20
 12 Expressions of partition ............................................. 21
 13 Mass nouns ............................................................. 22

Properties of Nouns ....................................................... 23
 14 Generally ................................................................ 23
 15 Case ..................................................................... 23
 16 Number .................................................................. 23
 17 Gender .................................................................... 24
 18 Person ..................................................................... 24

Plurals .............................................................................. 25
 19 Generally ................................................................ 25
 20 Adding “-s” or “-es” ................................................ 25
 21 Plurals of proper nouns ............................................ 25
 22 Nouns ending in “-f” or “-fe” .................................... 25
 23 Nouns ending in “-o” ............................................... 25
 24 Nouns ending in “-y” ............................................... 26
 25 Nouns ending in “-ics” .............................................. 26
 26 Compound nouns .................................................... 26
 27 Irregular plurals ....................................................... 27
 28 Borrowed plurals ..................................................... 27
 29 Plural form with singular sense ................................. 28
 30 Plural-form proper nouns ......................................... 29
 31 Tricky anomalies ...................................................... 29
Case ................................................................. 29
  32 Function ....................................................... 29
  33 Common case, nominative function .................. 29
  34 Common case, objective function .................... 30
  35 Genitive case .................................................. 30
  36 The “of”-genitive ............................................ 31
  37 Genitives of titles and names ......................... 32
  38 Joint and separate genitives ............................. 32

Agent and Recipient Nouns ........................................ 32
  39 Definitions; use ............................................. 32
  40 Appositives: definition and use ....................... 33

Conversions .......................................................... 33
  41 Nouns as adjectives ......................................... 33
  42 Nouns as verbs .............................................. 34
  43 Adverbial functions ......................................... 34
  44 Other conversions ........................................... 35

Pronouns .................................................................. 36

Definition and Uses ................................................... 36
  45 “Pronoun” defined. ........................................... 36
  46 Antecedents of pronouns ................................. 36
  47 Clarity of antecedent ....................................... 37
  48 Pronouns without antecedents ......................... 37
  49 Sentence meaning ............................................ 38

Properties of Pronouns ............................................... 38
  50 Four properties ................................................. 38
  51 Number and antecedent .................................... 38
  52 Exceptions regarding number of the antecedent ...... 39
  53 Pronoun with multiple antecedents ................... 39
  54 Some traditional singular pronouns .................. 40
  55 Gender ............................................................ 40
  56 Case ............................................................... 41
  57 Pronouns in apposition ..................................... 41
  58 Nominative case misused for objective ............... 41

Classes of Pronouns .................................................. 42
  59 Seven classes .................................................. 42

Personal Pronouns .................................................... 42
  60 Form .............................................................. 42
  61 Identification .................................................... 43
  62 Changes in form .............................................. 43
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Agreement generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Expressing gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Determining gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Special rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Case after linking verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Case after “than” or “as–as”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Special uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>The singular “they”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Possessive Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Uses and forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Possessive pronouns vs. contractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Compound personal pronouns: “-self” forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Basic uses of reflexive and intensive pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrative Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reciprocal Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Simple and phrasal pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interrogative Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Referent of interrogative pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Relative Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Gender, number, and case with relative pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Positional nuances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Antecedent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Remote relative clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Omitted antecedent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Relative pronoun and the antecedent “one”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Function of relative pronoun in clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Genitive forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>“Whose” and “of which”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Compound relative pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>“Who” vs. “whom”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Indefinite Pronouns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>The indefinite pronoun “one”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Adjectives</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative adjectives</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative adjectives</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrative adjectives</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive adjectives</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative adjectives</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronominal adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative adjectives</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles as Limiting Adjectives</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite article and proper names</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite article in specific reference</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing “a” or “an”</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles with coordinate nouns</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on meaning</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted article and zero article</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article as pronoun substitute</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates as Adjectives</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use and punctuation</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of Adjectives</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic rules</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After possessives</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective modifying pronoun</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicate adjective</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangling participles</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing an adjective from an adverb or participle</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Adjectives</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative forms</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superlative forms</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming comparatives and superlatives</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal and unequal comparisons</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncomparable adjectives</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Types of Adjectives</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129 Participle adjectives</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 Coordinate adjectives</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131 Phrasal adjectives</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132 Exceptions for hyphenating phrasal adjectives</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Variation</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133 Adjectives as nouns</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134 Adjectives as verbs</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135 Other parts of speech functioning as adjectives</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136 The weakening effect of injudicious adjectives</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbs</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definitions</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 Verbs generally</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138 Transitive and intransitive verbs</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 Ergative verbs</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 Dynamic and stative verbs</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 Regular and irregular verbs</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142 Linking verbs</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143 Phrasal verbs</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144 Principal and auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145 Verb phrases</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146 Constructions</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infinitives</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 Definition</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148 Split infinitive</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149 Uses of infinitive</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 Dangling infinitive</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participles and Gerunds</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 Participles generally</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152 Forming present participles</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153 Forming past participles</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154 Participial phrases</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155 Gerunds</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156 Gerund phrases</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157 Distinguishing between participles and gerunds</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158 Fused participles</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159 Dangling participles</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 Dangling gerunds</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Properties of Verbs

161 Five properties

162 Active and passive voice

163 Progressive conjugation and voice

164 Generally

165 Indicative mood

166 Imperative mood

167 Subjunctive mood

168 Subjunctive vs. indicative mood

169 Present subjunctive

170 Past subjunctive

171 Past-perfect subjunctive

172 Generally

173 Present tense

174 Past indicative

175 Future tense

176 Present-perfect tense

177 Past-perfect tense

178 Future-perfect tense

179 Progressive tenses

180 Backshifting in reported speech

181 Conjugation of the regular verb “to call”

182 Conjugation of the irregular verb “to hide”

183 Conjugation of the verb “to be”

184 Generally

185 Generally

186 Agreement in person and number

187 Disjunctive compound subjects

188 Conjunctive compound subjects

189 Some other nuances of number involving conjunctions

190 Peculiar nouns that are plural in form but singular in sense

191 Agreement of indefinite pronouns

192 Relative pronouns as subjects

193 “There is”; “Here is”

194 False attraction to intervening matter
Contents

195 False attraction to predicate noun ................................................. 120
196 Misleading connectives: “as well as,” “along with,”
   “together with,” etc. ..................................................................... 120
197 Agreement in first and second person ........................................... 121

Auxiliary Verbs ............................................................................. 121
198 Generally ..................................................................................... 121
199 Modal auxiliaries ........................................................................ 121
200 “Can” and “could” ...................................................................... 121
201 “May” and “might” ..................................................................... 122
202 “Must” ......................................................................................... 122
203 “Ought” ........................................................................................ 123
204 “Shall” ........................................................................................ 123
205 “Should” ....................................................................................... 123
206 “Will” and “would” ..................................................................... 124
207 “Dare” and “need” ...................................................................... 124
208 “Do” ............................................................................................ 125
209 “Have” ......................................................................................... 125

Adverbs ........................................................................................... 127

Definition and Formation ................................................................ 127
210 Generally ..................................................................................... 127
211 Sentence adverbs. ....................................................................... 127
212 Adverbial suffixes ........................................................................ 128
213 Adverbs without suffixes. ............................................................ 128
214 Distinguished from adjectives ...................................................... 128

Simple vs. Compound Adverbs ......................................................... 128
215 Standard and flat adverbs ............................................................ 128
216 Phrasal and compound adverbs ................................................... 130

Types of Adverbs ............................................................................. 130
217 Adverbs of manner ...................................................................... 130
218 Adverbs of time ........................................................................... 130
219 Adverbs of place ......................................................................... 130
220 Adverbs of degree ....................................................................... 131
221 Adverbs of reason ...................................................................... 131
222 Adverbs of consequence .............................................................. 131
223 Adverbs of number ..................................................................... 131
224 Interrogative adverbs ................................................................. 131
225 Exclamatory adverbs .................................................................. 132
226 Affirmative and negative adverbs ................................................. 132
227 Relative adverbs .......................................................................... 132
228 Conjunctive adverbs .................................................................... 133
Adverbial Degrees .................................................. 133
229 Generally ...................................................... 133
230 Comparative forms .............................................. 133
231 Superlative forms ............................................... 133
232 Irregular adverbs ............................................... 134
233 Noncomparable adverbs ...................................... 134

Position of Adverbs .................................................. 134
234 Placement as affecting meaning .............................. 134
235 Modifying words other than verbs ........................... 134
236 Modifying intransitive verbs ................................... 135
237 Adverbs and linking verbs ..................................... 135
238 Adverb within verb phrase .................................... 135
239 Importance of placement ...................................... 136
240 Adverbial objective .............................................. 136
241 Adverbial clause .................................................. 136
242 “Only” .............................................................. 137

Prepositions ........................................................... 139

Definition and Types .................................................. 139
243 Generally .......................................................... 139
244 Simple, compound ............................................... 139
245 Phrasal prepositions .............................................. 140
246 Participial prepositions ......................................... 141

Prepositional Phrases .................................................. 141
247 Generally .......................................................... 141
248 Prepositional function .......................................... 141
249 Placement .......................................................... 141
250 Refinements on placement ...................................... 142
251 Preposition-stranding ........................................... 142
252 Clashing prepositions ........................................... 142
253 Elliptical phrases ................................................ 142
254 Case of pronouns .................................................. 143

Other Prepositional Issues ........................................... 143
255 Functional variation .............................................. 143
256 Use and misuse of “like” ....................................... 143

Limiting Prepositional Phrases ..................................... 144
257 Avoiding overuse .................................................. 144
258 Cutting prepositional phrases .................................. 144
259 Cutting unnecessary prepositions ............................ 144
260 Replacing with adverbs ........................................ 144
261 Replacing with genitives ....................................... 145
262 Using active voice ................................................ 145
Contents

Conjunctions

263 Definition and types

264 Types of conjunctions: simple and compound

265 Coordinating conjunctions

266 Correlative conjunctions

267 Copulative conjunctions

268 Adversative conjunctions

269 Disjunctive conjunctions

270 Final conjunctions

271 Subordinating conjunctions

272 Special uses of subordinating conjunctions

273 Adverbial conjunctions

274 Expletive conjunctions

275 Disguised conjunctions

276 “With” used loosely as a conjunction

277 Beginning a sentence with a conjunction

278 Beginning a sentence with “however”

279 Conjunctions and the number of a verb

Interjections

280 Definition

281 Usage generally

282 Functional variation

283 Words that are exclusively interjections

284 Punctuating interjections

285 “O” and “oh”

II. Syntax

Sentences, Clauses, and Their Patterns

286 Definition

287 Statements

288 Questions

289 Some exceptional types of questions

290 Directives

291 Exceptional directives

292 Exclamations

The Four Traditional Types of Sentence Structures

293 Simple sentence

294 Compound sentence

295 Complex sentence

296 Compound-complex sentence
### English Sentence Patterns

- 297 Importance of word order .................................................. 160
- 298 The basic SVO pattern ......................................................... 160
- 299 All seven patterns .............................................................. 161
- 300 Variations on ordering the elements ...................................... 161
- 301 Constituent elements .......................................................... 161
- 302 Identifying the subject ......................................................... 162
- 303 Identifying the predicate ........................................................ 162
- 304 Identifying the verb ............................................................. 163
- 305 Identifying the object ........................................................... 163
- 306 Identifying complements ...................................................... 163
- 307 Inner and outer complements ................................................. 164
- 308 Identifying the adverbial element .......................................... 164

### Clauses

- 309 In general ............................................................................. 165
- 310 Relative clauses ..................................................................... 165
- 311 Appositive clauses ............................................................... 166
- 312 Conditional clauses ............................................................... 166

### Ellipsis

- 313 Generally ............................................................................... 167
- 314 Anaphoric and cataphoric ellipsis .......................................... 167
- 315 Whiz-deletions ....................................................................... 168

### Negation

- 316 Negation generally ............................................................... 169
- 317 The word “not” ...................................................................... 169
- 318 The word “no” ....................................................................... 171
- 319 Using negating pronouns and adverbs .................................... 171
- 320 Using “neither” and “nor” ....................................................... 171
- 321 Words that are negative in meaning and function .................... 172
- 322 Affix negation ........................................................................ 172
- 323 Negative interrogative and imperative statements .................... 172
- 324 Double negatives ................................................................... 172
- 325 Other forms of negation .......................................................... 173
- 326 “Any” and “some” in negative statements ............................... 173

### Expletives

- 327 Generally ............................................................................... 173
- 328 Expletive “it” ......................................................................... 174
- 329 Expletive “there” ................................................................. 174
**Contents**

*Parallelism* .......................................................... 175
  330 Generally .......................................................... 175
  331 Prepositions .......................................................... 176
  332 Paired joining terms ............................................... 176
  333 Auxiliary verbs .................................................... 177
  334 Verbs and adverbs at the outset ............................... 177
  335 Longer elements ................................................... 177

*Cleft Sentences* ..................................................... 178
  336 Definition .......................................................... 178
  337 Types ................................................................. 179
  338 Uses ................................................................. 179

*Traditional Sentence Diagramming* ................................ 181
  339 History and description .......................................... 181
  340 Benefits of diagrams .............................................. 181
  341 Using diagrams .................................................... 182
  342 Criticisms ............................................................ 182
  343 How diagrams work ................................................ 182
  344 Baseline .............................................................. 183
  345 Subject ................................................................. 184
  346 Predicate .............................................................. 184
  347 Direct object .......................................................... 184
  348 Objective complement ............................................. 185
  349 Indirect object ....................................................... 185
  350 Subjective complement ........................................... 186
  351 One-word modifiers ................................................ 186
  352 Prepositional phrases .............................................. 187
  353 Adjective clauses ................................................... 187
  354 Adverbial clauses ................................................... 188
  355 Noun clauses .......................................................... 188
  356 Infinitives ............................................................. 189
  357 Participles ............................................................. 190
  358 Gerunds ................................................................. 191
  359 Appositives ........................................................... 192
  360 Independent elements .............................................. 192
  361 Conjunctions .......................................................... 193
  362 Diagramming compound sentences ................................ 193
  363 Diagramming complex sentences .................................. 194
  364 Diagramming compound-complex sentences .................... 194
Transformational Grammar

Overview

365  Definition
366  Scope of section
367  Terminology of transformational grammar
368  Tools of transformational grammar
369  Universal symbols in rules
370  Tree diagrams

Base Rules in Transformational Grammar

371  Parts of speech
372  Sentence basics

Nouns and Noun Phrases

373  Functions of noun phrases
374  Simple noun phrases

Determiners

375  Types of determiners
376  Numeric and nonnumeric determiners
377  Multiple determiners
378  Determiners in noun phrases
379  Prearticles
380  Noun phrases with determiner and prearticle

Noun-Phrase Modifiers

381  Modifiers
382  Compound nouns
383  Combined rules
384  Number, person, and possession

Verb Phrases

385  Introduction
386  Functions of verb phrase
387  Principal verbs
388  Auxiliaries
389  Auxiliary verbs
390  “Have”
391  Multiple auxiliaries
392  “Be” as a principal verb

Different Types of Principal Verbs

393  Generally
394  Middle verbs
395  Special subtypes
Adverbials ................................................. 203
396  Adverbials with principal verbs .................. 203
397  Simple adverbs ........................................ 203
398  Functions of simple adverbs ..................... 204
399  Prepositional phrase as adverbial ................ 204
400  Noun phrase as adverbial ...................... 204
401  Adverbials of place, time, and manner .......... 204
402  Number and tense of verbs ...................... 204

Transformations ........................................ 205
403  Deep and surface structure ...................... 205
404  Transformational rules ............................ 205
405  Surface transformation ........................... 205
406  Simple-question transformation ................. 206
407  Imperative transformation ...................... 206
408  Active- to passive-voice transformation and back again .... 207

Spotting Ambiguities ................................ 207
409  Identification ...................................... 207
410  Lexical ambiguity ................................. 207
411  Surface-structure ambiguity ..................... 208
412  Deep-structure ambiguity ......................... 209
413  Active- and passive-voice diagrams ............ 210

III. Word Formation ..................................... 213
414  Generally .......................................... 213
415  Criteria for morphemes ......................... 213
416  Free and bound morphemes ..................... 214
417  Stems and affixes ................................ 214
418  Inflectional and derivational suffixes ........... 215
419  Compounding ...................................... 215
420  Conversion ........................................ 216
421  Shortened forms .................................. 216
422  Elongations ........................................ 217
423  Reduplicative forms ............................. 218
424  Loan translations ................................ 218
425  Acronyms and initialisms ....................... 218
426  Neologisms ....................................... 219
IV. Word Usage .................................................. 221

Introduction ...................................................... 223
  427 Grammar vs. usage ........................................ 223
  428 Standard Written English .............................. 223
  429 Dialect .................................................... 223
  430 Focus on tradition ......................................... 223

Troublesome Words and Phrases .............................. 225
  431 Good usage vs. common usage ......................... 225
  432 Using big data to assess linguistic change .......... 225
  433 Preventive grammar ...................................... 227
  434 Glossary of troublesome expressions ................. 228

Bias-Free Language ............................................. 324
  435 Maintaining credibility .................................. 324
  436 Gender bias ................................................ 324
  437 Other biases ................................................ 324
  438 Invisible gender-neutrality ............................. 324
  439 Techniques for achieving gender-neutrality ......... 324
  440 Necessary gender-specific language ................... 326
  441 Sex-specific labels as adjectives ...................... 326
  442 Gender-neutral singular pronouns ..................... 327
  443 Problematic suffixes .................................... 327
  444 Avoiding other biased language ....................... 328
  445 Unnecessary focus on personal characteristics ...... 328
  446 Unnecessary emphasis on the trait, not the person .. 328
  447 Inappropriate labels .................................... 328

Prepositional Idioms ............................................ 329
  448 Idiomatic uses ............................................ 329
  449 Shifts in idiom ........................................... 329
  450 Words and the prepositions construed with them ... 329

V. Punctuation .................................................. 345
  451 Introduction ............................................... 345

The Comma ....................................................... 347

Using Commas .................................................. 347
  452 With a conjunction between independent clauses .... 347
  453 After a transitional or introductory phrase ........... 347
  454 To set off a nonrestrictive phrase or clause ......... 348
  455 To separate items in a series ............................ 348
  456 To separate parallel modifiers .......................... 348
457  To distinguish indirect from direct speech .............. 349
458  To separate the parts of full dates and addresses ........ 349
459  To separate long numbers into three-digit chunks ........ 349
460  To set off a name, word, or phrase used as a vocative .... 350
461  Before a direct question inside another sentence ........ 350
462  To set off “etc.,” “et al.,” and the like at the end of a series ... 350
463  After the salutation in an informal letter ............... 351

Preventing Misused Commas ...................................... 351
464  Not to separate a subject and its verb ..................... 351
465  Not to separate a verb and its object ....................... 351
466  Not to set off a quotation that blends into the sentence ... 352
467  Not to set off an adverb that needs emphasis ............ 352
468  Not to separate compound predicates ..................... 352
469  Not to use alone to splice independent clauses .......... 353
470  Not to use after a sentence-starting conjunction ....... 354
471  Not to omit after an internal set-off word or phrase ..... 354
472  Not to set off restrictive matter ......................... 355
473  Not around name suffixes such as Jr., III, Inc., and Ltd. ... 356
474  Not to separate modifiers that aren’t parallel .......... 356

The Semicolon .................................................. 357
Using Semicolons .............................................. 357
475  To unite two short, closely connected sentences ........ 357
476  To separate items in a complex series .................... 358
477  In old style, to set off explanation or elaboration ....... 358

Preventing Misused Semicolons .................................. 359
478  Not where a colon is needed, as after a formal salutation ... 359
479  Not where a comma suffices, as in a simple list .......... 360

The Colon ...................................................... 361
Using Colons .................................................. 361
480  To link matter and indicate explanation or elaboration ... 361
481  To introduce an enumerated or otherwise itemized list .... 361
482  To introduce a question .................................. 362
483  Use a colon to introduce a question ....................... 363
484  After the salutation in business correspondence .......... 363
485  To separate hours from minutes and in some citations .... 363
486  Without capitalizing the following matter needlessly .... 364

Preventing Misused Colons ...................................... 364
487  Not to introduce matter that blends into your sentence ... 364
Parentheses ........................................ 365

Using Parentheses .................................. 365
488 To set off inserted matter that you want to minimize .......... 365
489 To clarify appositives or attributions .......................... 366
490 To introduce shorthand or familiar names ...................... 366
491 Around numbers or letters when listing items in text .......... 366
492 To denote subparts in a citation .............................. 367
493 Correctly in relation to terminal punctuation ................. 367
494 To enclose a brief aside ..................................... 368

Preventing Misused Parentheses ......................... 368
495 Not before an opening parenthesis ......................... 368

The Em-Dash (or Long Dash) .............................. 369

Using Em-Dashes ....................................... 369
496 To set off matter inserted in midsentence .................... 369
497 To set off but emphasize parenthetical matter ............... 369
498 To tack on an important afterthought ....................... 370
499 To introduce a specification or list .......................... 370
500 To show hesitation, faltering, or interruption ............... 370

Preventing Misused Em-Dashes ......................... 371
501 Not using more than two in a sentence ....................... 371
502 Not after a comma, colon, semicolon, or terminal period ... 372

The En-Dash (or Short Dash) ............................. 373

Using En-Dashes ....................................... 373
503 In a range, to show tension, or to join equivalents .......... 373

Preventing Misused En-Dashes ......................... 373
504 Not in place of a hyphen or em-dash ......................... 373
505 Not with the wording it replaces ............................ 374

The Hyphen ........................................... 375

Using Hyphens ........................................ 375
506 To join parts of a phrasal adjective .......................... 375
507 To mark other phrasal-adjective and suffix connections ... 376
508 In closely associated compounds according to usage ....... 376
509 When writing out fractions and two-word numbers ........ 376
510 To show hesitation, stammering, and the like ............... 377
511 In proper names when appropriate ............................ 377
512 In some number groups or when spelling out a word ....... 377
513 With “l-” suffixes (e.g., “-like”) on words ending in “-ll” .. 377
Preventing Misused Hyphens ........................................... 378
  514 Not after a prefix unless an exception applies .......... 378
  515 Not in place of an em-dash, even when doubled (“--”) ... 378
  516 Not with an “-ly” adverb and a participial adjective ... 379
  517 Not in a phrasal verb ........................................... 379

The Apostrophe .................................................................. 380
Using Apostrophes ........................................................... 380
  518 To indicate the possessive case ................................. 380
  519 To mark a contraction or to signal dialectal speech .... 380
  520 To form plurals of letters, digits, and some abbreviations . 381
Preventing Misused Apostrophes ......................................... 381
  521 Not to form other plurals, especially of names .......... 381
  522 Not to omit obligatory apostrophes ......................... 381

Quotation Marks ............................................................ 382
Using Quotation Marks .................................................... 382
  523 To quote matter of 50 or fewer words .................... 382
  524 When using a term as a term or when defining a term ... 382
  525 When you mean “so-called” or “but-not-really” ....... 383
  526 For titles of short-form works, according to a style guide . 383
  527 To show internal quotation using single marks .......... 384
  528 To signal matter used idiomatically, not literally ....... 384
  529 Placed correctly in relation to other punctuation ........ 384
Preventing Misused Quotation Marks ................................. 385
  530 Not for a phrasal adjective ........................................ 385
  531 Not to emphasize a word or note its informality ........ 385

The Question Mark .......................................................... 386
Using Question Marks ..................................................... 386
  532 After a direct question ............................................. 386
Preventing Misused Question Marks ................................... 386
  533 Not after an indirect question ..................................... 386

The Exclamation Mark ....................................................... 387
Using Exclamation Marks ............................................... 387
  534 After exclamatory matter, especially when quoting others .. 387
Preventing Misused Exclamation Marks ........................... 387
  535 Not to express your own surprise or amazement ....... 387
### The Period

#### Using Periods

- To end a typical sentence, not a question or exclamation... 388
- To indicate an abbreviated name or title .... 388
- Placed properly with parentheses and brackets ... 389
- To show a decimal place in a numeral .... 389

#### Preventing Misused Periods

- Not with an abbreviation at sentence end ... 389

### Brackets

#### Using Brackets

- In a quotation, to enclose matter not in the original ... 390
- In parenthetical matter, to enclose another parenthetical ... 390
- To enclose the citation of a source, as in a footnote ... 391

#### Preventing Misused Brackets

- Not in place of ellipsis dots when matter is deleted ... 391

### The Slash (Virgule)

#### Using Slashes

- To separate alternatives (but never “and/or”). ... 392
- To separate numerical parts in a fraction ... 392
- Informally, to separate elements in a date ... 392
- Informally, as a shorthand signal for “per” ... 393
- To separate lines of poetry or of a song ... 393

#### Preventing Misused Slashes

- Not when a hyphen or en-dash would suffice ... 393

### Bullets

#### Preventing Misused Ellipsis Dots

- Omitting space or allowing a line break between dots .....
- Beginning a quotation with ellipsis dots .... 399
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select Glossary</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources for Inset Quotations</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Bibliography</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Index</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Index</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation Guide</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

1 **The field of grammar.** In its usual sense, grammar is the set of rules governing how words are put together in sentences to communicate ideas—or the study of these rules. Native speakers of a language learn them unconsciously. The rules govern most constructions in any given language. The small minority of constructions that lie outside these rules fall mostly into the category of idiom and customary usage.

There are many schools of grammatical thought—and differing vocabularies for describing grammar. Grammatical theories have been in upheaval in recent years. Seemingly the more we learn, the less we know. As the illustrious editor in chief of the *Oxford English Dictionary* wrote in 1991: “An entirely adequate description of English grammar is still a distant target and at present seemingly an unreachable one, the complications being what they are.”¹ In fact, the more detailed the grammar (it can run to many large volumes), the less likely it is to be of any practical use to most writers and speakers.

Grammar should be an attempt to describe the English language as it is actually used—beginning with the facts and not with ingrained biases about what should and should not be considered grammatical. But that’s not the whole story. Describe English, yes—but whose English? The traditional view of English grammar is that it should record the linguistic habits of refined speakers and writers: the best English, or standard literary English shorn of dialect and idioms that typify the language of uneducated speakers. It is the type of English, in other words, that marks

---

its user as an educated speaker or writer. It can be found in the pages of reputable newsmagazines and nonfiction books (and much fiction, too, but less reliably so because of the utility of dialectal usage in dialogue and experimental usage within narrative).

Not everyone aspires to the standard language—and as a result our culture becomes more varied and interesting. But anyone who does aspire to it will find that it can be cultivated, partly through wide reading of serious writing and partly through close study of its techniques. Although nobody speaks or writes standard literary English infallibly—just as nobody behaves or exercises judgment infallibly—good English exists as certainly as good behavior and good judgment do.

2 \textbf{Who killed grammar?} During the 141 years from 1711 through 1851, grammars were among the most popular books published in English. There were hundreds of them. Seemingly every English-speaking household had, at a minimum, a Bible and a grammar. Lindley Murray, sometimes called “the father of English grammar,”\textsuperscript{2} sold some 15 million copies of his \textit{English Grammar} and other literary books from 1795 to 1840.\textsuperscript{3} In 1851, Goold Brown’s humongous \textit{Grammar of English Grammars} appeared, occupying 1,102 pages on the subject.

For the rest of the 19th century, the teaching of grammar was fairly stable. The top names in school grammars after 1850 were John Seely Hart,\textsuperscript{4} Allen Hayden Weld,\textsuperscript{5} Thomas N. Harvey,\textsuperscript{6} Simon Kerl,\textsuperscript{7} and William H. Maxwell.\textsuperscript{8} The dawn of the 20th century saw the rise of the first scholarly grammars and “college grammars,” still along the line of traditional grammars but somewhat more elaborate and standardized. Among the leading texts through the mid-20th century were those by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{3} Charles Monaghan, \textit{The Murrays of Murray Hill} (Brooklyn: Urban History, 1998), 95.
\item \textsuperscript{4} John Seely Hart, \textit{A Grammar of the English Language} (Philadelphia: Eldredge and Bro., 1882).
\item \textsuperscript{5} Allen Hayden Weld, \textit{The Progressive English Grammar} (Portland, ME: Bailey and Noyes, 1863).
\item \textsuperscript{6} Thomas N. Harvey, \textit{A Practical Grammar of the English Language}, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Co., 1868).
\item \textsuperscript{7} Simon Kerl, \textit{A Common-School Grammar of the English Language} (New York: Ivison, Phinney, Blakeman, 1866); Kerl, \textit{First Lessons in English Grammar} (New York: Ivison, Phinney, Blakeman, 1868).
\item \textsuperscript{8} William H. Maxwell, \textit{Advanced Lessons in English Grammar} (New York: American Book Co., 1891).
\end{itemize}
A campaign against traditional grammar had started by the early 20th century. In 1910 a leading commentator wrote:

What was the meaning of the reaction against the study of formal Grammar of the Lindley Murray type? The main count against it was that it failed of practical results; failed as a communicable “art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety,”—to quote the Murray definition. The endless formalities of rule and precept were found to be wasteful burdens of knowledge unrelated to practice.¹⁴

What was not then known was that nothing better would replace traditional grammar—at least nothing better that might still be comprehensible to the educated public in general, and nothing related to the teaching of composition.

By the early 20th century there was a drumbeat of dissatisfaction with the doctrine of grammatical “correctness.” Things like the parts of speech and sentence diagramming were criticized—mostly among expert linguists, not practical teachers. New schools of thought arose, each with its own nomenclature and classification system.¹⁵ That trend has only continued in the years since.

Some saw growing standardization as outright dogmatism, and in 1927 Charles Carpenter Fries, in his *Teaching of the English Language*, urged “the overthrow of the traditional view”¹⁶ of correctness as determined by the rules of con-
ventional school grammars. He wanted to jettison past methods: “For more than a century good English has been one of the major concerns of our educational system. . . . [Yet] we do not by any means agree as to what this good English is.”\textsuperscript{17} Fries was an influential voice, and over time—with the backing of the National Council of Teachers of English—the grammatical putsch succeeded.

By the mid-20th century, the structural linguists—also known as \textit{generative grammarians}—rose with a wholly new way of describing the English language: transformational grammar. Unlike traditional grammar, this new discipline was not a didactic system to help students use “good grammar”—in fact, the linguists no longer believed in “good grammar” or in using grammar as a vehicle for teaching English composition. They came to believe that if a native speaker utters a sentence, it is necessarily appropriate to the speaker’s dialect. They sought to record linguistic structures and describe syntax dispassionately and scientifically—usually with no preference for Standard Written English over regional and class dialects.

Transformational grammar was a descriptive method based on a theory first proposed by the linguist Noam Chomsky in 1957.\textsuperscript{18} Chomsky sought to describe how people produce and understand original sentences without formally learning rules for grammatical structures. According to his original theory, native speakers assimilate the natural rules of the language and internalize them. Transformational grammar attempts to describe those internal rules by first looking at a sentence’s structure and then deriving a formulalike rule or a tree diagram to show how a sentence or sentence part is formed. Sporadic, mostly unsuccessful attempts to teach grade-school children English using transformational grammar were made during the 1960s and early 1970s. Today it is taught mostly in colleges and graduate schools. Outside linguistics, transformational grammar is used mostly in computer-language-processing applications. It has an alien look and feel to traditionalists, but it can convey interesting insights into how the language works (see §§ 365–413).

In the late 20th century, it was common for the high-school and college courses that still taught grammar to treat it on dual tracks: traditional grammar plus transformational grammar.

Since then, no clear consensus has been reached, and the more advanced grammars have become so specialized and jargon-filled as to

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 1949 ed., 1–2.

be incomprehensible to all but other specialists. In the mid-1980s, the literary critic Christopher Ricks observed that many modern grammarians express themselves in a manner “as inviting as a tall wall bottled-spiked.”  

About the same time, Robert W. Burchfield, then editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, said that this impenetrable grammatical gobbledygook had led to an “unrelieved intellectual apartheid” that left most educated speakers of English “disastrously uninformed and uninstructed.”

Small wonder that the subject is hardly studied today—given that many of these moderns call themselves *grammaticographers* who study *grammaticology*. And small wonder that the grammatical heyday of the 18th and 19th centuries remains a dim memory on the literary landscape—an implausible past in which grammars were exceeded in sales only by the Bible.

In 1952 a bewildered and frustrated Harry C. Warfel, professor of English at the University of Florida, wrote *Who Killed Grammar?*, in which he detailed the demise of the subject in American secondary schools and colleges—laying blame mostly at the feet of Fries. Together with other linguists, Fries had succeeded in divorcing grammatical learning from the pedagogy of English composition. The sad saga was updated and elaborated in an excellent 2003 book by David Mulroy: *The War Against Grammar*.

In any event, grammar was never killed—even if it was wounded. It is very much alive, as evidenced by the interest you’re showing at this very moment. Your own learning about grammar will help hasten its recovery.

Why study grammar? Perhaps the most important reason for learning about grammar is that language is basic to almost everything we do—and the more nearly you can master it, the more effectively you’ll think, speak, and write. You’ll be more aware of ideas and how they’re expressed. You’ll make finer distinctions. A knowledge of grammar is fundamental to critical thinking.

---

Introduction

You’ll also find that a knowledge of grammar and usage opens up doors for you. Without it, your opportunities in life would be limited. That’s true in any culture and with every language—and it’s true of English-speaking countries. If you’re an ambitious speaker of English, you’ll want to learn Standard Written English. You’ll find a richer appreciation of English literature, and you’ll benefit in ways both tangible and intangible—ways that you can’t possibly appreciate until you’ve gained the knowledge.

An illustrative story: Many biographers of Abraham Lincoln have noted his early preoccupation with Samuel Kirkham’s *English Grammar in Familiar Lectures* (1820). When he first heard about the book, Lincoln walked six miles to get a copy.²⁴ He burned pine shavings in a blacksmith shop so that he could read it at night.²⁵ He committed whole sections of the book to memory, often wheedling friends into quizzing him.²⁶ He wanted to learn to speak well and write well. And so he did: he is widely considered the foremost orator and writer ever to have served as president of the United States.

Another story—a little less sublime: A professor acquaintance of mine had a college student who was determined to teach Greek philosophy. But the student couldn’t pass his first semester of Greek. The professor told the student what his problem was: he didn’t know the first thing about English grammar. (Other profs had said he just lacked innate ability.) After taking a couple of courses in English grammar, which he

---

²⁵ Ibid.
found challenging, the student tried again and succeeded with distinction. In fact, he went on to study medieval Latin as well. That competence, combined with his mastery of Greek, was decisive in getting him a good college teaching post the same year he earned his Ph.D. Today his academic career is flourishing. Both he and his advisers declare that English grammar paved the way.

Your own path will be unlike those. It will assuredly be unique. But one thing is certain: in the long term, your acquiring Standard Written English will only help you reach your most ambitious goals. Wear it lightly. Be practical, not pedantic. Seek to be astute in the way you handle language. In addition to speaking well and writing well, learn to listen well. You’ll perceive more. And listen sympathetically.

4 **Overview of the book.** As traditionally understood, grammar is both a science and an art. Often, it has focused—as part I of this book does—on parts of speech (or *word classes*). Each part of speech performs a particular function in a sentence or phrase. Traditional grammar has held that there are eight parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Some grammars have added a ninth: articles. But as you’ll soon discover (see § 5), reckonings vary.

The first 285 sections of this book deal with the traditional eight; each part of speech is discussed in some detail. The purpose here is to sketch some of the main lines of English grammar using mostly traditional grammatical terms.

Part II deals with syntax: the rules governing the arrangement of words and phrases into sentences. Traditional grammarians classified sentences into four types according to their purposes (statements, questions, directives, and exclamations), as well as four structural types according to the structure of clauses (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex). More modern grammarians have isolated seven fundamental patterns into which English sentences can be classified by word order. Part II explains these ideas along with the basics of sentence diagramming and the newer “sentence trees” of transformational grammar.

---

In part III we take up the subject of word formation, also known as *morphology*: the study of how small word-units known as *morphemes* compose words.

The multifariously detailed questions of English usage occupy part IV. The customary forms and meanings of words and phrases are constantly and often imperceptibly shifting. Some speakers and writers push words in new directions, often unconsciously; others resist and reject these innovations, often (in the long run) to no avail. But undesirable linguistic changes needn’t—and shouldn’t—be immediately acquiesced in. The usage glossary here presented gives a snapshot of the language as it stands today: a compilation of editorial judgments that experienced copyeditors make routinely.

More than that, though, part IV contains an unprecedented degree of empirical evidence in the form of Google ngrams, which reflect big data as applied to Standard Written English. These ngrams show the relative frequency in print of two or more competing forms. So let’s say that someone is arguing that *between him and I* should be accepted as standard—there are such people.²⁹ And let’s say that our disputatious friend cites outlier instances in literature of *between him and I* (it should be *between him and me*, of course—each pronoun being the object of a preposition). An ngram will show relative frequencies in massive amounts of literature—more than 5.2 million books from 1500 on—to assess the truth or

---

²⁹ See, e.g., Oliver Kamm, “The Pedant: There’s Nothing Amiss with Andrew Strauss’s Grammar,” *Times*, May 16, 2015, http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/courtsocial/article4441761.ece (stating that it is “groundless” to insist on the objective case in such a construction and that “a pronoun within a coordinate phrase is free to take either nominative or accusative case”); Rodney D. Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum, *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 463 (arguing that such a construction with *I* as a final coordinate is “so common in speech and used by so broad a range of speakers that it has to be recognized as a variety of Standard English”).
falsity, or maybe just the plausibility, of the contention. It’s also possible to calculate ratios of use through time. Here’s what we find:

1820 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 93:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 53:1

Even a ratio of 3:1 would be enough to establish serious predominance—and perhaps enough to declare (depending on the usage involved) the less-frequent form nonstandard. But anything more than 20:1 is powerful, objective evidence that the traditionally stigmatized form is in no position to be declared Standard Written English. In fact, many of the instances of its appearance in the database are probably owing to discussions of its ungrammatical nature.

Or consider a related construction—one I heard a television broadcaster use just as this book was being readied for publication—*Him and I are good friends. Because both pronouns are subjects of the plural verb are, they should both be in the subjective case. A few language commentators will hear such instances and opine that this phrasing has become standard. They may go so far as to say that English is gradually losing its declension of pronouns altogether—a highly indefensible position. Let’s see what the ngram tells us about instances of He and I are (educated usage) and *Him and I are (uneducated usage)—from 1500 to the present day:

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 109:1
The frequency ratio of 109:1 in printed books just from the latest year we can now use, 2008, provides powerful evidence that Standard Written English is hardly on the brink of a shift toward acceptance of the non-standard form.

This previously unavailable big-data tool allows us to gauge questions of English in a way never before possible, so that judgments about standard forms are based on something more than one person’s lifetime of reading and study, however reliable that may have been. Some 67 of these ngrams appear in part IV, where they are further explained. You may well find that they make part IV compulsively browsable.

Part V consists of a full restatement of the principles of English punctuation. Each principle is illustrated with verbatim examples drawn from writers of high repute. No writer, of course, is infallible in either usage or punctuation, but these sentences illustrate sound instances of punctuation. And the illustrations’ great variety contributes piquancy to what is often a dry topic.

The select glossary (see pp. 401–89) isn’t to be overlooked. Learners of any subject—your author included—benefit tremendously from treating it partly as an exercise in vocabulary-building. Learning the terminology of grammar represents a huge step toward mastering the subject as a whole. Hence I have gone into more detail in the glossary than many readers might have expected. Try browsing through it from time to time as you’re reading or consulting the book. You’ll find that the terminology is like good wine: once you get a taste for it, you’ll start picking up the nuances.

Throughout the text are inset quotations in shaded boxes. You’ve already encountered some. These quotations are intended to enrich the discussions with insights from writers and commentators of the past—most of them linguists and grammarians whose statements reinforce the basic message of the book: that linguistic study can be both practical and enjoyable. For the precise sources of these quotations, see pp. 491–95.

In most but not all ways, this book conforms to the recommendations found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. I take a somewhat different stance, for example, on commas after years in month-day-year-style dates, recommending their omission when the date is used adjectivally (§ 458); on en-dashes, recommending them for expressing tension or pairing as well as for numerical ranges (§ 503); and on ellipsis dots, recommending a space before the first of four dots if the elision occurs in midsentence as opposed to after a sentence’s end (§ 555). Naturally, all the grammatical discussions
and usage recommendations line up closely with chapter 5 of the Chicago Manual—given that I am the author of that chapter.

Beware the naysayers who tell you that learning Standard Written English will stifle your creativity or cause you to write “correct” but bloodless prose. This common concern is a slight one at best. The truth is that without Standard Written English, it will be all but impossible to produce “incredibly clear, beautiful, alive, urgent, crackling-with-voltage prose.”

That’s not a bad description of what you might ultimately aim for—though the first step is straightforward and simple clarity.

Pursue your interest in words and in writing well—together with their many settled conventions. You may find that you’ve changed the direction of your life. As one of my multilingual friends likes to say, fall in love with language, and it will love you back.

---

30 Quack This Way: David Foster Wallace and Bryan A. Garner Talk Language and Writing (Dallas: RosePen, 2013), 60 (quoting David Foster Wallace).
I. The Traditional Parts of Speech

**How did we arrive at the canonical eight?** The traditional grammarian’s approach to parts of speech is often attributed to an ancient of some renown: Dionysios Thrax, who lived in the second century B.C. In *Téknē Grammatikē* (or *The Grammatical Art*), he listed eight parts of speech: noun, verb, participle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb, conjunction. These categories were long accepted by Greek, by Roman, and later by European grammarians—and there were scores of them (hence only some highlights here).

The Roman grammarian Aelius Donatus, who lived in the fourth century A.D., wrote *Ars Grammatica*—a book that gained great popularity into the Middle Ages. His eight parts of speech were slightly different from those of Dionysios:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dionysios</th>
<th>Donatus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noun (adjective)</td>
<td>noun (adjective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle</td>
<td>participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preposition</td>
<td>preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb (interjection)</td>
<td>adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>interjection?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. For much of the information in the first two paragraphs, I am indebted to David Mulroy, *The War Against Grammar* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2003).
Both classified nouns and adjectives together—Dionysios because the two have the same kinds of inflectional endings in Greek, Donatus presumably because he was influenced by predecessors such as Dionysios. But Donatus dropped articles (Latin has none) and separated interjections from adverbs.

The Donatus model was followed by other early influential grammarians, such as Priscian, who lived in the fifth century A.D. So influential was Priscian that he gave us the phrase to break Priscian’s head, meaning “to use bad grammar.” In Renaissance England, a schoolboy learning Latin might be scolded when he mistranslated a phrase from English into Latin, “No, William, you’re breaking Priscian’s head!”

So influential was Latin grammar in England that English grammars were sparse until the 18th century. But Shakespeare’s main rival, Ben Jonson (1572–1637), wrote a grammar that was published in 1640, three years after his death. Jonson counted “in our English speech . . . the same parts with the Latins” —that is, eight. His list was that of Donatus (though Jonson’s direct influence was Priscian). But then he added another: articles.

When English grammars began to proliferate in the 18th and 19th centuries, there was great variability in grammarians’ counts of parts of speech. In 1711, James Greenwood repeated Donatus’s fourth-century roster. Others of the time replicated it. Still other grammarians, however,
counted only four—among these being John Entick,\(^9\) Thomas Dyche,\(^10\) Anne Fisher,\(^11\) and James Harris.\(^12\) Some had the number swell to nine (by adding articles, as Ben Jonson had done in 1640)\(^13\) or ten (by adding adjectives).\(^14\) There was simply no consensus.

Not until 1761 did any grammarian settle on the eight that became the canonical parts of speech in English. He was the same man who discovered oxygen: Joseph Priestley (1733–1804). In his *Rudiments of English Grammar*, he listed these:

- noun
- adjective
- pronoun
- verb
- adverb
- preposition
- conjunction
- interjection\(^15\)

Even so, it took another 80 years or so for those eight to be firmly accepted—perhaps because the categories fluidly relate to form and function. That is, some words are called nouns because they usually function that way, but of course they can often function as adjectives and verbs as well. And any part of speech can function as an interjection. So it’s not a perfect taxonomy.

---


12 James Harris, *Hermes, or A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Universal Grammar*, 5th ed. (London: F. Wingrave, 1794), 36 (substantives or nouns, attributives or verbs, definitives or articles, connectives or conjunctions).


The influential Robert Lowth counted nine in 1762 by adding articles; John Fell followed those nine in 1784, so did George Neville Ussher in 1785 and the highly influential Lindley Murray in 1795. But more grammarians of that period counted ten by adding participles to the mix: Rowland Jones in 1771, Ellin Devis in 1775, Ralph Harrison in 1777, Caleb Bingham in 1785, E. Harrold in 1804, Lady Eleanor Fenn in 1790, John Hutchins in 1791, Caleb Alexander in 1792, Thomas Coar in 1796, Duncan Mackintosh (with his two daughters) in 1797, Daniel Staniford in 1797, Jane Gardiner in 1799, David Gurney in 1801, Alexander Crombie in 1802, and John Comly in 1803. These

19 Lindley Murray, *English Grammar Adapted to Different Classes of Learners* (York: Wilson, Spence, and Mawman, 1795), 19.
grammarians were doubtless aware of one another’s work to one degree or another.

Some Americans were mavericks. In 1782, Robert Ross wrote *The American Grammar* with the help of Aaron Burr (the president of Yale College and father to the future vice president and killer of Alexander Hamilton). They counted eight parts of speech in both English and Latin but then speculated: “Since all Discourse must be about Things, their Properties, Actions, and Relations; were it not for long established Custom, we might divide Speech into four Parts, viz. Noun, Adnoun [i.e., adjective], Verb, and Participle.” Two years later, Noah Webster, more famous as a lexicographer than as a grammarian, counted six parts of speech. But he was long-lived, and in his final grammar nearly 50 years later, he counted seven—the conventional eight minus interjections. The most extreme examples were James Brown, who in his 1820 *American Grammar* counted thirty-three, and William S. Balch, who in 1838 counted only two (nouns and verbs).

This little survey only skims the surface. By 1801 there were 297 different listings of English parts of speech accounting for a total of 58 varieties. By the 1840s, however, a consensus was gradually emerging for Priestley’s eight:

- noun
- pronoun
- adjective
- verb
- adverb
- preposition
- conjunction
- interjection

---

The Traditional Parts of Speech

The variants gradually became outliers among mainstay school grammars. Even in recent years, though, the categories aren’t fully settled: modern grammarians have set the number at three, four, six, seven, eight (the traditional number), nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and nineteen. One says there is “no definitive answer.” In this way, parts of speech are rather like the biologist’s species and genera: they are human constructs that aren’t immutable.

In the discussion that follows, we examine the canonical eight with full knowledge that the classifications aren’t airtight.


Nouns

Traditional Classifications

6 Nouns generally. A noun is a word that names something, whether abstract (intangible) or concrete (tangible). It may be a common noun (the name of a generic class or type of person, place, thing, process, activity, or condition) or a proper noun (the name of a specific person, place, or thing—hence capitalized). A concrete noun may be a count noun (if what it names can be counted—as with horses or cars) or a mass noun (if what it names is uncountable or collective—as with information or salt). A noun-equivalent is a phrase or clause that serves the function of a noun in a sentence {to serve your country is honorable} {bring anyone you like}. Nouns and noun-equivalents are collectively called substantives or (especially throughout this book) noun elements.

7 Common nouns. A common noun is the generic name of one item in a class or group {a chemical} {a river} {a pineapple}. It is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence or appears in a title. A common noun is usually used with a determiner—that is, an article or other word (e.g., some, few) that indicates the number and definiteness of the noun element {a loaf} {the day} {some person}. Common nouns are often analyzed into three subcategories: concrete nouns, abstract nouns, and collective nouns. A concrete noun is solid or real; it indicates something perceptible to the physical senses {a building} {the wind} {honey}. An abstract noun denotes something you cannot physically see, touch, taste, hear, or smell {joy} {expectation} {neurosis}. A collective noun—which can be viewed as a concrete noun but is often separately categorized—refers to a group or collection of people or things {a crowd of people} {a flock of birds} {a herd of rhinos}. See § 10.

8 Proper nouns. A proper noun is the name of a specific person, place, or thing {John Doe} {Moscow} {the Hope Diamond}, or the title of a movie {Citizen Kane}, a play {Death of a Salesman}, a book {Oliver Twist}, a newspaper or magazine {The New Yorker}, a piece of music {U2’s “All Because of You”}, a painting {Mona Lisa}, a sculpture {The Kiss}, or any other publication, performance, or work of art. Proper nouns may be singular
The Traditional Parts of Speech

{Mary} {London} or plural {the Great Lakes} {the Twin Cities}. A proper noun is always capitalized, regardless of how it is used—unless someone is purposely flouting the rules {k.d. lang}. A common noun may become a proper noun {Old Hickory} {the Big Easy}, and sometimes a proper noun may be used figuratively and informally, as if it were a common noun {like Moriarty, he is a Napoleon of crime}. Proper nouns may be compounded when used as a unit to name something {the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel} {Saturday Evening Post}. Over time, some proper nouns (called eponyms) have developed common-noun counterparts, such as sandwich (from the Earl of Sandwich) and china (the porcelain, from the nation China). Articles and other determiners are used with proper nouns only when the last part of the noun is a common noun or the determiner provides emphasis {the Savoy Hotel} {Sam? I knew a Sam Hill once}.

9 **Count nouns.** A count noun has singular and plural forms and expresses discrete, enumerable things {dictionary–dictionaries} {hoof–hooves} {newspaper–newspapers}. As the subject of a sentence, a singular count noun takes a singular verb {the jar is full}; a plural count noun takes a plural verb {the jars are full}.

10 **Collective nouns.** A collective noun denotes an aggregate of individuals or things but is itself grammatically singular in form {group} {team} {flock} {herd}. For purposes of verb and pronoun agreement, however, collective nouns may be treated as either singular or plural, depending on whether the emphasis is on the constituent members acting as a unified whole {the committee meets on Tuesday to announce its decision} or, less commonly in American English (AmE), individually {the committee are debating their decision}. The general preference in AmE is to treat collective nouns as singular; the opposite is true in British English (BrE). But when collective nouns appear in expressions of multitude (see below), they are generally treated as plural.

11 **Expressions of multitude.** In constructions such as a bunch of amateurs, a collective noun expresses multitude, rather than signifying a unified group. Grammarians call collective nouns functioning this way quantifying collectives. (But some of the most common expressions of multitude use quantifying determiners in place of collectives: number, lot, couple, and few don’t function like collective nouns in other contexts.) Such constructions place the quantifying collective or determiner between an indefinite article (a or an) and a postmodifying of-phrase using a plural or
mass noun {a host of problems} {a group of doctors} {a set of stemware} {a lot of questions}.

As with collective nouns generally, syntax with expressions of multitude is governed by meaning and not by strict grammar—a phenomenon known as synesis or notional concord. (See § 186.) So while lone collective nouns typically signify the group as a unit and hence are treated as singular, nouns of multitude are distributive: verbs and pronouns must agree in number with the noun following of, not the singular noun of multitude preceding it.

If the noun following of is plural (as it typically is), verbs and pronouns must be too {a number of listeners always complain whenever we bring in a guest host} {a gang of kids were riding their bikes around the neighborhood}. But if the noun is a singular mass noun, use singular verbs and pronouns {a lot of this bread has mold on it}. (If the noun of multitude is plural, however, the accompanying verbs and pronouns invariably are as well {two teams of surgeons operate on their patient} {four sets of china were on sale}.)

Two caveats. First, not all constructions that place a noun between an indefinite article and a postmodifying of-phrase are true expressions of multitude. Constructions referring to containers or units of measurement often take this form {a jar of jellybeans} {a pound of nuts}. Here, the container or measurement noun governs meaning and therefore concord {a bushel of apples costs $60}. And a collective noun may also be followed by an of-phrase describing the group’s composition {a school of minnows} {a herd of bison}. In those cases, the ordinary rules for collective nouns apply (i.e., the noun may be treated as singular, depending on emphasis) {a flock of geese makes its way south for the winter} {a flock of geese fly in a V formation}.

Second, when the (instead of a) precedes number of, the emphasis is on the number itself, not the individual things it describes, so it is treated as singular. Compare “a number of applicants were unqualified” with “the number of unqualified applicants was surprising.” But not all nouns of multitude are treated this way—consider majority {the majority of senators vote along party lines}. As above, meaning and emphasis determine concord.

12 Expressions of partition. Expressions of partition, which signify a part of the group represented by the of-phrase (in this context termed the partitive genitive), follow the same rules as expressions of multitude. In place of a noun of multitude, these expressions use a partitive noun {fraction}
The Traditional Parts of Speech

{part} {portion}, a fraction, or a percentage {a fraction of the students raise their hands} {one-quarter of the competitors start at 10 a.m.} {only 42% of doctors report getting annual physicals}. This category includes partitive constructions using one of those + [plural noun] + who/that, which always take plural verbs and pronouns in the relative clause {she is one of those writers who wake up before dawn to start their work}. Even a fraction that is plural in form is treated as singular if it’s followed by of and a mass noun {two-thirds of Mary’s garden is planted with gladioluses}. But as with the above constructions also governed by synesis, meaning sometimes necessitates exceptions to the rule {just a fraction of those nails is all you need to do the job}. See § 186.

13 Mass nouns. A mass noun (sometimes called a noncount noun) is one that denotes something uncountable, either because it is abstract {cowardice} {evidence} or because it refers to an aggregation of people or things taken as an indeterminate whole {luggage} {the bourgeoisie}. The key difference between mass nouns and collective nouns is that unlike collective nouns (which are count nouns), mass nouns never take indefinite articles and typically do not have plural forms. (Compare a team to *an evidence, or two groups to *two luggages.) A mass noun can stand alone {music is more popular than ever} or with a determiner other than an indefinite article (some music or the music but not a music). As the subject of a sentence, a mass noun typically takes a singular verb and pronoun {the litigation is so varied that it defies simple explanation}.

Some mass nouns, however, are plural in form but are treated as grammatically singular {politics} {ethics} {physics} {news}. (See § 190.) Others are always grammatically plural {manners} {scissors} {clothes}. But just as singular mass nouns don’t take an indefinite article, plural mass nouns don’t combine with numbers: you’d never say *three scissors or *six manners. Some that refer to concrete objects, such as scissors or sunglasses, can be enumerated by adding pair of {a pair of scissors} {three pairs of sunglasses}. Likewise, singular concrete mass nouns can usually be enumerated by adding a unit noun such as piece and of {a piece of cutlery} {seven pieces of stationery}. Both singular and plural mass nouns can take indefinite adjectives such as any, less, much, and some that express general quantity {what you need is some courage} {he doesn’t have any manners}.

Many nouns can be both mass nouns and count nouns. With concrete nouns, which tend to be countable, the countable sense refers to individual things or instances {there were white chickens beside the red
wheelbarrow}; the mass sense refers to the thing viewed as a substance or material {let’s have chicken for dinner}. With abstract nouns, which tend to be uncountable, the mass sense refers to the general phenomenon {the candidate’s speech emphasized the importance of education}; the countable sense refers to individual instances or types {she told her son, “You’ll never succeed without an education”}.

Properties of Nouns

14 Generally. Nouns have properties of case and number. Some traditional grammarians also consider gender and person to be properties of nouns. The change in a noun or pronoun’s form to indicate these properties is called declension. In English, nouns change form only for number and the genitive case (see § 35); only pronouns truly decline in the traditional sense (see § 56).

15 Case. In English, only nouns and pronouns have case. Case denotes the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) and other words in a sentence. Grammarians disagree about the number of cases English nouns possess. Those who consider inflection (word form) the defining characteristic tend to say that there are two: common, which is the uninflected form, and genitive (or possessive), which is formed by adding -’s or just an apostrophe. But others argue that it’s useful to distinguish how the common-case noun is being used in the sentence, whether it is playing a nominative role {the doctor is in} or an objective role {go see the doctor}. They also argue that the label we put on nouns according to their function should match those we use for who and for personal pronouns, most of which do change form in the nominative and objective cases. Other grammarians even distinguish between the objective case and the dative case, the latter of which (in some languages—but not English) is inflected to signify an indirect object. But all these arguments are over a distinction without a practical difference in English word use. See §§ 32–38, 56.

16 Number. Number shows whether one object or more than one object is referred to, as with clock (singular) and clocks (plural). See §§ 19–31.
17 **Gender.** English nouns have no true gender, as that property is understood in many other languages. For example, whether a noun refers to a masculine or feminine person or thing does not determine the form of the accompanying article as it does in French, German, Spanish, and many other languages. Still, some English words—almost exclusively nouns denoting people or animals—are inherently masculine {uncle} {rooster} {lad} or feminine {aunt} {hen} {lass} and take the gender-appropriate pronouns. But most English nouns are common in gender and may refer to either sex {relative} {chicken} {child}. Many words once considered strictly masculine—especially words associated with jobs and professions—have been accepted as common (or indefinite) in gender over time {author} {executor} {proprietor}. Similarly, many forms made feminine by the addition of a suffix {aviatrix} {poetess} have been essentially abandoned. See § 443.

18 **Person.** A few grammarians attribute the property of person to nouns, distinguishing first person {I, Dan Walls, do swear that . . .}, second person {you, the professor, are key}, and third person {she, the arbiter, decides}. While those examples all use nouns in apposition to pronouns, that’s not closely relevant to the question whether the nouns themselves have the property of person in any grammatical sense. But using that property in analyzing nouns does help to point out three things. First, as with grammatical case, one argument for the property of person is to keep the properties of nouns parallel to those of pronouns, even though English nouns do not change form at all in first, second, or third person as personal pronouns do. Second, person determines what form other words will take—here, the verbs. Third, the examples illustrate why attributing person to nouns requires a stretch of logic—if the pronouns were not present in the first two examples, the verb would be in the third person, even if Dan Walls were talking about himself and even if the speaker were addressing the professor.

Although person distinction does not really occur in nouns, they do sometimes assume something approaching this function. Somebody may refer to himself or herself by using a noun or name {your Governor wishes you every happiness during this holiday season [written by the governor]} {children, your father wants you to pick up your blocks [said by the father]}. This third-person self-reference is known as *illeism*. A similar construction can be used in the second person, especially as an indication of politeness or respect {would Mother like a warm glass of milk? [the mother is being addressed]} {may I ask whether madam likes
the jacket? [the woman is being spoken to by a sales clerk]. But these instances are grammatical outliers.

**Plurals**

**19 Generally.** Because exceptions abound, a good dictionary or usage guide is essential for checking the standard plural form of a noun. But there are some basic rules for forming plurals.

**20 Adding “-s” or “-es.”** Most plurals are formed by adding -s or -es. If a noun ends with a letter whose sound readily combines with the s sound, then use -s to form the plural {siren–sirens} {club–clubs} {toy–toys}. If the noun ends in a letter that is not euphonious with -s alone (e.g., it ends in a sibilant such as -s, -sh, -x, -z, or a soft -ch), then use -es to form the plural {box–boxes} {moss–mosses} {birch–birches}.

**21 Plurals of proper nouns.** The plural of a proper noun is formed according to the same rules as those for common nouns {the Jenkinses} {the Rabiejs [silent j]} {the Murrys}. Never use an apostrophe with s to form the plural of a proper noun (only the possessive, both singular and plural—see § 35).

Pluralization confuses some families whose names end in a sibilant. Banks and Flowers look like plurals, but they’re not: they’re singular names. The plurals are Bankses and Flowerses {did you invite the Bankses?} {are we going to the Flowerses’ party?}. Think of “keeping up with the Joneses.”

**22 Nouns ending in “-f” or “-fe.”** Some nouns ending in -f or -fe take an -s {reef–reefs} {dwarf–dwarfs} {safe–safes}. Other nouns change the -f to -v and add -es {hoof–hooves} {knife–knives} {wolf–wolves}. A few words have one preferred form in AmE {wharf–wharves} and historically another in BrE {wharf–wharfs [though BrE has followed the AmE model since the mid-19th century]}. Even if one knows the etymology of a word, the correct forms are unpredictable. Again, consult a reliable dictionary or usage guide.

**23 Nouns ending in “-o.”** Some nouns ending in -o take an -s {avocado–avocados} {memento–mementos} {tuxedo–tuxedos}. But others take an -es {mango–mangoes} {cargo–cargoes} {volcano–volcanoes}. There is no
firm rule for determining whether the plural is formed with -s or -es, but two guidelines may prove helpful: (1) Nouns used as often in the plural as in the singular usually form the plural with -es {vetoes} {heroes}. Zeros is an exception (and therefore hard to remember). (2) Nouns usually form the plural with -s if (a) they appear to have been borrowed from some other language {intaglio–intaglions}; (b) they are proper names {Fazio–Fazios}; (c) they are rarely used as plurals {bravado–bravados}; (d) they end in -o preceded by a vowel {portfolio–portfolios}; or (e) they are shortened words {photo–photos}. Again, keep a dictionary and a usage guide handy.

24 **Nouns ending in “-y.”** Nouns ending in -y follow one of two rules: (1) If the noun is common and the -y is preceded by qu or by a consonant, change the -y to -i and add -es to form the plural {soliloquy–soliloquies} {berry–berries} {folly–follies}. (2) If the noun is proper or if the -y is preceded by a vowel, add -s to form the plural {Teddy–Teddys} {ploy–ploys} {buoy–buoys}. Bear in mind, there are a few exceptions {why–whys} {Ptolemy–Ptolemies}.

25 **Nouns ending in “-ics.”** Nouns ending in -ics present problems because they can be singular or plural. Generally, when the word denotes the facts and principles of a particular subject, the noun is singular {metaphysics deals with abstractions}. But if the noun expresses activity or a particular manifestation, it is plural {your ethics are unimpeachable}.

26 **Compound nouns.** A compound noun, which is made of separate words (with or without hyphens), typically forms the plural by using the plural form of the noun. If the compound is solid, the word is simply pluralized in the normal way {birdcages} {toothbrushes}—though there are rare exceptions {passersby}. If the compound consists of hyphenated or separate words, only the main word (also known as the head) is pluralized {holes in one} {maids of honor} {courts-martial} {motion pictures}. Rarely, more than one noun in a compound will change form {woman doctor → women doctors}. This usually occurs when man or woman is used as a qualifying word but only rarely when the word isn’t intended to be gender-specific. For instance, manservant becomes menservants, but man-hour becomes man-hours (not *men-hours, because man refers to humans in general, not to male humans in particular). But there are exceptions: man-of-war, a type of ship, becomes men-of-war, not *man-of-wars.
With a few words and phrases imported from Romance languages, the double plural of the source language is often kept for a time: *filet mignon* is generally recorded as *filets mignons* in dictionaries, and that was the predominant plural in print sources from about 1880 to 1980. But since 1980 the anglicized plural *filet mignons* has predominated in Standard Written English. Note that *filet* wasn't even treated as the main word or head, but instead the entire phrase took the plural -s at the end. But most English-speaking people have sensibly shortened the phrase to *filet* (pl. *filets*).

27 Irregular plurals. A few nouns have irregular plurals {child–children} {basis–bases}. With some of these words, the plural form depends on the meaning. Take the noun *louse*, for example: people may become infested with *lice* (insects), but contemptible people are *louses* (by metaphorical extension). Some nouns are ordinarily the same in both the singular and the plural {one fish, two fish} {I’d hoped to see four deer, but I saw only one deer}. And some nouns have two acceptable plurals {many Arkansans hunt duck} {we fed the ducks at the park}. The sense of a word may depend on which plural form is used. For example, a professional shrimper catches shrimp (the general name for the genus), while an ichthyologist studies shrimps (various species of shrimp).

28 Borrowed plurals. Many English nouns have been borrowed from other languages, especially Latin and Greek, in both their singular and plural forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alga</td>
<td>algae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alumna</td>
<td>alumnae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alumnus</td>
<td>alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bacillus</td>
<td>bacilli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bacterium</td>
<td>bacteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basis</td>
<td>bases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cactus</td>
<td>cacti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cherub</td>
<td>cherubim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrigendum</td>
<td>corrigenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crisis</td>
<td>crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criterion</td>
<td>criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datum</td>
<td>data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desideratum</td>
<td>desiderata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erratum</td>
<td>errata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fungus</td>
<td>fungi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>larva</td>
<td>larvae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorandum</td>
<td>memoranda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenomenon</td>
<td>phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phylum</td>
<td>phyla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prolegomenon</td>
<td>prolegomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seraph</td>
<td>seraphim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stimulus</td>
<td>stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stratum</td>
<td>strata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because these constitute irregular singulars and plurals in English, they can cause trouble: when a plural such as *alumni* or *criteria* appears much more frequently than its singular counterpart, some speakers and writers will almost inevitably begin treating the plural as a singular {*this criteria} {*I am an alumni of that school}. These nonstandard uses may never be accepted into Standard Written English—or, like *agenda*, they may (see pp. 233–34). The safest course generally is to stick to the naturalized singular and plural forms—and if the foreign plural in particular hasn’t been fully naturalized in English, use a normal English plural (e.g., *apparatuses, stadiums*). In judging a word’s degree of naturalization, you’ll find helpful guidance in a dictionary or usage guide. For two especially tricky examples—*data* and *media*—see the following section.

**29 Plural form with singular sense.** Some nouns are plural in form but singular in use and meaning {*good news is always welcome} {*economics is a challenging subject} {*measles is potentially deadly}. Also, a quoted plural word is treated as a singular {*mice is the plural of mouse} {*sistren is an archaic plural}.

Some traditional plurals, such as *data* and (to a lesser extent) *media*, have gradually acquired a mass-noun sense and are therefore treated as singular. Although traditionalists stick to the plural uses {*the data are inconclusive} {*the media are largely misreporting the event}, the new singular uses—using the terms in a collective sense rather than as count nouns—exist alongside the older ones {*the data shows the hypothesis to be correct} {*the media isn’t infallible}. In formal contexts, the most reliable approach is to retain the plural uses unless doing so makes you feel as if you’re being artificial, stuffy, and pedantic. Consider using alternative words, such as *information* and *journalists*. Or simply choose the newer
usage. But make your play and be consistent—vacillating will not win the admiration of readers and listeners.

**30** **Plural-form proper nouns.** A plural geographical name is often treated as singular when the name refers to a single entity {the United States is a relatively young nation} {Naples is a very beautiful city}. But there are many exceptions {the Alps have never been totally impassable}. Names of companies, institutions, and similar entities are generally treated as collective nouns—and hence singular in AmE, even when they are plural in form {General Motors reports that it will earn a profit} {American Airlines has moved its headquarters}. (For the possessive form of General Motors and American Airlines, see § 37.) In BrE, however, singular nouns that refer to individuals who work independently typically take plural verbs {Manchester United have won the FIFA Cup} {England are now leading in World Cup standings}. See § 10.

**31** **Tricky anomalies.** Not all English nouns show the usual singular–plural dichotomy. For example, mass nouns such as *furniture*, *spaghetti*, and *wheat* have only a singular form, and *oats*, *scissors*, and *slacks* (= pants) exist only as plurals. Some nouns look singular but are invariably plural {the police were just around the corner} {the vermin seem impossible to eradicate}. Others look plural but are invariably singular {the news is good} {linguistics is my major}. Strangely enough, *person* forms two plurals—*persons* and *people* (see p. 303)—but *people* also forms the plural *peoples* {the peoples of the world}.

**Case**

**32** **Function.** Case denotes the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence.

**33** **Common case, nominative function.** The nominative (sometimes called the *subjective*) function denotes the person, place, or thing about which an assertion in a clause is made {the governor delivered a speech [governor is the subject]} {the shops are crowded because the holiday season has begun [shops and season are the subjects of their respective clauses]}. A noun serving a nominative function controls the verb and usually precedes it {the troops retreated in winter [troops is the subject]}, but through inversion it can appear almost anywhere in the sentence {high
up in the tree sat a leopard \(\text{leopard is the subject}\)}. A noun or pronoun that follows a be-verb and refers to the same thing as the subject is called a \textit{predicate nominative} \(\text{my show dogs are Australian shepherds [Australian shepherds is a predicate nominative]}\). Generally, a sentence's predicate is the part that contains a verb and makes an assertion about the subject (see § 302).

\textbf{34 Common case, objective function.} The objective (sometimes called the \textit{accusative}) function denotes either (1) the person or thing acted on by a transitive verb in the active voice \{the balloon carried a pilot and a passenger \(\text{pilot and passenger are objective: the direct objects of the verb carried}\}\}; or (2) the person or thing related to another element by a connective, such as a preposition \{place the slide under the microscope \(\text{microscope is objective: the object of the preposition under}\}\}. A noun in an objective function usually follows the verb \{the queen consulted the prime minister \(\text{queen is nominative and prime minister is objective}\}\). But with an inverted construction, the object can appear elsewhere in the sentence \{everything else was returned; the jewelry the thieves had already sold \(\text{jewelry is objective and thieves is nominative}\}\}. A noun serving an objective function is never the subject of the following verb and usually does not control the number of the verb \{an assembly of strangers was outside \[the plural noun \text{strangers is the object of the preposition of}; the singular noun \text{assembly is the subject of the sentence, so the verb was must also be singular}\}\}.

Note, however, a tricky point: an object of a preposition frequently serves as the antecedent of a pronoun such as \textit{who} \{she is one of those artists who are always at the forefront of change\}. \textit{One} is not the subject of the \textit{who}-clause \(\text{who is}\); nor is \textit{one} the antecedent of \textit{who} \(\text{artists is}\). Hence the verb \(\text{are}\) is plural. You can more easily see why this is so if you rearrange the sentence without changing a single word: \textit{Of those artists who are always at the forefront of change, she is one}. See pp. 299–300.

\textbf{35 Genitive case.} The genitive case denotes (1) ownership, possession, or occupancy \{the architect's drawing board \(\text{Arnie's room}\}\}; (2) a relationship \{the philanthropist's secretary\}; (3) agency \{the company's representative\}; (4) description \{a summer's day\}; (5) the role of a subject \{the boy's application \[the boy applied]\}\}; (6) the role of an object \{the prisoner's release \[someone released the prisoner]\}\}; or (7) an idiomatic shorthand form of an of-phrase \{one hour's delay \[equal to a delay of one hour\]\}. The genitive case is also called the \textit{possessive case}, but \textit{possessive} is
a misleadingly narrow term, given the seven different functions of this case—true possession, as ordinarily understood, being only one. For instance, the fourth function above is often called the descriptive possessive. This is a misnomer, however, because the form doesn’t express actual possession but instead indicates that the noun is functioning as a descriptive adjective.

The genitive is formed in different ways, depending on the noun or nouns and their use in a sentence. The genitive of a singular noun is formed by adding -'s {driver’s seat} {engineer’s opinion}. The genitive of a plural noun that ends in -s or -es is formed by adding an apostrophe {parents’ house} {foxes’ den}. The genitive of an irregular plural noun is formed by adding -’s {women’s rights} {mice’s cage}. The genitive of a compound noun is formed by adding the appropriate ending to the last word in the compound {parents-in-law’s message}. All these -’s and -s’ endings are called inflected genitives.

Let’s dwell for a moment on singular and plural possessives. They befuddle people with proper names ending in -s—perhaps because a famous little book by William Strunk and E. B. White, The Elements of Style, in all editions since the first in 1959, opens with the singular possessive but never explains how to make a plural possessive.¹ Take the case of Bob Charles, who owns a boat: you write Bob Charles’s boat, according to most reputable style manuals (the AP Stylebook being to the contrary—see § 37). But what if the entire Charles family owns the boat? It’s the Charleses’ boat (no stylebook, reputable or not, being to the contrary). The rule is that you pluralize first and then add the possessive apostrophe {The Charleses’ boat is having trouble keeping up with the Joneses’ boat. Tom Jones’s assistant just told me so.}.

36 The “of”-genitive. The preposition of may precede a noun or proper name to express relationship, agency, or possession. The choice between an inflected genitive and an of-construction depends mostly on style. Proper nouns and nouns denoting people or things of higher status usually take the inflected genitive {Hilda’s adventures} {the lion’s paw}. Compare the perils of Penelope with the saucer of the chef. Nouns denoting inanimate things can often readily take either the inflected form or the of-genitive {the theater’s name} {the name of the theater}, but some sound right only in the of-genitive {the end of everything}.

The Traditional Parts of Speech

The *of*-genitive is also useful when a double genitive is called for—using both *of* and a possessive form {an idea of Hill's} {a friend of my grandfather's}. The double genitive is an age-old idiom that has consistently appeared in English since the days of Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1343–1400). It is impossible to avoid in some constructions with personal pronouns {an acquaintance of mine} {that briefcase of hers}.

Genitives of titles and names. The genitive of a title or a name is formed by adding *'s* {Lloyd's of London's records} {National Geographic Society's headquarters} {Dun & Bradstreet's rating}. This is so even when the word ends in a sibilant {Dickens's novels} {Dow Jones's money report}, unless the word itself is formed from a plural {General Motors' current production rate} {Applied Materials' financial statements}. But with a word that ends in a sibilant, it is acceptable (especially in journalism) to use a final apostrophe without the additional *-s* {Bill Gates' testimony}. See § 35.

Joint and separate genitives. If two or more nouns share possession, the last noun takes the genitive ending. (This is called the *group possessive.*) For example, *Peter and Harriet's correspondence* refers to the correspondence between Peter and Harriet. If two or more nouns possess something separately, each noun takes its own genitive ending. For example, *Peter's and Harriet's correspondence* refers to Peter's correspondence and also to Harriet's correspondence, presumably with all sorts of people. Joint possession is shown by a single apostrophe plus *-s* only when two nouns are used. If a noun and a pronoun are used to express joint possession, the noun must take an apostrophe plus *-s*. For example, *Hilda and Eddie's vacation* becomes (when Eddie has already been mentioned) *Hilda's and his vacation* or (if Eddie is speaking in first person) *Hilda's and my vacation*.

Agent and Recipient Nouns

Definitions; use. An agent noun denotes a person who performs some action. It is usually indicated by the suffix *-er* {adviser} or *-or* {donor}. The most common agent nouns end in *-er*; generally, *-or* appears in words that were brought into English directly from Latin. Consult a good dictionary or usage guide. A recipient noun denotes a person who receives something or action, or one for whom something is done. It is usually indicated by the suffix *-ee*, signaling a passive sense. For example, an *honoree*
is one who is honored. In legal usage, a recipient noun often means “one to whom”; for example, a lessee is one to whom property is leased. In recent years there has been a fad in coining new -ee words, and sometimes the meaning is not at all passive; for example, an attendee is one who attends. If these words unnecessarily displace their active-voice equivalents and can be ambiguous (what’s the difference between an attender and an attendee?), they should be avoided.

40 **Appositives: definition and use.** An appositive is a noun element that immediately follows another noun element in order to define or further identify it {George Washington, our first president, was born in Virginia [our first president is an appositive of the proper noun George Washington].} An appositive is said to be “in apposition” with the word or phrase to which it refers. Commas frame an appositive unless it is restrictive—e.g., compare Robert Burns, the poet, wrote many songs about women named Mary (poet being a nonrestrictive appositive noun) with the poet Robert Burns wrote many songs about women named Mary (Robert Burns restricting poet by precisely identifying which poet). A restrictive appositive cannot be removed from a sentence without obscuring the identity of the word or phrase that the appositive relates to. The type of appositive you use can substantially affect a sentence’s meaning. For example, compare My dog Skippy is a Norwegian elkhound with My dog, Skippy, is a Norwegian elkhound. Except for the commas surrounding the appositive in the second sentence, the two sentences are identical. The restrictive appositive in the first sentence may suggest that the writer has more than one dog—hence the reader needs to know which one is being spoken of. The nonrestrictive appositive suggests that there is only one dog because it is not critical to know the dog’s name to understand just what the writer is referring to.

**Conversions**

41 **Nouns as adjectives.** Words that are ordinarily nouns sometimes function as other parts of speech, such as adjectives or verbs. A noun-to-adjective transition takes place when a noun modifies another noun {the morning newspaper} {a state legislature} {a varsity sport} (morning, state, and varsity function as adjectives). These are also termed attributive nouns. Occasionally, the use of a noun as an adjective can produce ambiguity. For example, the phrase fast results can be read as meaning either “rapid
results” or (less probably but possibly) “the outcome of a fast.” Sometimes the noun and its adjectival form can be used interchangeably—e.g., prostate cancer and prostatic cancer both refer to cancer of the prostate gland. But sometimes the use of the noun instead of the adjective may alter the meaning—e.g., a study group is not necessarily a studious group. A preposition may be needed to indicate a noun’s relationship to other sentence elements. But if the noun functions as an adjective, the preposition must be omitted; at times this can result in a vague phrase—e.g., voter awareness (awareness of voters or by them?). Context might suggest what preposition is implied, but a reader may have to deduce the writer’s meaning.

42 **Nouns as verbs.** English nouns commonly pass into use as verbs; it always has been so. (The resulting verbs are called denominal verbs.) For example, in 1220 the noun husband meant “one who tills and cultivates the earth” {the husband has worked hard to produce this crop}. It became a verb meaning “to till, cultivate, and tend crops” around 1420 {you must husband your land thoughtfully}. New noun-to-verb transitions often occur in dialect or jargon. For example, the noun mainstream is used as a verb in passages such as more school districts are mainstreaming pupils with special needs. In formal prose, such recently transformed words should be used cautiously if at all.

43 **Adverbial functions.** Words that are ordinarily nouns occasionally function as adverbs {we rode single file} {Sam walked home}. This shift usually happens when a preposition is omitted {we rode in a single file} {Sam walked to his home}.

   Traditional grammarians have typically called such nouns-as-adverbs adverbial objectives. Often they modify verbs:

   - We arrived Saturday.
   - He went home.
   - She jogged miles and miles.
   - Each cover costs $4.

   Often, too, an adverbial objective modifies an adjective {the team is four members strong} {the proposal is worth considering}.  


Other conversions. Words that ordinarily function as other parts of speech, as well as various types of phrases, may function as nouns. Aside from the obvious instance of pronouns (see § 45), these include:

- adjectives such as *poor* {the poor are always with us} (see § 133);
- adverbs such as *here* and *now* {we cannot avoid the here and now};
- participles (gerunds) such as *swimming* {swimming in that lake can be dangerous} (see § 155);
- infinitives such as *to discover* {to discover the truth is our goal} (see §§ 147–50);
- phrases such as those denoting monetary amounts {six million dollars went toward restoring the arena}; and
- clauses such as *what the people want* {what the people want is justice}. 
Pronouns

Definition and Uses

45 “Pronoun” defined. A pronoun is a word used as a substitute for a noun or, sometimes, another pronoun. It is used in one of two ways. (1) A pronoun may substitute for an expressed noun or pronoun, especially to avoid needless repetition. For example, most of the nouns in the sentence The father told the father’s daughter that the father wanted the father’s daughter to do some chores can be replaced with pronouns: The father told his daughter that he wanted her to do some chores. (2) A pronoun may also stand in the place of an understood noun. For example, if the person addressed has been identified elsewhere, the question Susan, are you bringing your boots? can be more simply stated as Are you bringing your boots? And in the sentence It is too hot, the indefinite it is understood to mean the temperature (of something).

There are also a few word pairs, such as each other, one another, and no one, that function as pronouns. These are called phrasal pronouns.

46 Antecedents of pronouns. A pronoun typically refers to an antecedent—that is, an earlier noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause in the same or in a previous sentence. Pronouns with antecedents are called anaphoric pronouns. (Anaphora refers to the use of a word or phrase to refer to or replace one used earlier.) An antecedent may be explicit or implicit, but it should be clear. Miscues and ambiguity commonly arise from (1) a missing antecedent {the clown’s act with his dog made it a pleasure to watch [where it is intended to refer to the circus, which is not explicitly mentioned in the context]}; (2) multiple possible antecedents {Scott visited Eric after his discharge from the army [where it is unclear who was discharged—Scott or Eric]}; and (3) multiple pronouns and antecedents in the same sentence {when the bottle is empty or the baby stops drinking, it must be sterilized with hot water because if it drinks from a dirty bottle, it could become ill [where one hopes that the hot-water sterilization is for the bottle]}.
47 **Clarity of antecedent.** Writers sometimes engage in what is called *broad reference* by allowing a pronoun to refer to an entire idea instead of to an identifiable noun element (*she consistently returned his letters unread; this caused him much dismay*). The demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*, as well as the pronoun *it*, are most often used in this way. If the idea to which such a pronoun refers is reasonably clear, broad reference is acceptable in informal writing. But often it is considered a faulty construction (*He had to deliver newspapers early each morning on Wednesdays. This annoyed him no end. [What is this? The fact that he was delivering newspapers? That the mornings were so early? That the responsibility fell on Wednesdays?]*)

The mere fact that a noun element precedes a pronoun does not necessarily mean that the noun element is an antecedent. Sometimes, as we see in the next section, a pronoun does not have an antecedent (*Mr. Allen borrowed my golf clubs*); (*Mrs. Wallace gave us good advice*).

Occasionally, too, the pronoun precedes its referent—a figure of speech termed *cataphora*, or anticipatory reference (*if she wants our help, Sarah will call us*). As a matter of Standard Written English, editors often prefer to swap the positions of cataphoric pronouns and their referents so that readers won’t be needlessly in suspense about who or what is being referred to, especially in a long sentence (*if it is something you decide you really need, then your mother and I will consider getting a car for you*). Cataphora often permissibly occurs in constructions involving *like, as, do, or have* (*like his colleagues, Mr. Thomas hopes to win reelection*).

One more point: A pronoun normally requires a noun or another pronoun as its antecedent. And because possessives function as adjectives rather than nouns, some writers have argued that possessives should not serve as antecedents of pronouns used in the nominative or objective case. But compare *Mr. Blain’s background qualified him for the job* with *Mr. Blain had a background that qualified him for the job*. Not only is the identity of *him* perfectly clear in either construction, but the possessive in the first—a usage blessed by respected authorities—makes for a more economical sentence.

48 **Pronouns without antecedents.** Some pronouns do not require antecedents. The first-person pronouns *I* and *we* (as well as *us*) stand for the speaker or a group that includes the speaker, so they almost never have an antecedent. Similarly, the second-person pronoun *you* usually needs no antecedent (*are you leaving?*), although one is sometimes supplied
The Traditional Parts of Speech

in direct address {Katrina, do you need something?}. Expletives such as there and it (some of which are pronouns) have no antecedents {it is time to go} {this is a fine mess} (see § 327–29). And the relative pronoun what and the interrogative pronouns (who, which, what) never take an antecedent {who cares what I think?}. In colloquial usage, they often appear without an antecedent {they say she’s a good golfer}, though skeptical listeners and readers may want to know who “they” are.

49 **Sentence meaning.** The presence or absence of a pronoun may affect the meaning of a sentence. For example, if a noun is used as an appositive of a first-person pronoun, the sense is much different from that of a purely third-person reference. Compare *I, Claudius, once ruled the Roman Empire* with *Claudius once ruled the Roman Empire*. Or *talk to me, your physician, about the symptoms* with *talk to your physician about the symptoms*. As an imperative, the second-person pronoun you may usually be either used or omitted without changing the meaning: *You, come here!* is much the same as *Come here!* although the pronoun adds an aggressive tone. When it is not used imperatively, however, you cannot be omitted without shifting the sentence to the third person—e.g., *You children rake the yard* (speaking to the children) with *Children rake the yard* (speaking about the children—but in second-person direct address: *Children, rake the yard*).

Properties of Pronouns

50 **Four properties.** A pronoun has four properties: number, person, gender, and case. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, person, and gender. (This is called pronoun–antecedent agreement.) But only the third-person singular (he, she, it) is capable of indicating all three. Some pronouns can show only number—first-person singular and plural (I, we) and third-person plural. The second-person pronoun (you) indicates person only: it is no longer capable of showing singular or plural, since the form is the same for both in Modern English. First- and third-person personal pronouns (except it), who, and whoever can show nominative and objective case (I, me; we, us; he, him; she, her; they, them; who, whom; whoever, whomever); possessive pronouns represent the genitive case.

51 **Number and antecedent.** A pronoun’s number is guided by that of its antecedent or referent—that is, a singular antecedent takes a singular pronoun of the same person as the antecedent, and a plural antecedent
takes a plural pronoun of the same person as the antecedent \{a book and its cover\} \{the dogs and their owner\}. A collective noun takes a singular pronoun if the members are treated as a unit \{the audience showed its appreciation\} but a plural if they act individually \{the audience rushed back to their seats\}. (See § 10.) A singular noun that is modified by two or more adjectives to denote different varieties, uses, or aspects of the object may take a plural pronoun \{British and American writing differ in more ways than just their spelling [here, writing may be thought of as an elided noun after British]\}. Two or more singular nouns or pronouns that are joined by \textit{and} are taken jointly and referred to by a plural pronoun \{the boy and girl left their bicycles outside\}.

\textbf{52 Exceptions regarding number of the antecedent.} There are several refinements to the rules just stated: (1) When two or more singular antecedents denote the same thing and are connected by \textit{and}, the pronoun referring to the antecedents is singular \{a lawyer and role model received her richly deserved recognition today\}. (2) When two or more singular antecedents are connected by \textit{and} and modified by \textit{each}, \textit{every}, or \textit{no}, the pronoun referring to the antecedents is singular \{every college and university encourages its students to succeed\}. (3) When two or more singular antecedents are connected by \textit{or}, \textit{nor}, \textit{either–or}, or \textit{neither–nor}, they are treated separately and referred to by a singular pronoun \{neither the orange nor the peach smells as sweet as it should\}. (4) When two or more antecedents of different numbers are connected by \textit{or} or \textit{nor}, the pronoun’s number agrees with that of the nearest (usually the last) antecedent. If possible, cast the sentence so that the plural antecedent comes last \{neither the singer nor the dancers have asked for their paychecks\}. (5) When two or more antecedents of different numbers are connected by \textit{and}, they are referred to by a plural pronoun regardless of the antecedents’ order \{the horses and the mule kicked over their water trough\}.

\textbf{53 Pronoun with multiple antecedents.} When a pronoun has two or more antecedents that differ from the pronoun in person, and the antecedents are connected by \textit{and}, \textit{or}, or \textit{nor}, the pronoun must take the person of only one antecedent. The first person is preferred to the second, and the second person to the third \{you or I should get to work on our experiment\}. In that example, the antecedents are in the second and first person. The following pronoun \textit{our} is in the first person, as is the antecedent \textit{I}. \{You and she can settle your dispute.\} Here, the antecedents are in the second and third person, so the following pronoun \textit{your} takes the second
The Traditional Parts of Speech

person. If the pronoun refers to only one of the connected nouns or pronouns, it takes the person of that noun {you and Marian have discussed her trip report}. At times, the pronoun may refer to an antecedent that is not expressed in the same sentence; it takes the number of that antecedent, not of any connected noun or pronoun that precedes it {neither they nor I could do his work [his is referring to someone named in a preceding sentence]}.  

54 Some traditional singular pronouns. The antecedents anybody, anyone, each, either, everybody, everyone, neither, nobody, no one, one, somebody, and someone have traditionally been treated as singulars that require a singular pronoun:

Is anyone taking his parents?
Everybody tried his best.
Someone should bring his car.

But if a sentence patently refers only to females, the pronoun is traditionally feminine {each of the alumnae was responsible for her own gift} {every one of the sorority members had her say}.

Increasingly in Modern English, the possessive plural pronoun their replaces his in constructions such as these—to the consternation of traditionalists, to the relief of women’s-rights proponents, and to the indifference of most other people. The shift, which originated hundreds of years ago,\(^2\) did not become predominant in edited English until the 1980s. Everybody did his best still contends with Everybody did their best, but it appears to be losing the battle. Many experienced writers and editors simply avoid the problem with a little “preventive grammar” (see § 435). Tread carefully.

55 Gender. If the antecedents are of different genders and are joined by and, a plural pronoun is normally used to refer to them {the sister and brother are visiting their aunt}. But if a pronoun refers to only one of the antecedent nouns connected by and, the pronoun’s gender is that of the noun referred to {the uncle and niece rode in his car}. A special problem arises when the antecedent nouns are singular, are of different genders or an indeterminate gender, and are joined by or or nor. Using he, his, and him as a common-gender pronoun is now widely considered sexist, and picking the gender of the nearest antecedent may be misleading (e.g., {some boy or girl left her lunch box on the bus}). A good writer can usually recast

the sentence to eliminate the need for any personal pronoun at all {some child left a lunch box on the bus}. See §§ 49, 439.

56 **Case.** Sets of word forms by which a language differentiates the functions that a word performs in a sentence are called the word’s *cases*. A pronoun that functions as the subject of a finite verb is in the nominative case {they went to town}. A personal pronoun in the possessive case is governed by the name of the thing possessed {President Barack Obama took his advisers with him to Hawaii}. A pronoun that functions as the object of a verb or preposition is in the objective case {they gave her a farewell party} {they gave it to him}. A pronoun put after an intransitive verb or participle agrees in case with the preceding noun or pronoun referring to the same thing. A pronoun used in an absolute construction is in the nominative: its case depends on no other word {she being disqualified, our best hope is gone}.

57 **Pronouns in apposition.** The case of a pronoun used in an appositive construction (see § 311) is determined by the function (subject or object) of the words with which it is in apposition {we three—Bruce, Brad, and I—traveled to Augusta} {she asked us—Barbara, Sarah, and me—to move our cars}.

58 **Nominative case misused for objective.** The objective case governs personal pronouns used as direct objects of verbs {call me tomorrow}, indirect objects of verbs {write me a letter}, or objects of prepositions {makes sense to me}. One of the most persistent slips in English is to misuse the nominative case of a personal pronoun in a compound object:

- **Poor:** *The test would be simple for you or I.
- **Better:** The test would be simple for you or me.
- **Poor:** *Read this and tell Laura and I what you think.
- **Better:** Read this and tell Laura and me what you think.

The mistake may arise from overcorrecting a common error that young children are prone to—using the objective case for a personal pronoun in a compound subject, as in *Jim and me want to go swimming*. Such problems arise in compounds so exclusively that the foolproof way to check for them is to read the sentence with the personal pronoun alone: no one would mistake *The test would be simple for I* or *Read this and tell I what you think* for correct grammar. See § 58.
A few language commentators in recent years have taken the radical position that *between you and I* and other such phrases are now “standard” because the object of the preposition isn’t the pair of pronouns but instead the “coordinate phrase” with an invariable *and I.* The better view is that these mistaken nominatives are Stage 3 misusages—common but widely rejected as nonstandard among well-read, highly literate people. They are no longer Stage 1—universally rejected—but neither are they Stage 5 (universally accepted apart from pedantic, eccentric outliers), and they may never become Standard Written English (see pp. 8–9, §§ 428–30). For more on the five stages in the Language-Change Index, see *Garner’s Modern English Usage*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), xxxi, 1, li.

Classes of Pronouns

**Seven classes.** There are seven classes of pronouns:

- personal (*I, you, he, she, it, we, and they*);
- demonstrative (*that* and *this*);
- reciprocal (*each other and one another*);
- interrogative (*what, which, and who*);
- relative (*that, what, which, and who*);
- indefinite (*e.g., another, any, each, either, and none*); and
- adjective (*e.g., any, each, that, this, what, and which*).

Many pronouns, except personal pronouns, may function as more than one type—*e.g., that* may be a demonstrative, relative, or adjective pronoun—depending on its use in a particular sentence.

Personal Pronouns

**Form.** A personal pronoun shows by its form whether it is referring to the speaker (first person), the person or thing spoken to (second person), or the person or thing spoken of (third person). Personal pronouns, in other words, convey the source, goal, and topic of an utterance. By their form, they also display number, gender, and case.

---

3 See Oliver Kamm, *Accidence Will Happen* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2015), 141–42: “*Between you and I* is permissible. . . . Almost all style manuals disagree with me on this, but I modestly submit that they’re wrong. . . . The convention about the cases of conjoined pronouns is required by any rule of English grammar.”
Identification. The first person is the speaker or speakers \{I need some tea\} \{we heard the news\}. The second person shows who is spoken to \{you should write that essay tonight\}. And the third person shows who or what is spoken of \{she is at work\} \{it is in the glove compartment\}.

The first-person-singular pronoun *I* is always capitalized no matter where it appears in the sentence \{if possible, I will send you an answer today\}. All other pronouns are capitalized only at the beginning of a sentence, unless they are part of an honorific title \{Her Majesty, the Queen of England\}.

Changes in form. Personal pronouns change form (or *decline*) according to person, number, and case. Apart from the second person, all personal pronouns show number by taking a singular and plural form. Although the second-person pronoun *you* is both singular and plural, it always takes a plural verb, even if only a single person or thing is addressed.

The Forms of Personal Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular pronouns</th>
<th>NOMINATIVE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>GENITIVE</th>
<th>REFLEXIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my, mine</td>
<td>myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
<td>yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>she</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>her, hers</td>
<td>herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>its</td>
<td>itself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plural pronouns</th>
<th>NOMINATIVE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>GENITIVE</th>
<th>REFLEXIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>our, ours</td>
<td>ourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
<td>yourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>theirs</td>
<td>themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are four essential rules about the nominative and objective cases. (1) If the pronoun is the subject of a clause, it is in the nominative case \{he is vice president\}. (2) If the pronoun is the object of a verb, it is objective \{she thanked him\}. (3) If a pronoun is the object of a preposition, it is objective \{please keep this between you and me\}. (4) If the pronoun is the subject of an infinitive, it is objective \{Jim wanted her to sing\}.
The Traditional Parts of Speech

63 Agreement generally. A personal pronoun agrees with the noun for which it stands in both gender and number \{John writes, and he will soon write well\} \{Sheila was there, but she couldn’t hear what was said\}.

64 Expressing gender. Only the third-person-singular pronouns directly express gender. In the nominative or objective case, the pronoun takes the antecedent noun’s gender \{the president is not in her office today; she’s at a seminar\}. In the genitive case, the pronoun always takes the gender of the possessor, not of the person or thing possessed \{the woman loves her husband\} \{Thomas is visiting his sister\} \{the kitten pounced on its mother\}. Some nouns may acquire gender through personification, a figure of speech that refers to a nonliving thing as if it were a person. Pronouns enhance personification when a feminine or masculine pronoun is used as if the antecedent represented a female or male person (as was traditionally done, for example, when a ship or other vessel was referred to with the pronoun she or her).

65 Determining gender. Most English nouns do not have grammatical gender unless they have a specific meaning. (See § 17.) So choosing the appropriate personal pronoun may depend on whether the person’s or animal’s sex is known or important enough to be worth mentioning. For instance, you may declare That singer is awful. I hope she’ll stop soon! (the speaker knows the person’s sex) or That’s my neighbor’s pet pig: its name is Rasher (the animal’s sex is not known to the speaker or not important to understanding). Usually a word referring to a human requires a gender-specific pronoun. You can say I hear a baby crying somewhere; it must be wet (the baby’s sex is not known to the speaker and not important to understanding) (see § 69). But you don’t say The bank manager got into its car. When you must use a masculine or feminine pronoun but don’t know the person’s sex, you’ll probably want to cast the sentence so that a pronoun isn’t necessary. Avoid using sex-specific pronouns “generically.” See § 439.

66 Special rules. Some special rules apply to personal pronouns. (1) If a pronoun is the subject of a clause, or follows a conjunction but precedes the verb, it must be in the nominative case \{she owns a tan briefcase\} \{although Delia would like to travel, she can’t afford to\}. (2) If a pronoun is the object of a verb or preposition, it must be in the objective case \{the rustic setting helped him relax\} \{that’s a matter between him and her\}. (3) If a prepositional phrase contains more than one object, all the objects must be in the objective case \{will you send an invitation to him and
me?}. (4) If a pronoun is the subject of an infinitive, it must be in the objective case {does Tina want me to leave?}.

Case after linking verb. Strictly speaking, a pronoun serving as the complement of a be-verb or other linking verb should be in the nominative case {it was she who asked for a meeting}. In that construction, she functions as a predicate nominative; when a pronoun does this, it is termed an attribute pronoun. The same construction occurs when someone who answers a telephone call is asked, “May I speak to [answerer’s name]?” The refined response is This is he, not *This is him.

But in many sentences, the result can sound pedantic or eccentric to the modern ear {was that he on the phone?}. In formal writing, some fastidious readers will consider the objective case to be incorrect in every instance. But the colloquial objective is widely considered to be acceptable:

Informal: The most qualified candidate was her.  
Formal: The most qualified candidate was she.

See p. 287.

The position is somewhat different with first-person pronouns as predicate nominals. It’s me! is widely considered perfectly acceptable—even preferable to the priggish-sounding It’s I! Answering to the French C’est moi, the phrasing It’s me gradually became established beginning in the late 18th century and is now unimpeachable.

Case after “than” or “as–as.” The case of a pronoun following a comparative construction, typically at the end of a sentence, depends on who or what is being compared. In My sister looks more like our father than I [or me], for example, the proper pronoun depends on the meaning. If the question is whether the sister or the speaker looks more like their father, the pronoun should be nominative because it is the subject of an understood verb {my sister looks more like our father than I do}. But if the question is whether the father or the speaker looks more like the sister, the pronoun should be objective because it is the object of a preposition in an understood clause {my sister looks more like my father than she looks like me}. Whatever the writer’s intent with the original sentence, the listener or reader can’t be entirely certain about the meaning. It would be better to reword the sentence and avoid the elliptical construction. See § 314.
Special uses. Some personal pronouns have special uses.

(1) *He, him,* and *his* have traditionally been used as pronouns of indeterminate gender equally applicable to a male or female person {if the finder returns my watch, he will receive a reward}. Because these pronouns are also masculine-specific, they have in recent years been regarded as sexist when used generically, and their indeterminate-gender use is declining. (See §§ 65, 436.)

(2) *It* eliminates gender even if the noun’s sex could be identified. Using *it* does not mean that the noun has no sex—only that the sex is unknown or unimportant {the baby is smiling at its mother} {the mockingbird is building its nest}.

(3) *We, you,* and *they* can be used indefinitely, i.e., without an antecedent, in the sense of “persons,” “one,” or “people in general.” *We* is sometimes used by an individual who is speaking for a group {the council’s representative declared, “We appreciate your concern”} {the magazine’s editor wrote, “In our last issue, we covered the archaeological survey of Peru”}. This latter use is called “the editorial we.” Some writers also use *we* to make their prose appear less personal and to draw in the reader or listener {from these results we can draw only one conclusion}. You can apply indefinitely to any person or all persons {if you read this book, you will learn how to influence people [you is indefinite—anyone who reads the book will learn]}. The same is true of *they* {they say that Stonehenge may have been a primitive calendar [those denoted by they are unidentified and perhaps unimportant]}.

(4) *It* also has several uses as an indefinite pronoun: (a) *it* may refer to a phrase, clause, sentence, or implied thought {he said that the website is down, but I don’t believe it [without the pronoun *it*, the clause might be rewritten *I don’t believe what he said*]}; (b) *it* can be the subject of a verb (usually a *be*-verb) without an antecedent noun {it was too far}, or an introductory word or expletive for a phrase or clause that follows the verb {it is possible that Jerry Paul is on vacation}; (c) *it* can be the grammatical subject in an expression about time, weather, distance, or the like {it is almost midnight} {it is beginning to snow}; and (d) *it* may be an expletive that anticipates the true grammatical subject or object {I find it hard to accept this situation}. Using the indefinite *it* carelessly may result in obscurity {Paul asked about my cough again; it is starting to annoy me [what is annoying, Paul’s asking or the cough itself?]}. {my cousin is a doctor; it is an interesting
profession [there is no noun naming the profession (medicine), so it lacks a necessary antecedent].

The singular “they.” Normally, a singular antecedent requires a singular pronoun. But because he is no longer universally accepted as a generic pronoun referring to a person of unspecified gender, people commonly (in speech and in informal writing) substitute the third-person-plural pronouns they, them, their, and themselves, and the nonstandard singular *themself. While this usage is accepted in those spheres, it is still considered nonstandard in formal writing. Avoiding the plural form by alternating masculine and feminine pronouns is awkward and only emphasizes the inherent problem of not having a generic third-person pronoun. Employing an artificial form such as *s/he is distracting at best, and ridiculous to many readers. There are several ways to avoid the problem. For example, use the traditional, formal he or she, him or her, his or her, himself or herself. Stylistically, this device can be awkward or even stilted, but if used sparingly it can be functional. For other devices, see § 439.

Possessive Pronouns

Uses and forms. The possessive pronouns, my, our, your, his, her, its, and their, are used as limiting adjectives to qualify nouns {my dictionary} {your cabin} {his diploma}. Despite their name, possessive pronouns function in a much broader series of relationships than mere possession {my professor} {your argument}. Each form has a corresponding absolute possessive pronoun (also called an independent possessive) that can stand alone without a noun: mine, ours, yours, his, hers, its, and theirs. The independent form does not require an explicit object: the thing possessed may be either an antecedent or something understood {this dictionary is mine} {this cabin of yours is nice} {where is hers?}. An independent possessive pronoun can also stand alone and be treated as a noun: it can be the subject or object of a verb {hers is on the table} {pass me yours}, or the object of a preposition {put your coat with theirs}. When used with the preposition of, a double possessive is produced: that letter of Sheila’s becomes that letter of hers. Such a construction is unobjectionable. Note that none of the possessive personal pronouns is spelled with an apostrophe.
Possessive pronouns vs. contractions. The possessive forms of personal pronouns are my, mine, our, ours, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, and their. Again, none of them takes an apostrophe. Nor does the possessive form of who (whose). Apart from these exceptions, the apostrophe is a universal signal of the possessive in English, so it is a natural tendency (and a common error) to overlook the exceptions and insert an apostrophe in the forms that end in -s (or the sibilant -se). Aggravating that tendency is the fact that some of the words have homophones that are contractions—another form that is also signaled by apostrophes. The pronouns that don’t sound like legitimate contractions seldom present problems, even if they do end in -s (hers, yours, ours). But several do require special attention, specifically its (the possessive of it) and it’s (“it is”); your (the possessive of you) and you’re (“you are”); whose (the possessive of who) and who’s (“who is”); and the three homophones their (the possessive of they), there (“in that place” or “in that way”), and they’re (“they are”).

Poor: *It’s rare for my dog not to eat all it’s food.*
Better: It’s rare for my dog not to eat all its food.
Poor: *Your not going to believe you’re eyes.*
Better: You’re not going to believe your eyes.
Poor: *Whose to say who’s fault the accident was?*
Better: Who’s to say whose fault the accident was?
Poor: *They’re bags were over their, but now there not.*
Better: Their bags were over there, but now they’re not.

See § 146.

Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

Compound personal pronouns: "-self" forms. Several personal pronouns form compounds by taking the suffix -self or -selves. These are my–myself; our–ourselves; your–yourself; your–yourselves; him–himself; her–herself; it–itself; and their–themselves. The indefinite pronoun one forms the compound pronoun oneself. All these compound personal pronouns are the same in both the nominative case and the objective case. They have no possessive forms. They are used for four purposes: (1) for emphasis (in which case they are termed intensive pronouns) {I saw Queen Beatrice herself} {I’ll do it myself}; (2) to refer to the subject of the verb (in which case they are termed reflexive pronouns) {he saved himself the trouble of asking} {we support ourselves}; (3) to complement a verb that
requires a reflexive pronoun {she availed herself of the privilege} {we need to acquaint ourselves with Beethoven’s string quartets}; and (4) to substitute for a simple personal pronoun {this getaway weekend is just for myself}. This fourth use is the least well established in Standard Written English. If a simple personal pronoun will suffice (e.g., I or me), use that instead.

74 Basic uses of reflexive and intensive pronouns. The words *myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, and themselves* are used in two ways, and it’s useful to distinguish between their functions as reflexive and intensive personal pronouns. Compare the intensive pronoun in *I burned the papers myself* (in which the object of *burned* is *papers*) with the reflexive pronoun in *I burned myself* (in which the object of *burned* is *myself*).

Reflexive pronouns serve as objects that usually look back to the subject of a sentence or clause {the cat scared itself} {Gayla took it on herself to make the first move} {Ayoka dressed herself today} {don’t repeat yourself [the subject of this imperative sentence is understood to be You]}. Intensive pronouns repeat the antecedent noun or pronoun to add emphasis {I myself don’t care} {did you speak with the manager herself?} {Kate herself has won several writing awards} {did you knit that yourself?}. An intensive pronoun is used in apposition to its referent, so it’s in the nominative case.

A common problem occurs when the -self form does not serve either of those functions. For example, the first-person pronoun in a compound might be used as a subject:

Poor: The staff and myself thank you for your contribution.
Better: The staff and I thank you for your contribution.

Or it might be used as an object that does not refer to the subject:

Poor: Deliver the equipment to my partner or myself.
Better: Deliver the equipment to my partner or me.

Demonstrative Pronouns

75 Definition. A demonstrative pronoun (or, as it is sometimes called, a deictic pronoun) is one that points directly to its antecedent in the text: *this or that* for a singular antecedent {this is your desk} {that is my office}, and *these or those* for a plural antecedent {these have just arrived} {those need to be answered}. *This* and *these* point to objects that are near in space,
time, or thought, while that and those point to objects that are somewhat remote in space, time, or thought. The antecedent of a demonstrative pronoun can be a noun, phrase, clause, sentence, or implied thought, as long as the antecedent is clear. *Kind* and *sort*, each referring to “one class,” are often used with an adjectival *this* or *that* {this kind of magazine} {that sort of school}. The plural forms *kinds* and *sorts* are preferred in Standard Written English with the plural demonstratives {these kinds of magazines} {those sorts of schools}. A demonstrative pronoun standing alone cannot refer to a human antecedent; it must be followed by a word denoting a person. For example: *I heard Mike’s son playing. That child is talented.* In the second sentence, it would be erroneous to omit *child* or some such noun after *that*.

Reciprocal Pronouns

76 *Generally.* Each other and *one another* are called *reciprocal pronouns* because they express a mutual relationship between elements {after much discussion, the two finally understood each other} {it’s true that we love one another}. Compare the nuances of meaning that a reciprocal or plural reflexive pronoun creates in the same sentence: {after our hike, we all checked ourselves for ticks [each person inspected him- or herself]} {after our hike, we checked one another for ticks [each member inspected one or more of the others]}. Reciprocal pronouns can also take the inflected genitive *’s* to express possession {we admired each other’s watches}.

In traditional usage, *each other* is reserved for two {she and I protected each other} and *one another* for more than two {all five of us watched out for one another}. See p. 267.

77 *Simple and phrasal pronouns.* Because the reciprocal pronouns (along with *no one*) consist of two separate words operating as a single pronoun, they are sometimes termed *phrasal pronouns*. Contrast the simple pronouns *I*, *me*, *we*, *he*, *she*, and *they*, which have always been written as one word. (Pronouns such as *myself*, *everyone*, *whoever*, and *another* were originally open compounds that became closed over time. Only *no one* remains open, most likely because the repeated *o* would cause pronunciation miscues in a closed compound. In BrE it’s often hyphenated.)
Interrogative Pronouns

Definition. An interrogative pronoun asks a question. The three interrogatives are who, what, and which. Only one, who, declines: who (nominative), whom (objective), whose (possessive) {who starred in Casablanca?} {to whom am I speaking?} {whose cologne smells so nice?}. In the nominative case, who is used in two ways: (1) as the subject of a verb {who washed the dishes today?}; and (2) as a predicate nominative after a linking verb {it was who?}. In the objective case, whom is used in two ways: (1) as the object of a verb {whom did you see?}; and (2) as the object of a preposition {for whom is this building named?}. Yet who is often used for whom as the object of a verb:

Informal: Who did you want?
Stuffy: Whom did you want?

The same is true of who when it begins a clause as the object of a stranded preposition:

Informal: Who are you talking about?
Stuffy: Whom are you talking about?

Referent of interrogative pronouns. To refer to a person, who, what, or which can be used. But they are not interchangeable. Who is universal or general: it asks for any one or more persons among a universe of people. The answer may potentially include any person, living or dead, present or absent {who wants to see that movie?} {who were your greatest inspirations?}. Who also asks for a particular person’s identity {who is that person standing near the Emerald Buddha?}. Which and what, when followed by a noun denoting a person or persons, are usually selective or limited; they ask for a particular member of a group, and the answer is limited only to the group addressed or referred to {which explorers visited China in the 16th century?} {what ice-skater is your favorite?}. To refer to a person, animal, or thing, either which or what may be used {which one of you did this?} {what kind of bird is that?}. When applied to a person, what often asks for the person’s character, occupation, qualities, and the like {what do you think of our governor?}. When applied to a thing, what is broad and asks for any one thing, especially of a set {what is your quest?} {what is your favorite color?}. 
Relative Pronouns

80 **Definition.** A relative pronoun is one that introduces a dependent (or relative) clause and relates it to the independent clause. Relative pronouns in common use are *who, which, what,* and *that.* *Who* is the only relative pronoun that declines: *who* (nominative), *whom* (objective), *whose* (possessive) {the woman who presented the award} {a source whom he declined to name} {the writer whose book was a best seller}. *Who* refers only to a person, but it can be used in the first, second, or third person. *Which* refers only to an animal or a thing. *What* refers only to a nonliving thing. *Which* and *what* are used only in the second and third person. *That* refers to a person, animal, or thing, and it can be used in the first, second, or third person. When a relative pronoun qualifies a noun element in the clause it introduces, it is sometimes called a *relative adjective.* See § 105.

81 **Gender, number, and case with relative pronouns.** A relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender, person, and number. If a personal pronoun follows a relative pronoun, and both refer to the same antecedent in the independent clause, the personal pronoun takes the gender and number of that antecedent {I saw a farmer who was plowing his fields with his mule}. If the personal pronoun refers to a different antecedent from that of the relative pronoun, it takes the gender and number of that antecedent {I saw the boy and also the girl who pushed him down}. (See §§ 62–64.) A personal pronoun does not govern the case of a relative pronoun. Hence an objective pronoun such as *me* may be the antecedent of the nominative pronoun *who,* although a construction formed in this way sounds increasingly archaic or even incorrect {she was referring to me, who never graduated from college} {it was we whom they objected to}.

When a construction may be technically correct but sounds awkward or artificial {I, who am wronged, have a grievance}, the best course may be to use preventive grammar and find a different construction {I have been wronged; I have a grievance} {having been wronged, I have a grievance}. See § 433.

82 **Positional nuances.** A relative pronoun is in the nominative case when no subject comes between it and the verb {the professor who lectured was brilliant}. When one or more words intervene between the relative pronoun and the verb, the relative is governed by the following verb or by a verb or a preposition within the intervening clause {the person whom I called is no longer there} {it was John whom they thought was in
the bleachers). When a relative pronoun is interrogative, it refers to the word or phrase containing the answer to the question for its consequent, which agrees in case with the interrogative {whose book is that? Joseph’s}.

**Antecedent.** Usually a relative pronoun’s antecedent is a noun or pronoun in the independent clause on which the relative clause depends. For clarity, it should immediately precede the pronoun {the diadem that I told you about is in this gallery}. The antecedent may also be a noun phrase or a clause, but the result can sometimes be ambiguous: in *the bedroom of the villa, which was painted pink*, does the *which*-clause refer to the bedroom or to the villa? See the following section.

**Remote relative clauses.** For clarity, pronouns must have unambiguous antecedents. A common problem with the relative pronouns *that*, *which*, and *who* arises if you separate the relative clause from the noun to which it refers. The longer the separation, the more pronounced the problem—especially when one or more unrelated nouns fall between the true antecedent and the clause. Consider *the guy down the street that runs through our neighborhood*: if the intent is for *that runs through our neighborhood* to refer to *the guy* rather than *the street*, the writer should reword the phrase to make that instantly clear to the reader.

**Poor:** Stress caused her to lose the freedom from fear of the future, which she once enjoyed.

**Better:** Stress caused her to lose what she once enjoyed: freedom from fear of the future.

**Poor:** After the news came out, the CEO fired the aide, a friend of the chairman, who was the target of the investigation.

**Better:** After the news came out, the CEO fired the aide, who was the target of the investigation and also a friend of the chairman.

**Poor:** There are plenty of applicants with the right skills that wouldn’t fit in with our staff.

**Better:** There are plenty of applicants who have the right skills but who still wouldn’t fit in with our staff.

**Poor:** The benefits to clients that the new policy has brought are enormous.

**Better:** The benefits that the new policy has brought to clients are enormous.
**The Traditional Parts of Speech**

**Poor:** The question is whether a member of a gang that is arrested at the scene continues to be “present” and therefore accountable for any crime occurring after the arrest. (The relative pronoun *that* might refer either to *gang* or to *member*.)

**Better:** The question is whether a gang member who is arrested at the scene continues to be “present” and therefore accountable for any crime occurring after the arrest.

See § 310.

85 **Omitted antecedent.** If no antecedent noun is expressed, *what* can be used to mean *that which* {is this what you were looking for?}. But if there is an antecedent, use a different relative pronoun: *who* {where is the man who spoke?}, *that* (if the relative clause is restrictive, i.e., essential to the sentence’s basic meaning) {where are the books that Jones told us about?}, or *which* (if the relative clause is nonrestrictive, i.e., could be deleted without affecting the sentence’s basic meaning) {the sun, which is shining brightly, feels warm on my face}.

86 **Relative pronoun and the antecedent “one.”** A relative pronoun takes its number from its antecedent. That’s easy enough when the antecedent is simply *one*. But if *one* is part of a noun phrase with a plural noun such as *one of the few* or *one of those*, the relative pronoun following takes the plural word as its antecedent—not *one*. Treat the pronoun as a plural and use a plural verb. For example, in *Lily is one of those people who are famous for being famous*, the plural verb *are* links a quality belonging to *those people*. See § 34.

87 **Function of relative pronoun in clause.** A relative pronoun may function as the subject or object of a clause, or it may be adverbial. Using relative clauses makes it possible to condense several thoughts and eliminate repetitive elements. For instance, in *the driver who parked this car went into the store*, the pronoun *who* in the relative clause *who parked this car* identifies the driver and the previous action {the driver parked this car; the driver went into the store}.

88 **Genitive forms.** The forms *of whom* and *of which* are genitives {the child, the mother of whom we talked about, is in kindergarten} {this foal, the sire of which Belle owns, will be trained as a hunter-jumper}. These forms have an old-fashioned sound and can often be rephrased more naturally.
(the child whose mother we talked about is in kindergarten). The relative what forms the genitive of what {a list of what we need}. The relative that forms the genitive of that (the preposition being placed at the end of the phrase) {no legend that we know of} or of which {no legend of which we know}. On ending a sentence with a preposition, see § 251.

89 “Whose” and “of which.” The relatives who and which can both take whose as a possessive form (whose substitutes for of which) {a movie the conclusion of which is unforgettable} {a movie whose conclusion is unforgettable}. Some writers object to using whose as a replacement for of which, especially when the subject is not human, but the usage is centuries old and is widely accepted as preventing unnecessary awkwardness. Compare the company whose stock rose faster with the company the stock of which rose faster. Either form is acceptable, but the possessive whose is far smoother.

90 Compound relative pronouns. Who, whom, what, and which form compound relative pronouns by adding the suffix -ever. The compound relatives whoever, whomever, whichever, and whatever apply universally to any or all persons or things {whatever you do, let me know} {whoever needs to write a report about this book may borrow it}. The compounds whoever and whomever are distinguished in Standard Written English. Whoever is nominative and equivalent to anyone who. It is used for the subject of a clause, as in we will give a prize to whoever finds the hidden egg (although the entire whoever-clause is the object of the preposition to, the word whoever is the subject of that clause and therefore must be in the nominative case). Whomever is objective and equivalent to anyone (or anyone whom). It is an object, never the subject of a clause {give the key to whomever I point to}.

91 “Who” vs. “whom.” Who and whoever are nominative pronouns. Each can be used as a subject {whoever said that?} or as a predicate nominative {it was who?}. Whom and whomever are the objective forms, used as the object of a verb {you called whom?} or of a preposition {to whom are you referring?}.

Three problems arise with determining the correct case. First, because the words are so often found in the inverted syntax of an interrogative sentence, their true function in the sentence can be hard to see without sorting the words into standard subject–verb–object syntax. In
the following example, sorting the incorrect “I should say whom is call-
ing” makes the case easier to determine:

**Poor:**  *Whom should I say is calling?*
**Better:**  Who should I say is calling?

Second, determining the proper case can be confusing when the pronoun
serves a function (say, nominative) in a clause that itself serves a different
function (say, objective) in the main sentence. The pronoun’s function in
its clause determines its case.

**Poor:**  *I’ll talk to whomever will listen.*
**Better:**  I’ll talk to whoever will listen.
**Okay:**  Whoever you choose will suit me.
**Better:**  Whomever you choose will suit me.

In the first example, the entire clause *whoever will listen* is the object of
the preposition *to*. But in the clause itself, *whoever* serves as the subject,
and that function determines its case. Similarly, in the second example
*whomever* is the object of *choose* in the clause, so it must be in the objective
case even though the clause itself serves as the subject of the sentence.

Third, as the second example above shows, a further distraction can
arise when the *who*-clause itself contains a nested clause, typically of attri-
bution or identification (here, *you choose*). See § 309.

**Indefinite Pronouns**

*Generally.* An indefinite pronoun is one that generally or indefinitely rep-
resents an object, usually one that has already been identified or doesn’t
need exact identification. The most common examples are another, any, 
both, each, either, neither, none, one, other, some, and such. There are also
compound indefinite pronouns such as anybody, anything, anyone, every-
body, everyone, everything, nobody, no one, oneself, somebody, and someone.
Each, either, and neither are also called *distributive pronouns* because they
separate the objects referred to from others referred to nearby. Indefinite
pronouns have number.

When an indefinite pronoun is the subject of a verb, it is usually sin-
gular {everyone is enjoying the dinner} {everybody takes notes during
the first week}. But sometimes an indefinite pronoun carries a plural
sense in informal prose {nobody could describe the music; they hadn’t
been listening to it} {everyone understood the risk, but they were lured by promises of big returns}.

The forms of indefinite pronouns are not affected by gender or person, and the nominative and objective forms are the same. To form the possessive, the indefinite pronoun may take -'s {that is no one's fault} {is this anyone's jacket?} or the adverb else plus -'s {don't interfere with anybody else's business} {no one else's cups were broken}.

The indefinite pronoun “one.” As a pronoun, one has two primary uses: (1) as a substitute for a count noun that has already been mentioned or is readily inferable {a leather book requires more care than a cloth one} {where's your better half? she's a good one!}; and (2) as a generic pronoun referring to people in general {one prefers not receiving this kind of news in public} {one might thank oneself for keeping mum}. The second use is more typical of BrE than of AmE. One might easily verify that for oneself.
Types of Adjectives

**Definition.** An adjective is a word (more particularly, a type of word sometimes called an *adjunct*) modifying a noun or pronoun; it is often called a *describing word*. An adjective tells you what sort, how many, how large or small, whose, etc. It may modify an understood as well as an expressed noun (*he is a good as well as a wise man [man is understood after good]*)

An adjective may add a new idea to a noun or pronoun by describing it more definitely or fully (*red wagon* {human error}). Or it may be limiting (*three pigs* {this time}). Most adjectives derive from nouns, as *plentiful* derives from *plenty* or as *stylish* derives from *style*; some derive from verbs, roots, or other adjectives.

Often a suffix creates the adjective. Among the suffixes that often distinguish adjectives are -able (*manageable*), -al (*mystical*), -ary (*elementary*), -ed (*hammered*), -en (*wooden*), -ful (*harmful*), -ible (*inaccessible*), -ic (*artistic*), -ish (*foolish*), -ive (*demonstrative*), -less (*helpless*), -like (*childlike*), -ly (*ghostly*), -ous (*perilous*), -some (*lonesome*), and -y (*sunny*). But many adjectives do not have distinctive endings and are recognizable only by their function (*old* {tall} {brilliant}).

Depending on its syntactic position, an adjective is either attributive or predicative. An attributive adjective precedes the noun element it modifies (*good sportsmanship*) {fine writing}. A predicative adjective (also termed a *predicate adjective*) occurs after a linking verb (*the sky is blue*) or after an object, as a complement (*she found him scintillating*) {they considered the problem difficult}.

**Qualitative adjectives.** The largest class of adjectives is the qualitative (or *descriptive*) type: they tell you what type or kind or class or feature. They denote characteristics (*gray* {young} {wizened} {plump}).

**Quantitative adjectives.** A quantitative adjective limits the meaning of a noun by defining quantity or the order in which things should be considered. Number-related adjectives may denote an exact or definite number (*fourteen* {sixth}) or denote number generally (*many* {few}). Nonnumeric adjectives follow cardinal numbers (*one giant leap*), but if both
Adjectives

Ordinal and cardinal numbers appear in a phrase, the ordinal usually precedes the cardinal number {the first nine episodes}. An adjective denoting a position in a series is also treated like an ordinal number {the first three copies} unless it denotes a quality of the noun itself; then a cardinal number may precede the ordinal {the three first editions of Johnson’s Dictionary [meaning three copies of the first edition, not editions 1–3]}.

97 **Demonstrative adjectives.** A demonstrative adjective is one that can point to things, persons, or ideas—usually this, that, these, those, the, and such {this nurse saw that doctor administer the medicine}. Some demonstrative adjectives must agree in number with the nouns they modify—as a matter of what is called adjective–noun agreement. In particular, the singular forms this and that modify singular nouns {this book} {that enterprise}; the plural forms these and those modify plural nouns {these photographs are colorful} {those etchings will be hard to clean}. Normally, this and these refer to things close at hand (either literally or figuratively); that and those refer to things more distant.

Such (= of this or that kind) is typical of literary English {because several ruffians lurked on the fringes of the crowd, she preferred to stay away completely to avoid such people}. Lawyers frequently use such synonymously with one of the other demonstrative adjectives—that is, not to mean “of this or that type” but instead to displace this or that {although she considered buying 100 Maple Avenue, my client decided not to pursue such property}. But this usage is considered poor legal style because it occasionally introduces ambiguities (has the client decided not to buy property of that kind? or just the previously identified property?).

98 **Possessive adjectives.** The main possessive pronouns—namely my, our, your, his, her, its, and their—are often called possessive adjectives since their function is to qualify nouns {my hat} {our house} {their magnanimity}. See § 71.

99 **Interrogative adjectives.** An interrogative adjective asks a question {which train will you be taking?} {what good is it to argue?}, whether direct or indirect, while modifying a noun element in the question. An interrogative adjective, which qualifies a noun {what drink do you want?}, is distinguishable from an interrogative pronoun (see §§ 78–79), which itself stands for a noun {what do you want?}.
100 **Distributive adjectives.** Just as there are distributive pronouns (see § 92), there are distributive adjectives: *any, no, each, every, either, neither*, etc. when qualifying a noun {*any car*} {*each member*} {*neither argument*}.

101 **Indefinite adjectives.** Indefinite adjectives correspond to indefinite pronouns (see §§ 92–93), except that they modify nouns. The most common are *all, another, any, both, each, either, few, less, many, much, neither, one, other, several*, and *some*—when followed by a noun.

102 **Pronominal adjectives.** A pronominal adjective functions as a noun modifier. It must agree in number with the noun to which it belongs {*all people*} {*these sorts of favors*} {*those kinds of indulgences*}. All pronouns other than personal pronouns, *who*, and *none* may serve as adjectives {*those windows*} {*some coyotes*}. The adjective *no* is used instead of *none* {*no one astronaut*} {*no other paradise*}.

103 **Proper adjectives.** A proper adjective is one that, being or deriving from a proper name, always begins with a capital letter {*a New York minute*} {*a Cuban cigar*} {*a Canadian dollar*}. A proper name used attributively is still capitalized, but it does not cause the noun it modifies to be capitalized. A place-name containing a comma—such as *Toronto, Ontario, or New Delhi, India*—should generally not be used as an adjective because a second comma may be considered obligatory {*we met in a Toronto, Ontario, restaurant*} The comma after *Ontario* in that sentence is awkward. Compare the readability of *a New Delhi, India, marketplace* with *a New Delhi marketplace or a marketplace in New Delhi, India* (substituting a prepositional phrase for the proper adjective).

104 **Compound adjectives.** A compound adjective is composed of two or more words operating as a single adjective. It can be a closed compound {*a straitlaced disciplinarian*}, an open compound {*the West Virginia miners*}, or a hyphenated phrasal adjective {*well-bred children*}.

105 **Relative adjectives.** A relative adjective is a relative pronoun functioning as an adjective by modifying a noun element in the dependent adjectival or noun clause it introduces {*he is an author whose books become richer with every reading*} {*take whichever path will get you there quickest*}. 
Adjectives

106 **Definition.** Articles are function words that are more important for the role they play in a sentence’s structure than for their semantic content. An article is a limiting adjective that precedes a noun or noun phrase and determines its use to indicate something definite (*the*) or indefinite (*a* or *an*). An article might stand alone or be used with other adjectives {*a road*} {*an elaborate design*} {*the yellow-brick road*}.

107 **Definite article.** A definite article points to a definite object that (1) is so well understood that it does not need description (e.g., *the package is here* is a shortened form of *the package that you expected is here*); (2) is a thing that is about to be described {*the sights of Chicago*}; or (3) is important {*the grand prize*}. The definite article belongs to nouns in the singular {*the star*} or the plural number {*the stars*}.

108 **Definite articles and proper names.** Generally, the definite article is used for proper names {*the Majestic Theatre*} and is usually lowercase even when it is a part of the name {*the Beatles*}. But there are exceptions {*The Hague*}. An indefinite article may be used in some circumstances, as when referring to one of several things or people that have the same proper name {*I know a Timothy Benbow who lives in Oxfordshire and another in Gloucestershire*} {*one of Janice’s ancestors was an Earl or Duke of Northumberland in the 15th or 16th century*}.

If a proper name is reduced to an abbreviation, the definite article is often retained when the acronym stands alone. For example, *the National Football League* is usually written as *the NFL* {*the Dallas Cowboys joined the NFL in 1960*}. But if the proper name doesn’t usually take the definite article, the abbreviation won’t take it. *So the Columbia Broadcasting System* is abbreviated and written *CBS* {*do you watch CBS?*}. The definite article is absorbed into the acronym when it acts as an adjective {*FCC standards allow the media to police themselves*} {*the TV listings [the definite article is associated with listings, not TV]*}.

109 **Indefinite article.** An indefinite article points to a nonspecific object, thing, or person that is not distinguished from the other members of a class. The thing may be singular {*a student at Princeton*}, or uncountable {*a multitude*}, or generalized {*an idea inspired by Milton’s *Paradise Lost*}.
Indefinite article in specific reference. In a few usages, the indefinite article provides a specific reference {I saw a great movie last night} and the definite article a generic reference {the Scots are talking about independence [generalizing by nationality]}.

Choosing “a” or “an.” With the indefinite article, the choice of a or an depends on the sound of the word it precedes. A precedes words with a consonant sound, including /y/, /h/, and /w/, no matter how the word is spelled {a eulogy} {a historic occasion} {a onetime pass}. An comes before words with a vowel sound {an FBI agent} {an X-Files episode} {an hour ago}.

The same is true for abbreviations. If the first letter or syllable is sounded as a consonant, use a {a BTU calculation} {a GB of memory}. If the first sound is a vowel, then use an {an MBA degree} {an ATM}. Some abbreviations are commonly used as whole words—and are technically called acronyms (the term initialisms being reserved for abbreviations in which each character is sounded separately, as with NBA). With an acronym, the sound of the first syllable controls {an AIDS epidemic} {a MEDEVAC helicopter}. Some have variant pronunciations and may be sounded out letter by letter or as whole words: for example, a local-area network may be an LAN (/el-ay-en/) or a LAN (/lan/), and a radio-operated car is an ROC (/ahr-oh-see/) or a ROC (/rok/). Choose a or an according to whether the abbreviation’s first sound is more often spoken as a vowel or as a consonant. A dictionary may help. See p. 228.

Articles with coordinate nouns. With a series of coordinate nouns, an article may appear before each noun, but it is not necessary {the rosebush and hedge need trimming}. If the things named make up a single idea, it’s especially unnecessary to repeat the article {in the highest degree of dressage, the horse and rider appear to be one entity}. And if the named things are covered by one plural noun, the definite article should not be repeated {in the first and second years of college}. But if you want to distinguish concepts or add emphasis, then do repeat the article {the time, the money, and the effort were all wasted}.

Effect on meaning. Because articles have a demonstrative value, the meaning of a phrase may shift depending on the article used. For example, an officer and gentleman escorted Princess Grace to her car suggests (though ambiguously) that the escort was one man with two descriptive characteristics. But an officer and a friend escorted Princess Grace to her car
suggests that two people acted as escorts. Similarly, *do you like the red and blue cloth?* suggests that the cloth contains both red and blue threads. But *do you like the red and the blue cloth?* suggests that two different fabrics are being discussed. The clearest way to express the idea that the cloth contains both red and blue is to hyphenate the phrase as a compound modifier: *red-and-blue cloth*; and with two kinds of cloth, the clear expression is either to repeat the word *cloth* (*the red cloth and the blue cloth*) or to use *cloth* with the first adjective rather than the second (*the red cloth and the blue*).

114 **Omitted article and zero article.** The absence of an article may alter a sentence’s meaning—e.g., the meaning of *the news brought us little comfort* (we weren’t comforted) changes if *a* is inserted before *little*: *the news brought us a little comfort* (we felt somewhat comforted). An article that is implied but omitted is called a *zero article*, common in idiomatic usage. For example, in the morning you may *make the bed*, but at night you *go to bed* (not *the bed*)—and notice *in the morning* vs. *at night*. The zero article usually occurs in idiomatic references to time, illness, transportation, personal routines, and meals {by sunset} {has cancer} {travel by train} {go to bed} {make breakfast}.

115 **Article as pronoun substitute.** An article may sometimes substitute for a pronoun. For example, the blanks in *a patient who develops the described rash on ___ hands should inform ___ doctor* may be filled in with either a possessive pronoun or the definite article (*the*).

**Dates as Adjectives**

116 **Use and punctuation.** Dates are often used as descriptive adjectives, more often today than in years past. If a month-year or month-day date is used as an adjective, no hyphen or comma is needed {October 31 festivities} {December 2014 financial statement}. If a full month-day-year date is used, then a comma is sometimes considered necessary both before and after the year {the May 27, 2016, ceremonies}. But this construction is awkward because the adjective (which is forward-looking) contains two commas (which are backward-looking); the construction is therefore best avoided {ceremonies on May 27, 2016}. When the full date is used adjectivally, some writers omit the second comma {the May 27, 2016 ceremonies}. 


Position of Adjectives

117 **Basic rules.** An adjective that modifies a noun element usually precedes it {perfect storm} {spectacular view} {a good bowl of soup}. Such an adjective is called an *attributive adjective*. An adjective may follow the noun element if the adjective (1) expresses special emphasis {reasons innumerable} {captains courageous}; (2) occurs in this position in standard usage {court-martial} {notary public}; (3) is a predicate adjective following a linking verb {I am ready}; (4) functions as an appositive set off by commas or dashes {the man, tall and thin, stood in the corner}; or (5) modifies a pronoun of a type usually followed by an adjective {anything good} {everything yellow} {nothing important} {something wicked}. (An adjective that follows its noun is termed a *postpositive adjective* because it appears after the noun it modifies.) Some adjectives are always in the predicate and never appear before what they modify {the city is asleep} {the door was ajar}. Others appear uniformly before the nouns they modify {utter nonsense} {a mere child}. Phrasal adjectives may precede or follow what they modify. When a modifying phrase follows the noun element it modifies, it is traditionally called an *adjective phrase*. See §§ 131–32.

118 **After possessives.** When a noun phrase includes a possessive noun, as in *children’s shoes* or *the company’s president*, the adjective follows the possessive {children’s athletic shoes} {the company’s former president} (unless the reference is to athletic children or a former company). The same is true of possessive pronouns {her red dress}.

119 **Adjective modifying pronoun.** When modifying a pronoun, an adjective usually follows the pronoun {the searchers found him unconscious} {some like it hot}, sometimes as a predicate adjective {it was insensitive} {who was so jealous?}.

120 **Predicate adjective.** A predicate adjective is an adjective that follows a linking verb (see §§ 142, 183) but modifies the subject {the child is afraid} {the night became colder} {this tastes delicious} {I feel bad}. If an adjective in the predicate modifies a noun or pronoun in the predicate, it is not a predicate adjective. For example, in *the train will be late*, the adjective *late* modifies the subject *train*. But in *the train will be here at a late hour*, the adjective *late* modifies the noun *hour*, not the subject *train*. 
So even though it occurs in the predicate, it is not known as a **predicate adjective**, which by definition follows a linking verb.

**Dangling participles.** A participial adjective often appears before an independent clause {watching constantly, the lioness protected her cubs from danger}. Such a participial phrase is said to “dangle” when the participle lacks grammatical connection to a noun that performs the action denoted by the participle. This grammatical problem occurs when a participial form is not immediately followed by the noun it modifies {before receiving the medal, the general congratulated the soldier [receiving is meant to attach to soldier, not general]}.  

**Poor:** Bounding through the woods, we saw a herd of deer.  
**Better:** We saw a herd of deer bounding through the woods.  

**Poor:** Elated by the letter from a long-lost friend, life took a turn for the better for Doris.  
**Better:** Elated by the letter from a long-lost friend, Doris found her life taking a turn for the better.

The same problem arises when a possessive follows the participial phrase {dodging the traffic, his cellphone got dropped in the street [the cellphone wasn’t dodging traffic]}. If you recast the sentence to eliminate the dangler, you’ll improve the style {the general congratulated the soldier before awarding the medal} {dodging the traffic, he dropped his cellphone in the street}. For certain participles functioning as prepositions (or subordinating conjunctions) and therefore exempt from the rule against dangling, see § 246.

**Distinguishing an adjective from an adverb or participle.** Some adjectives have an -ly ending and therefore resemble adverbs {friendly} {goodly}. Others end with -ed or -ing and resemble participial verbs {insulting} {tired}. Placement usually distinguishes whether a word is an adjective. Compare a calculated risk (calculated is an adjective) with the risk has been calculated (calculated is a participle), and compare his lectures are boring (boring is an adjective) with he is boring the class (boring is a participle). Also, Eddie did a fine job (fine is an adjective) with the camera works fine (fine is an adverb). See § 214.
Degrees of Adjectives

123 Generally. An adjective is gradable into three degrees: the positive or absolute {hard}, the comparative {harder}, and the superlative {hardest}. A positive adjective simply expresses an object’s quality without reference to any other thing {a big balloon} {bad news}.

124 Comparative forms. A comparative adjective expresses the relationship between a specified quality shared by two things, often to determine which has more or less of that quality {a cheaper ticket} {a happier ending}. The suffix -er usually signals the comparative form of a common adjective having one or two syllables {light–lighter} {merry–merrier}. These forms are called synthetic comparatives. A positive adjective with three or more syllables typically takes more (or greater, less, fewer, and so forth) instead of a suffix to form the comparative {intelligent–more intelligent} {purposeful–more purposeful}. These forms are called periphrastic comparatives. Among the exceptional three-syllable positive forms that make synthetic comparatives are unlucky {unluckier} and unsteady {unsteadier}. Yet more unlucky and more unsteady are available as periphrastic alternatives.

Some adjectives with two syllables take the -er suffix {lazy–lazier} {narrow–narrower}, but most two-syllable adjectives take more {more hostile} {more careless}. A two-syllable adjective ending in -er, -le, -ow, -ure, or -y can typically use either the -er suffix or more—unless it is prefixed with un- {unluckier} {unsteadier}.

125 Superlative forms. A superlative adjective expresses the relationship between at least three things and denotes an extreme of intensity or amount in a particular shared quality {the biggest house on the block} {the bitterest pill of all}. The suffix -est usually signals the superlative form of a common adjective having one or two syllables {lighter–lightest}. These forms are called synthetic superlatives. An adjective with three or more syllables takes most instead of a suffix to form the superlative {quarrelsome–most quarrelsome} {humorous–most humorous}. These forms are called periphrastic superlatives. Some adjectives with two syllables take the -est suffix {holy–holiest} {noble–noblest}, but most two-syllable adjectives take most {most fruitful} {most reckless}.

126 Forming comparatives and superlatives. A few rules govern the forming of a short regular adjective’s comparative and superlative forms. (1) If the
adjective is a monosyllable ending in a single vowel followed by a single consonant, the final consonant is doubled before the suffix is attached {red–redder–reddest}. (2) If the adjective ends in a silent -e, the -e is dropped before adding the suffix {polite–politer–politest}. (3) A participle used as an adjective requires more or most before the participle; no suffix is added to form the comparative or the superlative {this teleplay is more boring than the first one} {I am most tired on Fridays}. (4) A few one-syllable adjectives—real, right, and wrong—can take only more and most. Even then, these combinations occur only in informal speech. (5) Eager, proper, and somber, unlike many other two-syllable adjectives, also take only more and most; none can take a suffix. (6) A two-syllable adjective to which the negative prefix un- has been added can usually either take a suffix or take more or most, even if the total number of syllables is three {unhappiest} {most unhappy}. (7) Participles that function as adjectives never take suffixes; they use only more and most {a more appealing outfit} {the most stunning smile}. (8) Many adjectives are irregular—there is no rule that guides their comparative and superlative forms {good–better–best} {less–lesser–least}. A good dictionary will show the forms of an irregular adjective. (9) An adjective can never take both a suffix and more or most (or less, least, etc.). This is a grammatical fault known as a double comparative {*more wronger} or a double superlative {*least wrongest}. It is stigmatized as nonstandard.

127 Equal and unequal comparisons. A higher degree of comparison is signaled by a suffix (-er or -est), or by more or most. (See §§ 124–26.) A lower degree is shown by less (comparative) or least (superlative) {cold–less cold} {less cold–least cold}. Equivalence is shown by the use of the as–as construction {this is as old as that} and sometimes by so {that test was not so hard as the last one}.

128 Noncomparable adjectives. An adjective that, by definition, describes an absolute state or condition—e.g., entire, impossible, pregnant, unique—is called noncomparable. It cannot take a comparative suffix and cannot be coupled with a comparative term (more, most, less, least). Nor can it be intensified by a word such as very, largely, or quite. But on the rare occasion when a particular emphasis is needed, a good writer may depart from this rule and use a phrase such as more perfect, as the framers of the United States Constitution did in composing its preamble {We the
People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union ...].
Among the adjectives generally considered noncomparable are these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>inevitable</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>infinite</td>
<td>stationary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
<td>irrevocable</td>
<td>sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>ultimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoid</td>
<td>manifest</td>
<td>unanimous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entire</td>
<td>only</td>
<td>unavoidable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>false</td>
<td>paramount</td>
<td>unbroken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatal</td>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favorite</td>
<td>perpetual</td>
<td>unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final</td>
<td>possible</td>
<td>universal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideal</td>
<td>preferable</td>
<td>void</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impossible</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special Types of Adjectives**

**Participial adjectives.** A participial adjective is simply a verb’s participle (see §§ 151–54, 157–59) that modifies a noun or pronoun. It can be a present participle (verb ending in -ing) {the dining room} {a walking stick} {a rising star} or a past participle (usually a verb ending in -ed) {an endangered species} {a completed assignment} {a proven need}. Some past-participial adjectives have only this adjectival function, the past-participial verb having taken a different form {a shaven face} {a graven image}. When a past participle (see § 151) functioning as an adjective has its own modifier, that modifier may itself be modified with an adverb such as *quite* {a quite fatigued traveler}, *barely* {a barely concealed wince}, *little* {a little-known fact}, or an adverbial phrase such as *very much* {a very much distrusted public official}. If the past participle has gained a strong adjectival quality, *very* will do the job alone without the quantitative *much* {very tired} {very drunk}. But if the participial form seems more like a verb, *very* needs *much* to help it do the job {very much appreciated} {very much delayed}. A few past participles (such as *bored*, *interested*, *pleased*, *satisfied*) are in the middle of the spectrum between those having mostly adjectival qualities and those having mostly verbal qualities. With these few, the more stringent editorial position is to include the quantitative *much*.
Coordinate adjectives. A coordinate adjective is one that appears in a sequence with one or more related adjectives to modify the same noun. Coordinate adjectives should be separated by commas or by and {skilled, experienced chess player} {nurturing and loving parent}. If one adjective modifies the noun and another adjective modifies the idea expressed by the combination of the first adjective and the noun, the adjectives are not considered coordinate and should not be separated by a comma. For example, a lethargic soccer player describes a soccer player who is lethargic. Likewise, phrases such as white brick house and wrinkled canvas jacket are unpunctuated because the adjectives are not coordinate: they have no logical connection in sense (a white house could be made of many different materials; so could a wrinkled jacket). The most useful test is this: if and would fit between the two adjectives, a comma is necessary.

Phrasal adjectives. A phrasal adjective (also called a compound modifier) is a phrase that functions as a unit to modify a noun. A phrasal adjective follows these basic rules: (1) Generally, if placed before a noun, the phrase should be hyphenated to avoid misdirecting the reader {dog-eat-dog competition}. There may be a considerable difference between the hyphenated and the unhyphenated forms: compare small animal hospital with small-animal hospital. (2) If a compound noun is an element of a phrasal adjective, the entire compound noun must be hyphenated to clarify the relationship among the words {video-game-magazine dispute} {college-football-halftime controversy}. (3) If more than one phrasal adjective modifies a single noun, hyphenation becomes especially important {19th-century song-and-dance numbers} {state-inspected assisted-living facility}. (4) If two phrasal adjectives end in a common element, the ending element should appear only with the second phrase, and a suspension hyphen should follow the unattached words to show that they are related to the ending element {the choral- and instrumental-music programs}. (5) If the phrasal adjective denotes an amount or a duration, the plural should be dropped. For instance, pregnancy lasts nine months but is a nine-month pregnancy, and a shop open 24 hours a day has a 24-hour-a-day schedule. The plural is retained only for fractions {a two-thirds majority}. (6) If a phrasal adjective becomes awkward, the sentence should probably be recast. For example, The news about the lower-than-expected third-quarter earnings disappointed investors could become The news about the third-quarter earnings, which were lower than expected, disappointed investors. Or perhaps this: Investors were disappointed by the third-quarter earnings, which were lower than expected.
**Exceptions for hyphenating phrasal adjectives.** There are exceptions to hyphenating phrasal adjectives: (1) If a phrasal adjective follows a linking verb, it is often unhyphenated—e.g., compare a well-trained athlete with an athlete who is well trained. (2) When a proper name begins a phrasal adjective, the name is not hyphenated {the Monty Python school of comedy}. (3) A two-word phrasal adjective that begins with an adverb ending in -ly is not hyphenated {a sharply worded reprimand} (but a not-so-sharply-worded reprimand).

**Functional Variation**

**Adjectives as nouns.** An adjective-to-noun shift (sometimes called an adnoun) is relatively common in English. Some adjectives are well established as nouns and are perfectly suitable for most contexts. For example, a postmortem examination is often called a postmortem; collectible objects are collectibles; and French people are the French. Any but the most established among such nouns should be used only after careful consideration. If there’s an alternative, it will almost certainly be better. For example, there is probably no good reason to use the adjective collaborative as a noun (i.e., as a shortened form of collaborative enterprise) when the perfectly good collaboration is available. See § 44.

**Adjectives as verbs.** Adjective-to-verb shifts are uncommon in English but occur once in a while, usually as jargon or slang {the cargo tanks were inerted by introducing carbon dioxide into them} {it would be silly to low-key the credit for this achievement}. They generally don’t fit comfortably into formal prose.

**Other parts of speech functioning as adjectives.** Words that ordinarily function as other parts of speech, but sometimes as adjectives, include nouns (see § 41), pronouns (see § 102), and verbs (see § 151).

**The weakening effect of injudicious adjectives.** Use care in handling adjectives. In the best style, they don’t bolster nondescript nouns when a stronger alternative is available. For example, famous people has less force than celebrities. An adjective may also diminish the impact of a statement by drawing emphasis away from the noun. Compare it is the undeniable truth with it is the truth. Some adjectives are so close in meaning that one swallows the other or creates a redundancy. You’ll often find that omitting one will make the noun—and the sentence—stronger.
Verbs

Definitions

137  **Verbs generally.** A verb shows the performance or occurrence of an action or the existence of a condition or a state of being, such as an emotion. A verb is the most essential part of speech—the only one that can express a full thought by itself (with the subject understood) {Run!} {Enjoy!} {Think!}. (One-word sentences such as *Why?* or *Yes* alone can express complete thoughts, but these are in fact elliptical sentences omitting a clause implied by context. {Why [did she do that]?} {Yes[, you may borrow that book].}. See § 313.)

138  **Transitive and intransitive verbs.** Depending on the presence or absence of an object, a verb is classified as transitive or intransitive. A transitive verb requires an object to express a complete thought; the verb indicates what action the subject exerts on the object. For example, _the cyclist hit a curb_ states what the subject _cyclist_ did to the object _curb_. (A few transitive verbs have what are called *cognate objects*, which are closely related etymologically to the verb {drink a drink} {build a building} {see the sights}.) An intransitive verb does not require an object to express a complete thought {the rescuer jumped}, although it may be followed by a prepositional phrase serving an adverbial function {the rescuer jumped to the ground}. Many verbs may be either transitive or intransitive, the different usages often distinguishing their meanings. For example, when used transitively, as in _the king’s heir will succeed him_, the verb _succeed_ means “to follow and take the place of”; when used intransitively, as in _the chemist will succeed in identifying the toxin_, it means “to accomplish a task.” With some verbs, no such distinction is possible. For example, in _I will walk; you ride_, the verb _ride_ is intransitive. In _I will walk; you ride your bike_, the verb _ride_ is transitive, but its meaning is unchanged. A verb that is normally used transitively may sometimes be used intransitively to emphasize the verb and leave the object undefined or unknown {the
patient eats poorly [{how well the patient eats is more important than what the patient eats}]. The test for whether a given verb is transitive is to try it with various possible objects. For each sentence in which an object is plausible, the verb is being used transitively. If an object doesn’t work idiomatically, the verb is being used intransitively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Transitive Verbs</th>
<th>Common Intransitive Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attach</td>
<td>happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>block</td>
<td>laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borrow</td>
<td>nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy</td>
<td>occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cut</td>
<td>rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>file</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fix</td>
<td>smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>sneeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kick</td>
<td>vanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lift</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ergative verbs.** Some verbs, called ergative or ambitransitive verbs, can be used transitively or intransitively {the impact shattered the windshield} {the windshield shattered}. The noun that serves as the object when the verb’s use is transitive becomes the subject when the verb’s use is intransitive. For example, with the noun door and the verb open, one can say *I opened the door* (transitive) or *the door opened* (intransitive). Many verbs can undergo ergative shifts {the torpedo sank the boat} {the boat sank}. For example, the verb ship was once exclusively transitive {the company shipped the books on January 16}, but in commercial usage it is now often intransitive {the books shipped on January 16}. Likewise, grow (generally an intransitive verb) was transitive only in horticultural contexts {the family grew several types of crops}, but commercial usage now makes it transitive in many other contexts {how to grow your business}. Careful writers and editors employ such usages cautiously if at all, preferring well-established idioms.

**Dynamic and stative verbs.** Verbs can be classified as either dynamic (or action) or stative (or nonaction). Dynamic verbs express actions that a subject can carry out {Jim wrote an article} {Maria bought a car}. Stative
verbs, by contrast, express a state or condition, not an action {Jim has the article} {Maria owns a car}. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamic Verbs</th>
<th>Stative Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>argue</td>
<td>be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>call</td>
<td>consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive</td>
<td>dread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly</td>
<td>enjoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jump</td>
<td>exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lift</td>
<td>hate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>push</td>
<td>imagine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sew</td>
<td>imply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shout</td>
<td>know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sketch</td>
<td>need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>prefer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walk</td>
<td>seem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wash</td>
<td>suffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch</td>
<td>understand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only dynamic verbs can appear in the present-progressive tense {Jim is writing a book} and the past-progressive tense {Maria was buying a car}. Stative verbs simply don’t function idiomatically in those contexts.

Regular and irregular verbs. The past-tense and past-participial forms of most English words are formed by appending -ed to the basic form {draft–drafted–drafted}. If the verb ends in -e, only a -d is appended {charge–charged–charged}. (Sometimes a final consonant is doubled: for the spelling rules of these regular forms, see § 174.) These verbs are classified as regular, or weak (the latter is a term used in philology to classify forms of conjugation).

But a few common verbs have maintained forms derived mostly from Old English roots {begin–began–begun} {bet–bet–bet} {bind–bound–bound} {bite–bit–bitten}. These verbs are called irregular or strong verbs. The various inflections of strong verbs defy simple classifications, but many past-tense and past-participial forms (1) change the vowel in the base verb (as begin), (2) keep the same form as the base verb (as bet), (3) share an irregular form (as bind), or (4) change endings (as bite). (The vowel change between cognate forms in category 1 is called an ablaut.) The verb be is highly irregular, with eight forms (is, are, was, were, been, being, be, and am). Because no system of useful classification is possible for irregular verbs, a reliable memory and a general dictionary are essential.
tools for using the correct forms consistently. Further complicating the
spelling of irregular verbs is the fact that the form may vary according to
the sense of the word. When used to mean “to offer a price,” for example,
bid keeps the same form in the past tense and past participle, but when
it means “to offer a greeting,” it forms bade (traditionally rhyming with
glad) and bidden. The form may also depend on whether the verb is being
used literally {wove a rug} or figuratively {weaved in traffic}. Finally, a few
verbs that are considered regular have an alternative past tense and past
participle that is formed by adding -t to the simple verb form {dream–
dreamed} {dream–dreamt}. When these alternatives are available, AmE
tends to prefer the forms ending in -ed (e.g., dreamed, learned, spelled),
while BrE often prefers the forms ending in -t (dreamt, learnt, spelt).

The table below should be understood with those complications in
mind. It lists only the irregular forms that are commonly used in Standard
Written English. Words that may also take regular forms are italicized
as a signal that the forms shown here may be incorrect in some usages.
Irregular verbs are a closed word class, meaning that there is a finite num-
ber that can be exhaustively listed. (Other closed word classes include
pronouns, articles, and auxiliary verbs. Regular verbs, on the other hand,
are an example of an open word class—along with nouns, adjectives, and
adverbs.) The list below, however, includes only the most common of the
270 or so irregular verbs. It also omits many words recently coined on the
pattern of an old one (for instance, cablecast and simulcast, both formed
on the analogy of broadcast). Those words almost always maintain the
same inflections as the words they are built on.

It’s useful to read over this list with an eye to memorizing the inflec-
tions. Try the past-tense and past-participial forms in sentences that you
can devise {I mistook your meaning}. Some may sound stuffy {I forbore
attending the optional meeting}, but on the whole you’ll probably find
it pleasing to be reminded of the standard inflections. Knowing them
builds confidence in a speaker or writer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irregular Verbs</th>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abide</td>
<td>abide</td>
<td>abode</td>
<td>abode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alight</td>
<td>alight</td>
<td>alit</td>
<td>alit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arise</td>
<td>arose</td>
<td>arisen</td>
<td>arisen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awake</td>
<td>awoke</td>
<td>awaked</td>
<td>awaked (or awoken)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bear</td>
<td>bore</td>
<td>borne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat</td>
<td>beat</td>
<td>beaten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT TENSE</th>
<th>PAST TENSE</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
<td>became</td>
<td>become</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>befall</td>
<td>befell</td>
<td>befallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beget</td>
<td>begot</td>
<td>begotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin</td>
<td>began</td>
<td>begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behold</td>
<td>beheld</td>
<td>beheld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bend</td>
<td>bent</td>
<td>bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bereave</td>
<td>bereft</td>
<td>bereft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beseech</td>
<td>besought</td>
<td>besought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beset</td>
<td>beset</td>
<td>beset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bespeak</td>
<td>bespoke</td>
<td>bespoke (or bespoke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bet</td>
<td>bet</td>
<td>bet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bid (= to express)</td>
<td>bade</td>
<td>bidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bid (= to offer)</td>
<td>bid</td>
<td>bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bind</td>
<td>bound</td>
<td>bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bite</td>
<td>bit</td>
<td>bitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bleed</td>
<td>bled</td>
<td>bled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blow</td>
<td>blew</td>
<td>blown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>broke</td>
<td>broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breed</td>
<td>bred</td>
<td>bred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>brought</td>
<td>brought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broadcast</td>
<td>broadcast</td>
<td>broadcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>browbeat</td>
<td>browbeat</td>
<td>browbeaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>build</td>
<td>built</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burn</td>
<td>burnt (BrE)</td>
<td>burnt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burst</td>
<td>burst</td>
<td>burst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy</td>
<td>bought</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cast</td>
<td>cast</td>
<td>cast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catch</td>
<td>caught</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>chose</td>
<td>chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleave (= to split)</td>
<td>cleft (or clove)</td>
<td>cleft (or cloven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cling</td>
<td>clung</td>
<td>clung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothe</td>
<td>clad</td>
<td>clad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>came</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cost</td>
<td>cost</td>
<td>cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creep</td>
<td>crept</td>
<td>crept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crow</td>
<td>crow</td>
<td>crowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cut</td>
<td>cut</td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deal</td>
<td>dealt</td>
<td>dealt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dig</td>
<td>dug</td>
<td>dug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dive</td>
<td>dove (AmE)</td>
<td>dived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>draw</td>
<td>drew</td>
<td>drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dream</td>
<td>dreamt (BrE)</td>
<td>dreamt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>drank</td>
<td>drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive</td>
<td>drove</td>
<td>driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dwell</td>
<td>dwelt</td>
<td>dwelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>ate</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fall</td>
<td>fell</td>
<td>fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feed</td>
<td>fed</td>
<td>fed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>felt</td>
<td>felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fight</td>
<td>fought</td>
<td>fought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find</td>
<td>found</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fit</td>
<td>fit (AmE)</td>
<td>fit (AmE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flee</td>
<td>fled</td>
<td>fled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fling</td>
<td>flung</td>
<td>flung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floodlight</td>
<td>floodlit</td>
<td>floodlit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly</td>
<td>flew</td>
<td>flown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forbear</td>
<td>forbore</td>
<td>forborne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forbid</td>
<td>forbade</td>
<td>forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forecast</td>
<td>forecast</td>
<td>forecast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foresee</td>
<td>foresaw</td>
<td>foreseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foretell</td>
<td>foretold</td>
<td>foretold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forget</td>
<td>forgot</td>
<td>forgotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgive</td>
<td>forgave</td>
<td>forgiven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forswear</td>
<td>forswore</td>
<td>forsworn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freeze</td>
<td>froze</td>
<td>frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gainsay</td>
<td>gainsaid</td>
<td>gainsaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>got</td>
<td>gotten (AmE), got (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grind</td>
<td>ground</td>
<td>ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grow</td>
<td>grew</td>
<td>grown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hamstring</td>
<td>hamstrung</td>
<td>hamstrung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang (a picture)</td>
<td>hung</td>
<td>hung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>heard</td>
<td>heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heave</td>
<td>hove</td>
<td>hove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hew</td>
<td>hewed</td>
<td>hewn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hide</td>
<td>hid</td>
<td>hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>hit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT TENSE</th>
<th>PAST TENSE</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hold</td>
<td>held</td>
<td>held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurt</td>
<td>hurt</td>
<td>hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inlay</td>
<td>inlaid</td>
<td>inlaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>input</td>
<td>input</td>
<td>input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inset</td>
<td>inset</td>
<td>inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interweave</td>
<td>interwove</td>
<td>interwoven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>kept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kneel</td>
<td>knelt</td>
<td>knelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lay (= to place)</td>
<td>laid</td>
<td>laid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead</td>
<td>led</td>
<td>led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leap</td>
<td>leapt (mostly BrE)</td>
<td>leapt (mostly BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn</td>
<td>learnt (BrE)</td>
<td>learnt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leave</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lend</td>
<td>lent</td>
<td>lent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let</td>
<td>let</td>
<td>let</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lie (= to rest)</td>
<td>lay</td>
<td>lain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light</td>
<td>lit</td>
<td>lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lose</td>
<td>lost</td>
<td>lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>made</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>meant</td>
<td>meant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet</td>
<td>met</td>
<td>met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miscast</td>
<td>miscast</td>
<td>miscast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misdeal</td>
<td>misdealt</td>
<td>misdealt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mishear</td>
<td>misheard</td>
<td>misheard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mislay</td>
<td>mislaid</td>
<td>mislaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mislead</td>
<td>misled</td>
<td>misled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misread</td>
<td>misread</td>
<td>misread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misspell</td>
<td>misspelt (BrE)</td>
<td>misspelt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misspend</td>
<td>misspent</td>
<td>misspent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mistake</td>
<td>mistook</td>
<td>mistaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misunderstand</td>
<td>misunderstood</td>
<td>misunderstood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mow</td>
<td>mowed</td>
<td>mown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outbid</td>
<td>outbid</td>
<td>outbid (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outdo</td>
<td>outdid</td>
<td>outdid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outgrow</td>
<td>outgrew</td>
<td>outgrown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>output</td>
<td>output</td>
<td>output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outrun</td>
<td>outran</td>
<td>outrun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outsell</td>
<td>outsold</td>
<td>outsold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outshine</td>
<td>outshone</td>
<td>outshone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>overbid</td>
<td>overbid</td>
<td>overbid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overcome</td>
<td>overcame</td>
<td>overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overdo</td>
<td>overdid</td>
<td>overdid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overdraw</td>
<td>overdrew</td>
<td>overdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overeat</td>
<td>overate</td>
<td>overeaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overfly</td>
<td>overflew</td>
<td>overflown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overhang</td>
<td>overhung</td>
<td>overhung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overhear</td>
<td>overheard</td>
<td>overheard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overlay</td>
<td>overlaid</td>
<td>overlaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overlie</td>
<td>overlay</td>
<td>overpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overpay</td>
<td>overpaid</td>
<td>overpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>override</td>
<td>overran</td>
<td>overran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overrun</td>
<td>oversaw</td>
<td>overseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oversee</td>
<td>overshot</td>
<td>overshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overshoot</td>
<td>overslept</td>
<td>overslept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oversleep</td>
<td>overtook</td>
<td>overtaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overtake</td>
<td>Overthrew</td>
<td>Overthrown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overthrow</td>
<td>Partook</td>
<td>Partaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partake</td>
<td>Paid</td>
<td>Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>Put</td>
<td>Put</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put</td>
<td>Quit</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>Rebuilt</td>
<td>Rebuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuild</td>
<td>Recast</td>
<td>Recast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recast</td>
<td>Redid</td>
<td>Redone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redo</td>
<td>Reheard</td>
<td>Reheard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehear</td>
<td>Remade</td>
<td>Remade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remake</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rent</td>
<td>Repaid</td>
<td>Repaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repay</td>
<td>Reread</td>
<td>Reread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reread</td>
<td>Reran</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rerun</td>
<td>Resold</td>
<td>Resold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resell</td>
<td>Reset</td>
<td>Reset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reset</td>
<td>Resat</td>
<td>Resat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resit</td>
<td>Retake</td>
<td>Retaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retake</td>
<td>Retold</td>
<td>Retold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell</td>
<td>Rewrote</td>
<td>Rewritten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rewrite</td>
<td>Rid</td>
<td>Rid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rid</td>
<td>Rode</td>
<td>Ridden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESENT TENSE</td>
<td>PAST TENSE</td>
<td>PAST PARTICIPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ring</td>
<td>rang</td>
<td>rung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rise</td>
<td>rose</td>
<td>risen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run</td>
<td>ran</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw</td>
<td>sawed</td>
<td>sawn (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek</td>
<td>sought</td>
<td>sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sell</td>
<td>sold</td>
<td>sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>sent</td>
<td>sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>set</td>
<td>set</td>
<td>set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sew</td>
<td>sewed</td>
<td>sewn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shake</td>
<td>shook</td>
<td>shaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shear</td>
<td>sheared</td>
<td>shorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shed</td>
<td>shed</td>
<td>shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shine</td>
<td>shone</td>
<td>shone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoe</td>
<td>shod</td>
<td>shod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoot</td>
<td>shot</td>
<td>shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show</td>
<td>showed</td>
<td>shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrink</td>
<td>shrunk</td>
<td>shrunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrive</td>
<td>shrive</td>
<td>shriven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shut</td>
<td>shut</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td>sang</td>
<td>sung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sink</td>
<td>sank</td>
<td>sunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>sat</td>
<td>sat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slay</td>
<td>slew</td>
<td>slain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>slept</td>
<td>slept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slide</td>
<td>slid</td>
<td>slid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sling</td>
<td>slung</td>
<td>slung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slink</td>
<td>slunk</td>
<td>slunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slit</td>
<td>slit</td>
<td>slit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smell</td>
<td>smelt (BrE)</td>
<td>smelt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smite</td>
<td>smote</td>
<td>smitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sow</td>
<td>sowed</td>
<td>sown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak</td>
<td>spoke</td>
<td>spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speed</td>
<td>sped</td>
<td>sped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spell</td>
<td>spelt (BrE)</td>
<td>spelt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spend</td>
<td>spent</td>
<td>spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spill</td>
<td>spilt (BrE)</td>
<td>spilt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spin</td>
<td>spun</td>
<td>spun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spit</td>
<td>spat</td>
<td>spat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT TENSE</th>
<th>PAST TENSE</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>split</td>
<td>split</td>
<td>split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoil</td>
<td>spoilt (BrE)</td>
<td>spoilt (BrE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spread</td>
<td>spread</td>
<td>spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spring</td>
<td>sprang</td>
<td>sprung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stand</td>
<td>stood</td>
<td>stood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stave</td>
<td>stove</td>
<td>stove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steal</td>
<td>stole</td>
<td>stolen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stick</td>
<td>stuck</td>
<td>stuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sting</td>
<td>stung</td>
<td>stung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stink</td>
<td>stank</td>
<td>stunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strewn</td>
<td>strewn</td>
<td>strewn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stride</td>
<td>strode</td>
<td>strode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strike</td>
<td>struck</td>
<td>struck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>string</td>
<td>strung</td>
<td>strung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strive</td>
<td>strove</td>
<td>striven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sublet</td>
<td>sublet</td>
<td>sublet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swear</td>
<td>swore</td>
<td>sworn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweep</td>
<td>swept</td>
<td>swept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swim</td>
<td>swam</td>
<td>swum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swing</td>
<td>swung</td>
<td>swung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>took</td>
<td>taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach</td>
<td>taught</td>
<td>taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tear</td>
<td>tore</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell</td>
<td>told</td>
<td>told</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>thought</td>
<td>thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throw</td>
<td>threw</td>
<td>thrown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thrust</td>
<td>thrust</td>
<td>thrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tread</td>
<td>trod</td>
<td>trodden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underbid</td>
<td>underbid</td>
<td>underbid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undercut</td>
<td>undercut</td>
<td>undercut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undergo</td>
<td>underwent</td>
<td>undergone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underlie</td>
<td>underlay</td>
<td>underlain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underpay</td>
<td>underpaid</td>
<td>underpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undersell</td>
<td>undersold</td>
<td>undersold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>understood</td>
<td>understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undertake</td>
<td>undertook</td>
<td>undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underwrite</td>
<td>underwrote</td>
<td>underwritten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undo</td>
<td>undid</td>
<td>undone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfreeze</td>
<td>unfroze</td>
<td>unfrozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unwind</td>
<td>unwound</td>
<td>unwound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uphold</td>
<td>upheld</td>
<td>upheld</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irregular Verbs cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT TENSE</th>
<th>PAST TENSE</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>upset</td>
<td>upset</td>
<td>upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wake</td>
<td>woke</td>
<td>woken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wear</td>
<td>wore</td>
<td>worn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weave</td>
<td>wove</td>
<td>woven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wed</td>
<td>wed</td>
<td>wed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weep</td>
<td>wept</td>
<td>wept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wet</td>
<td>wet</td>
<td>wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>win</td>
<td>won</td>
<td>won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wind</td>
<td>wound</td>
<td>wound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withdraw</td>
<td>withdrew</td>
<td>withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withhold</td>
<td>withheld</td>
<td>withheld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withstand</td>
<td>withstood</td>
<td>withstood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wring</td>
<td>wrung</td>
<td>wrung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

142 Linking verbs. A linking verb (also called a copula or connecting verb) is one that links the subject to a closely related word in the predicate—a subjective complement. The linking verb itself does not take an object because it expresses a state of being instead of an action {Mr. Block is the chief executive officer} {that snake is venomous} {his heart’s desire is to see his sister again}. There are two kinds of linking verbs: be-verbs and intransitive verbs that are used in a weakened sense, such as appear, become, feel, look, seem, smell, and taste. The weakened intransitive verbs often have a figurative sense akin to that of become, as in He fell heir to a large fortune (he didn’t physically fall on or into anything) or The river ran dry (a waterless river doesn’t run—it has dried up).

Some verbs only occasionally function as linking verbs—among them act {act weird}, get {get fat}, go {go bald}, grow {grow weary}, lie {lie fallow}, prove {prove untenable}, remain {remain quiet}, sit {sit still}, stay {stay trim}, turn {turn gray}, and wax {wax eloquent}. Also, some passive-voice constructions contain linking verbs {this band was judged best in the contest} {she was made sales-force manager}.

If a verb doesn’t have a subjective complement, then it doesn’t qualify as a linking verb in that particular construction. For instance, when a be-verb conveys the sense “to be situated” or “to exist,” it is not a linking verb {Kansas City, Kansas, is across the river} {there is an unfilled receptionist position}. Likewise, if a verb such as appear, feel, smell, sound, or taste is followed by an adverbial modifier instead of a subjective complement {he
Phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb is usually a verb plus a preposition (or particle) {settle down} {act up} {phase out}. A phrasal verb is not hyphenated, even though its equivalent noun or phrasal adjective might be—e.g., compare to flare up with a flare-up, and compare to step up the pace with a stepped-up pace. Three rules apply: (1) if the phrasal verb has a sense distinct from the component words, use the entire phrase—e.g., hold up means “to rob” or “to delay,” and get rid of and do away with mean “to eliminate”; (2) avoid the phrasal verb if the verb alone conveys essentially the same meaning—e.g., rest up is equivalent to rest; and (3) don’t compress the phrase into a one-word verb, especially if it has a corresponding one-word noun form—e.g., one burns out (phrasal verb) and suffers burnout (noun).

In a phrasal verb, the preposition is an integral part of the verb, serving as an adverb but often with a figurative, idiomatic sense:

- She turned up four new witnesses.
- Put out the candles.
- The interviewer took down everything she said verbatim.

Although you might think at first that a preposition starts a prepositional phrase—that witnesses, candles, and everything are the objects of prepositions—that is not so. Grammatically, the nouns are direct objects of the verbs shaded in the above examples: in each sentence, the words up, out, and down could come after instead of before the noun:

- She turned four new witnesses up.
- Put the candles out.
- The interviewer took everything she said down verbatim.
Except in questions, prepositions can’t be switched around in this way. But in the following sentences, the preposition doesn’t function as part of the phrasal verb:

- She ran up the stairs.
- Several reporters walked out this door.
- He tumbled down the stairs.

Although an entire prepositional phrase can conceivably be moved {down the stairs he tumbled}, the single preposition can’t be moved in the way demonstrated above with phrasal verbs.

Although most phrasal verbs consist of two words {look over} {take up [= to begin as a hobby]}, many consist of three {get away with} {look up to} {put up with}.

144 **Principal and auxiliary verbs.** Depending on its uses, a verb is classified as principal or auxiliary. A principal verb is one that can stand alone to express an act or state {he jogs} {I dreamed about Xanadu}. If combined with another verb, it expresses the combination’s leading thought {a tiger may roar}. An auxiliary verb is used with a principal verb to form a verb phrase that indicates mood, tense, or voice {you must study for the exam!} {I will go to the store} {the show was interrupted}. The most commonly used auxiliaries are be, can, do, have, may, must, ought, shall, and will. For more on auxiliary verbs, see §§ 198–209.

145 **Verb phrases.** The combination of an auxiliary verb with a principal verb is a verb phrase, such as could happen, must go, or will be leaving. When a verb phrase is modified by an adverb, the modifier typically goes directly after the first auxiliary verb, as in could certainly happen, must always go, and will soon be leaving. The idea that verb phrases should not be “split” in this way is quite mistaken (see § 238). A verb phrase is negated by placing the negative adverb not after the first auxiliary {we have not called him}. In an interrogative sentence, the first auxiliary begins the sentence and is followed by the subject {must I repeat that?} {do you want more?}. An interrogative can be negated by placing not after the subject {do you not want more?}, but a contraction is often more natural {don’t you want more?}. Most negative forms can be contracted {we do not–we don’t} {I will not–I won’t} {he has not–he hasn’t} {she does not–she doesn’t}, but I am not is contracted to I’m not (never *I amn’t*). The corresponding interrogative form is aren’t I? Sometimes the negative is emphasized if the auxiliary is contracted with the pronoun and the negative is left standing...
alone {he is not–he isn’t–he’s not} {we are not–we aren’t–we’re not} {they have not–they haven’t–they’ve not}.

Verb phrases are sometimes also called complete verbs. But this term can be ambiguous, since some grammarians use it instead for only the principal verb in a phrase. So in the sentence “We have not thanked him for working so hard,” complete verb could refer to have thanked or simply thanked. To further confuse the issue, others call any nonlinking finite verb a complete verb—meaning that working could also be a complete verb. Combine this ambiguity with the potential for conflating complete verb and complete predicate (see § 303), and it’s easy to see why this term is best avoided.

Contractions. Most types of writing benefit from the use of contractions. If used thoughtfully, contractions in prose sound natural and relaxed, and make reading more enjoyable. Be-verbs and most of the auxiliary verbs are contracted when followed by not: are not–aren’t; was not–wasn’t; cannot–can’t; could not–couldn’t; do not–don’t; and so on. A few, such as ought not–oughtn’t, look or sound awkward and are best avoided. Pronouns can be contracted with auxiliaries, with forms of have, and with some be-verbs. Think before using one of the less common contractions, which often don’t work well in prose, except perhaps in dialogue or quotations. Some examples are I’d’ve (I would have), she’d’ve (she would have) it’d (it would), should’ve (should have), there’re (there are; there were), who’re (who are; who were), and would’ve (would have). Also, some contracted forms can have more than one meaning. For instance, there’s may be there is or there has, and I’d may be I had or I would. The particular meaning may not always be clear from the context.

Nouns can also form contractions with auxiliaries, have-verbs, and some be-verbs, but they often look and sound clumsy {you’d think the train’d be on time for once} {the stores’re sold out of fondue sets} {the DVDs’ve melted in the heat}. And nouns contracted with is may initially resemble possessives {Robin’s falling out of the tree} {Amalie’s firing the head chef right now}. Consider using a pronoun instead.

Infinitives

Definition. An infinitive verb, also called the verb’s root or stem, is a verb that in its principal uninflected form may be preceded by to {to dance} {to dive}. It is the basic form of the verb, the one listed in dictionary entries. The preposition to is sometimes called the “sign” of the infinitive {he tried
to open the door}, and it is sometimes classed as an adverb (see § 210). In the active voice, to is generally dropped when the infinitive follows an auxiliary verb {you must flee} and can be dropped after several verbs, such as bid, dare, feel, hear, help, let, make, need, and see {you dare say that to me?}. But when the infinitive follows one of these verbs in the passive voice, to should be retained {he cannot be heard to deny it} {they cannot be made to listen}. The to should also be retained after ought and ought not (see § 203).

148 **Split infinitive.** Although from about 1850 to 1925 many grammarians stated otherwise, it is now widely acknowledged that adverbs sometimes justifiably separate the to from the principal verb {they expect to more than double their income next year}. See § 238.

149 **Uses of infinitive.** The infinitive has great versatility. It is sometimes called a verbal noun because it can function as part of a verb phrase {someone has to tell her} or a noun {to walk away now seems rash}. The infinitive also has limited uses as an adjective or an adverb. As a verb, it can take (1) a subject {we wanted the lesson to end}, (2) an object {try to throw the javelin higher}, (3) a predicate complement {want to race home?}, or (4) an adverbial modifier {you need to think quickly in chess}.

An infinitive takes on the role of principal verb when used with a finite verb whose sense doesn't express a full thought, as often happens with dare, ought, am able, etc. {you ought to apologize to her} {I am finally able to laugh again}. Without the infinitive to express the specific obligation, ability, etc., such sentences make little sense. That's why this use is termed the complementary infinitive: it completes the meaning of the finite verb, which takes on a modal quality {I am going to wash my hair tonight}. (This usage should not be confused with an infinitive operating as a subjective or objective complement, which is a noun or adjectival function.)

As a noun, the infinitive can perform as (1) the subject of a finite verb {to fly is a lofty goal} or (2) the object of a transitive verb or participle {I want to hire a new assistant}. An infinitive may be governed by a verb {cease to do evil}, a noun {we all have talents to be improved}, an adjective {she is eager to learn}, a participle {they are preparing to go}, or a pronoun {let him do it}.

150 **Dangling infinitive.** An infinitive phrase can be used, often loosely, to modify a verb—in which case the sentence must have a grammatical
subject (or an unexpressed subject of an imperative) that could logically perform the action of the infinitive. If there is none, then the sentence may be confusing. For example, in *To repair your car properly, it must be sent to a mechanic*, the infinitive *repair* does not have a logical subject; the infinitive phrase *to repair your car* is left dangling. But if the sentence is rewritten as *To repair your car properly, you must take it to a mechanic*, the logical subject is *you*.

### Participles and Gerunds

**Participles generally.** A participle is a nonfinite verb that is not limited by person, number, or mood, but does have tense. Two participles are formed from the verb stem: the present participle invariably ends in *-ing*, and the past participle usually ends in *-ed*. See § 174.

The present participle consists of the present stem of the verb plus *-ing* {ask–asking}, sometimes with the final consonant of the stem doubled {spin–spinning}. It denotes the verb’s action as being in progress or incomplete at the time expressed by the sentence’s principal verb {watching intently for a mouse, the cat settled in to wait} {hearing his name, Jon turned to answer}.

The past participle is the third principal part of a verb. For a regular verb, it is formed by adding *-d*, *-ed*, or *-t* to the present stem and is identical with the past tense {call–called–called}. For irregular verbs, there are several patterns: the principal parts of the verb may be identical {slit–slit–slit}, the first and third parts may be identical {run–ran–run}, the second and third parts may be identical {spin–spun–spun}, or all three parts may be different {sing–sang–sung}. The past participle denotes the verb’s action as being completed {planted in the spring} {written last year}.

There are other types of participles as well. All verbs have a perfect participle {having called} and a perfect-progressive participle {having been calling}. Transitive verbs have passive forms of the present participle {being called} and of the perfect participle {having been called}.

Participles occur in many types of verb phrases. The past participle appears in the active-voice versions of the present perfect {have called}, the past perfect {had called}, and the future perfect {will have called}. It also appears in all tenses with the passive voice {was called} {were called} {am called}. See § 181 (verb conjugations with *call*).

**Forming present participles.** The present participle is formed by adding *-ing* to the stem of the verb {reaping} {wandering}. If the stem ends in
Verbs

-ie, the -ie usually changes to -y before the -ing is added {die–dying} {tie–tying}. If the stem ends in a silent -e, that -e is usually dropped before the -ing is added {giving} {leaving}. There are two exceptions to this rule. The silent -e is retained when (1) the word ends with -oe {toe–toeing} {hoe–hoeing} {shoe–shoeing}, or (2) the verb has a participle that would resemble another word but for the distinguishing -e (e.g., dyeing means something different from dying, and singeing means something different from singing). The spelling rules for inflecting words that end in -y and for doubling final single consonants are the same as those given in § 174. Regular and irregular verbs both form the present participle in the same way. The present participle is the same for all persons and numbers.

153 **Forming past participles.** With regular verbs, the past participle is formed in the same way as the past indicative—that is, the past-indicative and past-participial forms are always identical {stated–stated} {pulled–pulled}. For irregular verbs, the forms are sometimes the same {paid–paid} {sat–sat} and sometimes different {forsook–forsaken} {shrank–shrunk}. See § 141.

154 **Participial phrases.** A participial phrase is made up of a participle plus any closely associated word or words, such as modifiers or complements. It can be used (1) as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun {nailed to the roof, the slate stopped the leaks} {she pointed to the clerk drooping behind the counter}, or (2) as an absolute phrase {generally speaking, I prefer spicy dishes} {they having arrived, we went out on the lawn for our picnic}. For more on participial adjectives, see §§ 121–22, 129.

155 **Gerunds.** A gerund is a present participle used as a noun. It is not limited by person, number, or mood, but it does have tense. Being a noun, the gerund can be used as (1) the subject of a verb {complaining about it won’t help}; (2) the object of a verb {I don’t like your cooking}; (3) a predicate nominative or complement {his favorite pastime is sleeping}; or (4) the object of a preposition {reduce erosion by terracing the fields}. In some sentences, a gerund may substitute for an infinitive. Compare the use of the infinitive to lie as a noun {to lie is wrong} with the gerund lying {lying is wrong}.

Even though a gerund is always used as a noun, it retains some characteristics of a verb. Specifically, it can take an object {mailing letters kept her busy all day} and it can be modified by an adverb {preparing assiduously enabled him to succeed}. 
Gerund phrases. A gerund phrase consists of a gerund, its object, and any modifiers that may be present {winning the bid amid so much competition made her proud}. The phrase in that example consists of the gerund winning, its object bid, the article (or adjective) the modifying bid, and the adverbial phrase amid so much competition. In addition to serving as the subject of a clause, a gerund phrase may function as:

- a direct object of a verb {we worried about his believing that idea};
- a subjective complement {that is throwing the baby out with the bathwater};
- an objective complement {we call this soldiering on};
- an adverbial objective {the offer is worth considering closely};
- the object of a preposition {they were amply rewarded for working overtime};
- an appositive {his strategy, being silent when there was no significant news, made everyone even more anxious}; or
- part of an absolute construction {her being honest about unpleasant facts having established trust with her opposite number, the two were able to proceed cooperatively}.

The same words may function as either a gerund phrase {knowing his own shortcomings made him more fearless as a competitor} or a participial phrase {knowing his own shortcomings, he decided to play it safe}.

Distinguishing between participles and gerunds. Because participles and gerunds both derive from verbs, the difference between them depends on their function. A participle is used as a modifier {the running water} or as part of a verb phrase {the meter is running}; it can be modified only by an adverb {the swiftly running water}. A gerund is used as a noun {running is great exercise}; it can be modified only by an adjective {sporadic running and walking makes for a great workout}.

Along with infinitives, which can function as nouns {to lie is immoral} or modifiers {the decision to leave is always hard}, participles and gerunds are collectively called verbals. A phrase comprising more than one verbal is called a group verbal {hoping to change her mind was futile}.

Fused participles. As nouns, gerunds are modified by adjectives {double-parking is prohibited}, including possessive nouns and pronouns {Critt’s parking can be hazardous to pedestrians}. By contrast, a present participle is always modified (if at all) by an adverb, whether the participle
serves as a verb {she’s parking the car now}, an adjective {I’ll be looking for a parking place}, or an adverb {finally parking, we saw that the store had already closed}. It is traditionally considered a linguistic fault (a *fused participle*) to use a nonpossessive noun or pronoun with a gerund:

**Poor:** *Me painting your fence depends on *you paying me first.
**Better:** My painting your fence depends on your paying me first.

In the poor example, *me* looks like the subject of the sentence, but it doesn’t agree with the verb *depends*. Instead, the subject is *painting*—a gerund, here seeming to be “modified” by *me*, a pronoun. In the predicate, *you* looks like the object of the preposition *on*, but the true object is the gerund *paying*.

There are times, however, when the possessive is unidiomatic. You usually have no choice but to use a fused participle with a nonpersonal noun {we’re not responsible for the jewelry having been mislaid}, a nonpersonal pronoun {we all insisted on something being done}, or a group of pronouns {the settlement depends on some of them agreeing to compromise}.

**Dangling participles.** Both participles and gerunds are subject to dangling. A participle that has no syntactic relationship with the nearest subject is called a *dangling participle* or just a *dangler*. In effect, the participle ceases to function as a modifier and functions as a kind of preposition. Often the sentence is illogical, ambiguous, or even incoherent {*frequently used in early America, experts suggest that shaming is an effective punishment [used does not modify the closest noun, experts; it modifies shaming]!*} {*being a thoughtful mother, I believe Meg gives her children good advice [the writer at first seems to be attesting to his or her own thoughtfulness rather than Meg’s]!}. Recasting the sentence so that the misplaced modifier is associated with the correct noun is the only effective cure {experts suggest that shaming, often used in early America, is an effective punishment} {I believe that because Meg is a thoughtful mother, she gives her children good advice}. Using passive voice in an independent clause can also produce a dangler. In *Finding that the questions were not ambiguous, the exam grades were not changed*, the participle *finding* “dangles” because there is no logical subject to do the finding. The sentence can be corrected by using active voice instead of passive, so that the participle precedes the noun it modifies {finding that the questions were not ambiguous, the teacher did not change the exam grades}. Quite often writers will use *it* or *there* as the subject of the independent clause.
after a participial phrase, thereby producing a dangler without a logical subject {*reviewing the suggestions, it is clear that no consensus exists [a possible revision: Our review of the suggestions shows that no consensus exists]}

160 **Dangling gerunds.** When the participle in a dangling gerund is the object of a preposition, it functions as a noun rather than as a modifier. For example, *After finishing the research, the screenplay was easy to write* (who did the research and who wrote the screenplay?). The best way to correct a dangling gerund is to revise the sentence. The example above could be revised as *After Gero finished the research, the screenplay was easy to write,* or *After finishing the research, Gero found the screenplay easy to write.* Dangling gerunds can result in improbable statements. Consider *while driving to San Antonio, my phone ran out of power.* The phone wasn’t at the wheel, so *driving* is a dangling gerund that shouldn’t refer to *my phone.* Clarifying the subject of the gerund improves the sentence {while I was driving to San Antonio, my phone ran out of power}.

**Properties of Verbs**

161 **Five properties.** A verb has five properties: voice, mood, tense, person, and number. Verbs are conjugated (inflected) to show these properties.

**VOICE**

162 **Active and passive voice.** Voice shows whether the subject acts (active voice) or is acted on (passive voice)—that is, whether the subject performs or receives the action of the verb. Only transitive verbs are said to have voice. The clause *the judge levied a $50 fine* is in the active voice because the subject *judge* is acting. But *the tree’s branch was broken by the storm* is in the passive voice because the subject *branch* does not break itself—it is acted on by the object *storm.* The passive voice is always formed by joining an inflected form of *to be* (or, in colloquial usage, *get*) with the verb’s past participle. Compare *the ox pulls the cart* (active voice) with *the cart is pulled by the ox* (passive voice). A passive-voice verb in a dependent clause...
often has an implied be-verb: in the advice given by the novelist, the implied words that was—omitted by what is known as a whiz-deletion (see § 315)—are understood to come before given; so the passive construction is was given. Although the be-verb is sometimes implied, the past participle must always be expressed. Sometimes the agent isn’t named {his tires were slashed}.

As a matter of style, passive voice {the matter will be given careful consideration} is typically, though not always, inferior to active voice {we will consider the matter carefully}. The choice between active and passive voice may depend on which point of view is desired. For instance, the mouse was caught by the cat describes the mouse’s experience, whereas the cat caught the mouse describes the cat’s.

What is important is to be able to identify passive voice reliably. Remember that be-verbs alone are not passive—hence he is thinking about his finances isn’t in the passive voice. It’s just a be-verb plus a present participle. To make it passive voice, you’d have to write his finances are thought about by him (an awkward sentence, to say the least). The two necessary elements are a be-verb (occasionally understood contextually) and a past participle:

**Passive Voice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Passive Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>misled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was</td>
<td>sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were</td>
<td>demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>been</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being</td>
<td>completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>bothered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the passive-voice verb is followed by the preposition by (plus the noun that performs the action), it is a long-passive construction. If the by-phrase is omitted, it is known as a short passive:

**Long passive:** Mistakes were made by our office.
**Short passive:** Mistakes were made.

Because of its vagueness, the short passive is sometimes (by no means always) used to evade or to deflect responsibility.

**Progressive conjugation and voice.** If an inflected form of be is joined with a verb’s present participle, a progressive conjugation results {the ox is
pulling the cart}. If the verb is transitive, the progressive conjugation is
in active voice because the subject is performing the action, not being
acted on. (See § 162.) But if both the principal verb and the auxiliary are
be-verbs followed by a past participle {the cart is being pulled}, the result
is a passive-voice construction.

MOOD

164  Generally. Mood (or mode) indicates the manner in which the verb
expresses an action or state of being. The three moods are indicative,
imperative, and subjunctive.

165  Indicative mood. The indicative mood is the most common in English.
It is used to express facts and opinions and to ask questions {amethysts
cost very little} {the botanist lives in a garden cottage} {does that bush
produce yellow roses?}.

166  Imperative mood. The imperative mood expresses commands {go away!},
direct requests {bring the tray in here}, and, sometimes, permission {come
in!}. It is simply the verb’s stem used to make a command, a request, an
exclamation, or the like {put it here!} {give me a clue} {help!}. The subject
of the verb, you, is understood even though the sentence might include a
direct address {give me the magazine} {Cindy, take good care of yourself
[Cindy is a direct address, not the subject]}. Use the imperative mood cau-
tiously: in some contexts it could be too blunt or unintentionally rude.
You can soften the imperative by using a word such as please {please stop
at the store}. If that isn’t satisfactory, you might recast the sentence in the
indicative {will you stop at the store, please?}.

167  Subjunctive mood. Although the subjunctive mood no longer appears
with much frequency, it is useful when you want to express an action or a
state not as a reality but as a mental conception. Typically, the subjunctive
expresses an action or state as doubtful, imagined, desired, conditional,
hypothetical, or otherwise contrary to fact. Despite its decline, the sub-
junctive mood persists in stock expressions such as perish the thought,
heaven help us, or be that as it may. For particulars about subjunctive con-
structions, see the sections that follow.

168  Subjunctive vs. indicative mood. The subjunctive mood signals a state-
ment contrary to fact {if I were you}, including wishes {if I were a rich
man}, conjectures {oh, were it so}, demands {the landlord insists that the
dog go}, and suggestions {I recommend that she take a vacation}. Three
ersors often crop up with these constructions. First, writers sometimes
use an indicative verb form when the subjunctive form is needed:

**Poor:** If it wasn’t for your help, I never would have found the
place.

**Better:** If it weren’t for your help, I never would have found the
place.

Second, indicative-mood sentences sometimes resemble these subjunc-
tive constructions but aren’t statements contrary to fact:

**Poor:** I called to see whether she were in.

**Better:** I called to see whether she was in.

Third, one often sees *If I would have gone, I would . . . ,* with two condition-
als, instead of *If I had gone, I would . . . .*

Although the subjunctive mood is often signaled by *if*, not every *if*
takes a subjunctive verb. When the action or state might be true but the
writer does not know, the indicative is called for instead of the subjunc-
tive {if I am right about this, please call} {if Napoleon was in fact poisoned
with arsenic, historians will need to reevaluate his associates}.

**Present subjunctive.** The present-tense subjunctive mood is formed by
using the base form of the verb, such as *be.* This form of subjunctive
often appears in suggestions or requirements {he recommended that we
be ready at a moment’s notice} {we insist that he retain control of the
accounting department}. The present-tense subjunctive is also expressed
by using either *be* plus the simple-past form of the verb or a past-form aux-
iliary plus an infinitive {the chair proposed that the company be acquired
by the employees through a stock-ownership plan} {today would be con-
venient for me to search for that missing file} {might he take down the
decorations this afternoon?}.

**Past subjunctive.** Despite its label, the past-tense subjunctive mood refers
to something in the present or future but contrary to fact. It is formed
using the verb’s simple-past tense, except for *be*, which becomes *were*
regardless of the subject’s number. For example, the declaration *if only I
had a chance* expresses that the speaker has little or no chance. Similarly,
*I wish I were safe at home* almost certainly means that the speaker is not at
home and perhaps not safe—though it could also mean that the speaker is at home but quite unsafe.

This past-tense-but-present-sense subjunctive typically appears in the form if I (he, she, it) were {if I were king} {if she were any different}. That is, the subjunctive mood ordinarily uses a past-tense verb (e.g., were) to connote uncertainty, impossibility, or unreality where the present or future indicative would otherwise be used. Compare If I am threatened, I will quit (indicative) with If I were threatened, I would quit (subjunctive), or If the canary sings, I smile (indicative) with If the canary sang (or should sing, or were to sing), I would smile (subjunctive).

**Past-perfect subjunctive.** Just as the past subjunctive uses a verb’s simple-past-tense form to refer to the present or future, the past-perfect subjunctive uses a verb’s past-perfect form to refer to the past. The past-perfect subjunctive typically appears in the form if I (he, she, it) had been {if he had been there} {if I had gone}. That is, the subjunctive mood ordinarily uses a past-perfect verb (e.g., had been) to connote uncertainty or impossibility where the past or past-perfect indicative would otherwise be used. Compare If it arrived, it was not properly filed (indicative) with If it had arrived, it could have changed the course of history (subjunctive). The past-perfect subjunctive is identical in form to the past-perfect indicative, so the two can be distinguished only by context: if a past-perfect clause is followed by a conditional clause, the first clause is usually subjunctive as well. Compare If it had snowed the night before, then the children always made a snowman (indicative) with If it had snowed the night before, school would have been canceled (subjunctive).

**TENSE**

**172 Generally.** Tense shows the time in which an act, state, or condition occurs or occurred. The three major divisions of time are present, past, and future. (Most modern grammarians hold that English has no future tense; see § 175.) Each division of time breaks down further into a perfect tense denoting a comparatively more remote time by indicating that the action has been completed: present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect. And all six of these tenses can be further divided into a progressive tense (also called imperfect or continuous), in which the action continues. (Rather than treating these as twelve distinct tenses, many modern grammarians classify the perfect and progressive as aspects, optional
forms relating an action’s status—completed or ongoing—to the time expressed by one of the three main tenses.)

173 **Present tense.** The present tense is the infinitive verb’s stem, also called the *present indicative* {walk} {drink}. It primarily denotes acts, conditions, or states that occur in the present {the dog howls} {the air is cold} {the water runs}. It is also used (1) to express a habitual action or general truth {cats prowl nightly} {polluted water is a health threat}; (2) to refer to timeless facts, such as memorable persons and works of the past that are still extant or enduring {Julius Caesar describes his strategies in *The Gallic War*} {the Pompeian mosaics are exquisite}; and (3) to narrate a fictional work’s plot {the scene takes place aboard the *Titanic*}. The latter two uses are collectively referred to as the *historical-present tense*, and the third is especially important for those who write about literature. Characters in books, plays, and films *do* things—not *did* them. If you want to distinguish between present action and past action in literature, the present-perfect tense is helpful {Hamlet, who has spoken with his father’s ghost, reveals what he has learned to no one but Horatio}.

The present indicative is the verb stem for all persons, singular and plural, in the present tense—except for the third-person singular, which adds an *-s* to the stem {takes} {strolls} {says}. If the verb ends in *-o*, an *-es* is added {goes} {does} {torpedoes}. If the verb ends in a consonant followed by *-y*, the *-y* is changed to *-i* and then an *-es* is added {carry–carries} {identify–identifies} {multiply–multiplies}.

174 **Past indicative.** The past indicative denotes an act, state, or condition that occurred or existed at some explicit or implicit point in the past {the auction ended yesterday} {we returned the shawl}. For a regular verb, it is formed by adding *-ed* to its base form {jump–jumped} {spill–spilled}. If the verb ends in a silent *-e*, only a *-d* is added to form the past tense and past participle {bounce–bounded}. If it ends in *-y* preceded by a consonant, the *-y* changes to an *-i* before forming the past tense and past participle with *-ed* {hurry–hurried}. If it ends in a double consonant {block}, two vowels and a consonant {cook}, or a vowel other than *-e* {veto}, a regular verb forms the past tense and past participle by adding *-ed* to its simple form {block–blocked–blocked} {cook–cooked–cooked} {veto–vetoed–vetoed}.

If the verb ends in a single vowel before a consonant, several rules apply in determining whether the consonant is doubled. It is always doubled in one-syllable words {pat–patted–patted}. In words of more than
one syllable, the final consonant is doubled if it is part of the syllable that is stressed both before and after the inflection {prefer–preferred–preferred}, but not otherwise {travel–traveled–traveled}. In BrE, there is no such distinction: all such consonants are doubled.

Irregular verbs form the past tense and past participle in various ways {give–gave–given} {hide–hid–hidden} {read–read–read}. See § 141.

175 **Future tense.** What is traditionally known as the *future tense* is formed by using *will* with the verb’s stem form {will walk} {will drink}. It refers to an expected act, state, or condition {the artist will design a wall mural} {the restaurant will open soon}. *Shall* may be used instead of *will*, but in AmE it typically appears only in first-person questions {shall we go?} and in legal requirements {the debtor shall pay within 30 days}. In most contexts, *will* is preferred—or *must* with legal requirements.

Two further points deserve mention here.

First, modern grammarians and linguists have generally repudiated the paradigm formerly taught in English grammar classes.

**The Outmoded Shall–Will Paradigm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Futurity</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>I shall</td>
<td>we shall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you will</td>
<td>you will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>he will</td>
<td>they will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determination, Promise, or Command</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>I will</td>
<td>we will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you shall</td>
<td>you shall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>she shall</td>
<td>they shall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was an artificial concoction that never reflected the actual English usage of any appreciable segment of English-speaking people.

Second, much more radically, most linguists are now convinced that, technically speaking, English has no future tense at all—that *will* is simply a modal verb that should be treated with all the others. Yet the future tense remains a part of traditional grammar and is discussed here in the familiar way.

---

**Present-perfect tense.** The present-perfect tense is formed by using *have* or *has* with the principal verb’s past participle {have walked} {has drunk}. (Because all three perfect tenses use a form of *have* plus a past participle, they are called compound tenses.) It is formed the same way in both the indicative and subjunctive moods (see §§ 167–68), and in both it denotes an act, state, or condition that is now completed or continues up to the present {I have put away the clothes} {it has been a long day} {I will apologize, even if I have done nothing wrong}. The present perfect is distinguished from the past tense because it refers to (1) a time in the indefinite past {I have played golf there before} or (2) a past action that comes up to and touches the present {I have played cards for the last 18 hours}. The past tense, by contrast, indicates a more specific or a more remote time in the past.

**Past-perfect tense.** The past-perfect (or *pluperfect*) tense is formed by using *had* with the principal verb’s past participle {had walked} {had drunk}. It refers to an act, state, or condition that was completed before another specified or implicit past time or past action {the engineer had driven the train to the roundhouse before we arrived} {by the time we stopped to check the map, the rain had begun falling} {the movie had already ended}.

**Future-perfect tense.** The future-perfect tense is formed by using *will have* with the verb’s past participle {will have walked} {will have drunk}. It refers to an act, state, or condition that is expected to be completed before some other future act or time {the entomologist will have collected 60 more specimens before the semester ends} {the court will have adjourned by five o’clock}. *Shall* can also form the future perfect, but usually only for the first person, and in very few parts of the English-speaking world is it prevalent {I shall have finished by tomorrow} {we shall have written before we embark}.

**Progressive tenses.** The progressive tenses, also known as *continuous tenses*, show action that progresses or continues. With active-voice verbs,
all six basic tenses can be made progressive by using the appropriate be-verb and the present participle of the main verb, as so:

- present progressive {he is playing tennis};
- present-perfect progressive {he has been playing tennis};
- past progressive {he was playing tennis};
- past-perfect progressive {he had been playing tennis};
- future progressive {he will be playing tennis}; and
- future-perfect progressive {he will have been playing tennis}.

Any such tense requiring additional words for its expression is considered an expanded tense.

With the passive voice, the present- and past-progressive tenses are made by using the appropriate be-verb with the present participle being, plus the past participle of the main verb, as so:

- present {I am being dealt the cards}; and
- past {I was being dealt the cards}.

Progressive tenses frequently appear in the posing and answering of questions {Are you studying? No, I’m answering e-mails}.

180 **Backshifting in reported speech.** When one speaker or writer conveys the words of another, grammarians call the result reported speech. There are two types of reported speech: direct and indirect speech (also called direct and indirect discourse). Direct speech repeats another’s words verbatim (or at least purports to), usually in the form of a quotation {he said, “I’ve never come here by this route”}. Indirect speech, on the other hand, conveys the content but not the form—that is, it paraphrases the original utterance without quoting the exact words {he said he had never been there by that route}.

Notice that in the second example, several words from the original statement have changed. That’s because indirect discourse reflects the reporting speaker’s deixis—the reporter’s perspective on identity, time, and place. So pointing elements in the original utterance shift accordingly: verbs and pronouns shift in person (I becomes he), and references to location shift in relation to distance (here becomes there; this becomes that; even come becomes go)—unless the identity or location of the reporter and the original speaker are the same. References to time usually become more remote (now becomes then)—unless the original utterance was a future reference to the time when something will be reported {“I’ll call you then” → she said she’d call me now} or the original speaking and
the reporting happen in the same window of time {“I am here now” → he says he is here now}.

This shift in time is particularly important for verb tense. Indirect speech typically involves backshifting—the changing of present-tense to past-tense verbs when currently relating what someone earlier said in the present tense. Since the reporting clause uses the past tense (he said), the verbs in the original utterance must become more remote in the reported clause (the present-perfect have come becomes the past-perfect had gone). Grammarians call this relationship, in which the verb tense of the reporting clause governs that of the reported clause, the sequence of tenses. Exactly what tense a reported verb backshifts to is dictated by context. When the reporting clause is in the present tense, backshifting is unnecessary {“we want to leave” → they say they want to leave}. And sometimes the backshift is either impossible (past-perfect verbs cannot become any more remote) or optional. For instance, I have walked 12 miles today becomes (at a later time) he said he had walked 12 miles that day. But I have tried a thousand times could become either he said he had tried a thousand times or he said he has tried a thousand times. Backshifting also occurs in sentences with hypothetical conditional clauses (see § 312).

TENSES ILLUSTRATED

181 Conjugation of the regular verb “to call.”
Principal parts: call, called, called

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFINITIVES</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>to call</td>
<td>to be called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present progressive</td>
<td>to be calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>to have called</td>
<td>to have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>to have been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPLES</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>calling</td>
<td>being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having called</td>
<td>having been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>having been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GERUNDS</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>calling</td>
<td>being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having called</td>
<td>having been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>having been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Indicative Mood, Active Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I call</td>
<td>you call</td>
<td>we call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you call</td>
<td>he calls</td>
<td>you call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am calling</td>
<td>you are calling</td>
<td>we are calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you are calling</td>
<td>he is calling</td>
<td>you are calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Emphatic Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do call</td>
<td>you do call</td>
<td>we do call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you do call</td>
<td>he does call</td>
<td>you do call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have called</td>
<td>you have called</td>
<td>we have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have called</td>
<td>he has called</td>
<td>you have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Perfect-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been calling</td>
<td>you have been calling</td>
<td>we have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have been calling</td>
<td>he has been calling</td>
<td>you have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I called</td>
<td>you called</td>
<td>we called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you called</td>
<td>he called</td>
<td>you called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was calling</td>
<td>you were calling</td>
<td>we were calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you were calling</td>
<td>he was calling</td>
<td>you were calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Emphatic Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did call</td>
<td>you did call</td>
<td>we did call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you did call</td>
<td>he did call</td>
<td>you did call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had called</td>
<td>you had called</td>
<td>we had called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you had called</td>
<td>he had called</td>
<td>you had called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he had called</td>
<td></td>
<td>they had called</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Perfect-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td>I had been calling</td>
<td>we had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had been calling</td>
<td>you had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had been calling</td>
<td>they had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future Tense</strong></td>
<td>I will call</td>
<td>we will call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will call</td>
<td>you will call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will call</td>
<td>they will call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td>I will be calling</td>
<td>we will be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will be calling</td>
<td>you will be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will be calling</td>
<td>they will be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td>I will have called</td>
<td>we will have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will have called</td>
<td>you will have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will have called</td>
<td>they will have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Perfect-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td>I will have been calling</td>
<td>we will have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will have been calling</td>
<td>you will have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will have been calling</td>
<td>they will have been calling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Indicative Mood, Passive Voice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Present Tense</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you are called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he is called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td>I am being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you are being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he is being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td>I have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he has been called</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Traditional Parts of Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I was called</td>
<td>we were called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you were called</td>
<td>you were called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he was called</td>
<td>they were called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I was being called</td>
<td>we were being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you were being called</td>
<td>you were being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he was being called</td>
<td>they were being called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I had been called</td>
<td>we had been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had been called</td>
<td>you had been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had been called</td>
<td>they had been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I will be called</td>
<td>we will be called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will be called</td>
<td>you will be called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will be called</td>
<td>they will be called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I will have been called</td>
<td>we will have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will have been called</td>
<td>you will have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will have been called</td>
<td>they will have been called</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Imperative Mood, Active Voice**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-EMPHATIC TENSE</strong></td>
<td>do call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Imperative Mood, Passive Voice**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>be called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be called</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Subjunctive Mood, Active Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I call</td>
<td>we call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you call</td>
<td>you call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he call</td>
<td>they call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I be calling</td>
<td>we be calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you be calling</td>
<td>you be calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he be calling</td>
<td>they be calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-EMPHATIC TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do call</td>
<td>we do call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you do call</td>
<td>you do call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he do call</td>
<td>they do call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have called</td>
<td>we have called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have called</td>
<td>you have called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he have called</td>
<td>they have called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been calling</td>
<td>we have been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have been calling</td>
<td>you have been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he have been calling</td>
<td>they have been calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I called</td>
<td>we called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you called</td>
<td>you called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he called</td>
<td>they called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I were calling</td>
<td>we were calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you were calling</td>
<td>you were calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he were calling</td>
<td>they were calling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-EMPHATIC TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did call</td>
<td>we did call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you did call</td>
<td>you did call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he did call</td>
<td>they did call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had called</td>
<td>we had called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you had called</td>
<td>you had called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he had called</td>
<td>they had called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Traditional Parts of Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Perfect-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>we had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you had been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>you had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he had been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>they had been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past-Conditional Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had I called</td>
<td></td>
<td>had we called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had you called</td>
<td></td>
<td>had you called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had he called</td>
<td></td>
<td>had they called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should call</td>
<td></td>
<td>we should call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should call</td>
<td></td>
<td>you should call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should call</td>
<td></td>
<td>they should call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should be calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>we should be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should be calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>you should be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should be calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>they should be calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have called</td>
<td></td>
<td>we should have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should have called</td>
<td></td>
<td>you should have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should have called</td>
<td></td>
<td>they should have called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future-Perfect-Progressive Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>we should have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should have been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>you should have been calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should have been calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>they should have been calling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Subjunctive Mood, Passive Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Present Tense</strong></th>
<th><strong>Present-Perfect Tense</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I be called</td>
<td>we be called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you be called</td>
<td>you be called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he be called</td>
<td>they be called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present-Perfect Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been called</td>
<td>we have been called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have been called</td>
<td>you have been called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he have been called</td>
<td>they have been called</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Verbs

**Past Tense**
- I were called
- you were called
- he were called

**Past-Progressive Tense**
- I were being called
- you were being called
- he were being called

**Past-Perfect Tense**
- I had been called
- you had been called
- he had been called

**Past-Conditional Tense**
- had I been called
- had you been called
- had he been called

**Future Tense**
- I should be called
- you should be called
- he should be called

**Future-Perfect Tense**
- I should have been called
- you should have been called
- he should have been called

---

**Conjugation of the irregular verb “to hide.”**

**Principal parts:** hide, hid, hidden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitives</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>to hide</td>
<td>to be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present progressive</td>
<td>to be hiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>to have hidden</td>
<td>to have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>to have been hiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participles</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>hiding</td>
<td>being hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having hidden</td>
<td>having been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>having been hiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td></td>
<td>hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GERUNDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>hiding</td>
<td>being hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having hidden</td>
<td>having been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect progressive</td>
<td>having been hiding</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Indicative Mood, Active Voice

#### Singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hide</td>
<td>we hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you hide</td>
<td>you hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he hides</td>
<td>they hide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present-progressive tense</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am hiding</td>
<td>we are hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you are hiding</td>
<td>you are hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he is hiding</td>
<td>they are hiding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present-emphatic tense</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do hide</td>
<td>we do hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you do hide</td>
<td>you do hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he does hide</td>
<td>they do hide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present-perfect tense</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have hidden</td>
<td>we have hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have hidden</td>
<td>you have hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he has hidden</td>
<td>they have hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present-perfect-progressive tense</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have been hiding</td>
<td>we have been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have been hiding</td>
<td>you have been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he has been hiding</td>
<td>they have been hiding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Past Tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Past-progressive tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hid</td>
<td>we hid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you hid</td>
<td>you hid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he hid</td>
<td>they hid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was hiding</td>
<td>we were hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you were hiding</td>
<td>you were hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he was hiding</td>
<td>they were hiding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Verbs

**Past-Emphatic Tense**
- I did hide
- you did hide
- he did hide
- we did hide
- you did hide
- they did hide
- you did hide
- you did hide
- he did hide
- they did hide

**Past-Perfect Tense**
- I had hidden
- you had hidden
- he had hidden
- we had hidden
- you had hidden
- they had hidden
- you had hidden
- you had hidden
- he had hidden
- they had hidden

**Past-Perfect-Progressive Tense**
- I had been hiding
- you had been hiding
- he had been hiding
- we had been hiding
- you had been hiding
- they had been hiding
- you had been hiding
- you had been hiding
- he had been hiding
- they had been hiding

**Future Tense**
- I will hide
- you will hide
- he will hide
- we will hide
- you will hide
- they will hide

**Future-Progressive Tense**
- I will be hiding
- you will be hiding
- he will be hiding
- we will be hiding
- you will be hiding
- they will be hiding

**Future-Perfect Tense**
- I will have hidden
- you will have hidden
- he will have hidden
- we will have hidden
- you will have hidden
- they will have hidden

**Future-Perfect-Progressive Tense**
- I will have been hiding
- you will have been hiding
- he will have been hiding
- we will have been hiding
- you will have been hiding
- they will have been hiding

---

**Indicative Mood, Passive Voice**

**Present Tense**
- I am hidden
- you are hidden
- he is hidden
- we are hidden
- you are hidden
- they are hidden
The Traditional Parts of Speech

**Present-progressive tense**
- I am being hidden
- you are being hidden
- he is being hidden
- we are being hidden
- you are being hidden
- they are being hidden

**Present-perfect tense**
- I have been hidden
- you have been hidden
- he has been hidden
- we have been hidden
- you have been hidden
- they have been hidden

**Past tense**
- I was hidden
- you were hidden
- he was hidden
- we were hidden
- you were hidden
- they were hidden

**Past-progressive tense**
- I was being hidden
- you were being hidden
- he was being hidden
- we were being hidden
- you were being hidden
- they were being hidden

**Past-perfect tense**
- I had been hidden
- you had been hidden
- he had been hidden
- we had been hidden
- you had been hidden
- they had been hidden

**Future tense**
- I will be hidden
- you will be hidden
- he will be hidden
- we will be hidden
- you will be hidden
- they will be hidden

**Future-perfect tense**
- I will have been hidden
- you will have been hidden
- he will have been hidden
- we will have been hidden
- you will have been hidden
- they will have been hidden

---

**Imperative Mood, Active Voice**

**Present tense**
- hide

**Present-progressive tense**
- be hiding

**Present-emphatic tense**
- do hide
Imperative Mood, Passive Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be hidden</td>
<td>be hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subjunctive Mood, Active Voice

Present Tense

| I hide          | we hide  |
| you hide        | you hide |
| he hide         | they hide|

Present-Progressive Tense

| I be hiding     | we be hiding |
| you be hiding   | you be hiding |
| he be hiding    | they be hiding |

Present-Emphatic Tense

| I do hide       | we do hide  |
| you do hide     | you do hide |
| he do hide      | they do hide |

Present-Perfect Tense

| I have hidden   | we have hidden |
| you have hidden | you have hidden |
| he have hidden  | they have hidden |

Present-Perfect-Progressive Tense

| I have been hiding | we have been hiding |
| you have been hiding | you have been hiding |
| he have been hiding | they have been hiding |

Past Tense

| I hid           | we hid   |
| you hid         | you hid  |
| he hid          | they hid |

Past-Progressive Tense

<p>| I were hiding   | we were hiding |
| you were hiding | you were hiding |
| he were hiding  | they were hiding |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAST-EMPHATIC TENSE</td>
<td>I did hide</td>
<td>we did hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you did hide</td>
<td>you did hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he did hide</td>
<td>they did hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST-PERFECT TENSE</td>
<td>I had hidden</td>
<td>we had hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had hidden</td>
<td>you had hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had hidden</td>
<td>they had hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</td>
<td>I had been hiding</td>
<td>we had been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had been hiding</td>
<td>you had been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had been hiding</td>
<td>they had been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST-CONDITIONAL TENSE</td>
<td>had I hidden</td>
<td>had we hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>had you hidden</td>
<td>had you hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>had he hidden</td>
<td>had they hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE TENSE</td>
<td>I should hide</td>
<td>we should hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you should hide</td>
<td>you should hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he should hide</td>
<td>they should hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</td>
<td>I should be hiding</td>
<td>we should be hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you should be hiding</td>
<td>you should be hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he should be hiding</td>
<td>they should be hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE-PERFECT TENSE</td>
<td>I should have hidden</td>
<td>we should have hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you should have hidden</td>
<td>you should have hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he should have hidden</td>
<td>they should have hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</td>
<td>I should have been hiding</td>
<td>we should have been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you should have been hiding</td>
<td>you should have been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he should have been hiding</td>
<td>they should have been hiding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Subjunctive Mood, Passive Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I be hidden</td>
<td>we be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you be hidden</td>
<td>you be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he be hidden</td>
<td>they be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been hidden</td>
<td>we have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have been hidden</td>
<td>you have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he have been hidden</td>
<td>they have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I were hidden</td>
<td>we were hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you were hidden</td>
<td>you were hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he were hidden</td>
<td>they were hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I were being hidden</td>
<td>we were being hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you were being hidden</td>
<td>you were being hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he were being hidden</td>
<td>they were being hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had been hidden</td>
<td>we had been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you had been hidden</td>
<td>you had been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he had been hidden</td>
<td>they had been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-CONDITIONAL TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had I been hidden</td>
<td>had we been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had you been hidden</td>
<td>had you been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had he been hidden</td>
<td>had they been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should be hidden</td>
<td>we should be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should be hidden</td>
<td>you should be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should be hidden</td>
<td>they should be hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have been hidden</td>
<td>we should have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you should have been hidden</td>
<td>you should have been hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should have been hidden</td>
<td>they should have been hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The verb *be* has eight forms (*be*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *been*, *being*, and *am*) and has several special uses. First, it is sometimes a sentence’s principal verb meaning “exist” {*I think, therefore I am*}. Second, it is more often used as an auxiliary verb {*I was born in Lubbock*}. When joined with a verb’s present participle, it denotes continuing or progressive action {*the train is coming*} {*the passenger was waiting*}. When joined with a past participle, the verb becomes passive {*a signal was given*} {*an earring was dropped*} (see § 162). Often this type of construction can be advantageously changed to active voice {*he gave the signal*} {*she dropped her earring*}. Third, *be* is the most common linking verb that connects the subject with something affirmed of the subject {*truth is beauty*} {*we are the champions*}. Occasionally a *be*-verb is used as part of an adjective {*a wannabe rock star [want to be]*} {*a would-be hero*} or noun {*a has-been*}.

*Be* has some nuances in the way it’s conjugated. (1) The stem is not used in the present-indicative form. Instead, *be* has three forms: for the first-person singular, *am*; for the third-person singular, *is*; and for all other persons, *are*. (2) The present participle is formed by adding -*ing* to the root *be* {*being*}. It is the same for all persons, but the present progressive requires also using *am*, *is*, or *are* {*I am being*} {*it is being*} {*you are being*}. (3) The past indicative has two forms: the first- and third-person singular use *was*; all other persons use *were* {*she was*} {*we were*}. (4) The past participle for all persons is *been* {*I have been*} {*they have been*}. (5) The imperative is the verb’s stem {*be yourself!*}.

Principal parts: *be*, *been*, *been*

**INFINITIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>to have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTICIPLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GERUNDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect (present perfect)</td>
<td>having been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Indicative Mood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I am</td>
<td>we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you are</td>
<td>you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he is</td>
<td>they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I am being</td>
<td>we are being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you are being</td>
<td>you are being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he is being</td>
<td>they are being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I have been</td>
<td>we have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you have been</td>
<td>you have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he has been</td>
<td>they have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I have been being</td>
<td>we have been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you have been being</td>
<td>you have been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he has been being</td>
<td>they have been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I was</td>
<td>we were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you were</td>
<td>you were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he was</td>
<td>they were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I was being</td>
<td>we were being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you were being</td>
<td>you were being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he was</td>
<td>they were being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I had been</td>
<td>we had been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had been</td>
<td>you had been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had been</td>
<td>they had been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I had been being</td>
<td>we had been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you had been being</td>
<td>you had been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he had been being</td>
<td>they had been being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Traditional Parts of Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I will be</td>
<td>we will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will be</td>
<td>you will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will be</td>
<td>they will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE-PERFECT TENSE</strong></td>
<td>I will have been</td>
<td>we will have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you will have been</td>
<td>you will have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he will have been</td>
<td>they will have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Imperative Mood**

| **PRESENT TENSE** | be | be |

**Subjunctive Mood**

<p>| <strong>PRESENT TENSE</strong> | I be | we be |
|                   | you be | you be |
|                   | he be | they be |
| <strong>PRESENT-PERFECT TENSE</strong> | I have been | we have been |
|                   | you have been | you have been |
|                   | he have been | they have been |
| <strong>PRESENT-PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong> | I have been being | we have been being |
|                   | you have been being | you have been being |
|                   | he have been being | they have been being |
| <strong>PAST TENSE</strong> | I were | we were |
|                   | you were | you were |
|                   | he were | they were |
| <strong>PAST-PROGRESSIVE TENSE</strong> | I were being | we were being |
|                   | you were being | you were being |
|                   | he were being | they were being |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Singular**

**Past-perfect tense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>had been</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>had been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>had been</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>had been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>had been</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>had been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Past-perfect-progressive tense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>had been being</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>had been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>had been being</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>had been being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>had been being</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>had been being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Future-perfect tense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>should have been</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>should have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>should have been</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>should have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>should have been</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>should have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Future tense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>should be</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>should be</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>should be</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>should be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conditional tense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>had I</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>had we</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had you</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>had you</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had he</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>had they been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PERSON**

184 *Generally.* A verb’s person shows whether the act, state, or condition is that of (1) the person speaking (first person), (2) the person spoken to (second person), or (3) the person or thing spoken of (third person).

**NUMBER**

185 *Generally.* The number of a verb must agree with the number of the noun or pronoun used with it. In other words, the verb must be singular or plural. Only the third-person present-indicative singular changes form to indicate number and person {I sketch} {you sketch} {she sketches} {they sketch}. *(Be changes form in a few other contexts, however [see § 183]. And most modal auxiliaries lack a distinct third-person-singular form.)* The second-person verb is always plural in form, whether one person or
more than one person is spoken to {you are a wonderful person} {you are wonderful people}.

186 Agreement in person and number. A finite verb agrees with its subject in person and number—which is to say that a singular subject takes a singular verb {the solution works}, while a plural subject takes a plural verb {the solutions work}. When a verb has two or more subjects connected by and, it agrees with them jointly and is plural {Socrates and Plato were wise}. When a verb has two or more subjects connected by or or nor, the verb agrees with the last-named subject {Bob or his friends have your key} {neither the twins nor Jon is prepared to leave}. When the subject is a collective noun conveying the idea of unity or multitude, the verb is singular {the nation is powerful}. When the subject is a collective noun conveying the idea of plurality, the verb is plural {the faculty were divided in their sentiments}.

This last type of construction, in which meaning rather than strict grammar governs syntax, is called synesis or notional concord. In English, synesis occurs when a grammatically singular subject takes a plural verb. (Synesis applies to pronouns, too: note the use of their to refer to faculty above and to team, total, and bulk below.) This is more common in BrE than AmE, but it appears in all varieties of the language—most often with collective nouns {the team were honing their skills}. But many other nouns such as number, total, lot, multitude, myriad, and majority can also function as plural when followed by an of-phrase using a plural noun {a majority of senators support the bill} {a number of people were there} {a total of 37 students have voiced their concerns}. These nouns of multitude are usually treated as singular when they are preceded by the definite article, when the of-phrase uses a singular mass noun, or when they appear without an of-phrase {the number of people was staggering} {a lot of this chicken has gone bad} {a majority is more than we can hope for}.

But there are exceptions: sometimes the of-phrase is implied or displaced {over a hundred demonstrators turned out; a lot [of the demonstrators] were carrying signs} {of those present, only a minority were against the proposition}. And sometimes the sense is plural even when the precedes the noun {the bulk of librarians say their work is fulfilling}. The deciding factor is whether the focus is on the subject as a single cohesive entity or as a group of individual elements (though sometimes either option is appropriate {a multitude of options confront the customer [focusing on the individual options]} {a multitude of options confronts the customer [focusing on the total number of options]})). See §§ 10–13.
Likewise, a plural subject indicating a quantity of something considered as a unit takes a singular verb {three hundred dollars is a reasonable price} {six weeks is a long time to wait} {three-quarters of the grain was infested}. But if the plural subject represents a number of individual items, then the verb is plural {three hundred tourists were enrolled in the excursion} {six weeks have passed since the accident} {two-thirds of the flowers were destroyed}.

A book or film title incorporating a plural, or a plural word referred to as a word, is considered singular and takes a singular verb {The Replacements is her favorite movie} {errata is the plural of erratum}.

A gerund, an infinitive, or a clause used as a subject ordinarily requires a singular verb {her negotiating wins over many a client} {to succeed is to thrive} {what this house needs is a new coat of paint}. Some gerunds, however, have well-accepted plural forms that take plural verbs {beginnings always present a challenge} {her musings were a delight to everyone}.

187 Disjunctive compound subjects. When two or more discrete subjects of mixed number (i.e., not all singular or plural) are joined with a disjunctive such as or, either–or, or neither–nor, the verb should agree with the nearest subject:

- Poor: Either the teachers or the school board have the authority to act.
- Better: Either the teachers or the school board has the authority to act.
- Better: Either the school board or the teachers have the authority to act.

As the second “better” example shows, placing the plural subject closest to the verb makes the sentence sound more natural.

188 Conjunctive compound subjects. When two singular subjects are joined by a conjunctive such as and, the verb should be plural. The common error here is to ignore the compound nature of the subject:

- Poor: Public relations and recruiting is a big part of the coach’s job.
- Better: Public relations and recruiting are a big part of the coach’s job.
Notice that the plural subject (*public relations and recruiting*) determines the number of the verb—not the singular complement (*a big part*).

Two exceptions. First, if the subjects are not discrete but instead refer to a single thing, use a singular verb {*corned beef and cabbage is the traditional St. Patrick’s Day fare*} {*spaghetti and meatballs is her favorite dish*}. A singular verb may also be appropriate when the subjects are rhetorically close {*fame and fortune was her goal*}. But this is often a matter of idiom {*time and tide wait for no one*}. Second, if *each or every* modifies singular subjects joined by *and*, the verb is singular {*each box, suitcase, and handbag is inspected*}.

**189 Some other nuances of number involving conjunctions.** If a compound subject contains both singular and plural nouns, how do you choose the controlling noun? When the nouns are linked by *and*, they form a plural subject and take a plural verb {*the children and their nanny are going to the park*}. If the subject contains a prepositional phrase, only the nouns that are not part of the phrase control the verb {*Maxine together with her friend was laughing*}. When the nouns or noun phrases are linked with a disjunctive conjunction, then the noun closest to the verb controls it {*Bill or Mary was responsible*} {*neither the dogs nor the mailman is to blame*}. In a few constructions, *or* may be only weakly disjunctive so that either a singular or plural verb may be used {*a word or two is needed*} {*a word or two are needed*}. A mass-noun phrase may take a singular verb {*the nation’s military might and power was not enough*}.

**190 Peculiar nouns that are plural in form but singular in sense.** A few nouns ending in *-s* are plural in form but take a singular verb {*the news comes on at 7:00*}. Some plural forms can go either way as singular {*politics is nasty business*} {*ethics is worthy of study*} or plural {*his politics are troubling the voters*} {*her ethics are irreproachable*}—singular for *politics* and *ethics* when referring to the art or science. See § 13.

**191 Agreement of indefinite pronouns.** An indefinite pronoun (see § 92) such as *anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone, nobody, no one, somebody*, and *someone* routinely takes a singular verb {*everyone receives credits for this course*} {*somebody knows where the car is*}.

**192 Relative pronouns as subjects.** A relative pronoun used as the subject of a clause can be either singular or plural, depending on the pronoun’s antecedent {*a woman who likes skydiving*} {*people who collect books*}.
Perhaps one of the trickiest constructions involves *one of those who* or *one of those that*:

**Poor:** She is one of those employees who works tirelessly.
**Better:** She is one of those employees who work tirelessly.

In this construction, the subject of the verb *work* is *who*, and the antecedent of *who* is *employees*, not *one*. You can see this easily if you reorder the syntax (without adding or subtracting a word): *Of those employees who work tirelessly, she is one*.

**“There is”; “Here is.”** When appearing at the beginning of a sentence, the word *there* is typically an expletive standing in for the subject—sometimes called a *dummy subject*. It is not the subject itself. Instead, it causes an inversion of the subject and the verb—so that the verb precedes. The actual subject in such a construction is sometimes termed an anticipatory or delayed subject. The fact that the sentence order is inverted from the usual subject–predicate order does not change the rule that the number of the subject determines the number of the verb (there is nothing to fear) (there are two options). It is a common error to mistake *There* for the subject and use a singular verb (especially with the contraction *There’s*) when the true subject is plural:

**Poor:** There’s snacks on the table.
**Better:** There are snacks on the table.

A similar error often occurs with the adverbs *Here* and *Where*:

**Poor:** Here’s your options.
**Better:** Here are your options.

**Poor:** Where’s my keys?
**Better:** Where are my keys?

**False attraction to intervening matter.** When words separate the subject and verb, writers may be misled to use a verb that agrees in number with a nearby noun instead of the more distant subject. While this error sometimes results in a singular verb with a plural subject, the more common mistake is to be tempted toward a plural verb with a singular subject. The most common troublemaker is the object or objects of an intervening prepositional phrase:
Poor: The idea underlying all these arguments are that Shakespeare must have been apprenticed in a law office as a young adult.

Better: The idea underlying all these arguments is that Shakespeare must have been apprenticed in a law office as a young adult.

Sometimes, however, a lack of strict agreement is appropriate—a type of construction called synesis. For more on subject–verb agreement, see § 186.

195 False attraction to predicate noun. When the subject and a predicate noun differ in number, the subject governs the number of the verb {mediocrity and complacency are the source of his ire} {the source of his ire is mediocrity and complacency}. A plural predicate noun after a singular subject may mislead a writer into error by suggesting a plural verb. When this occurs, the simple correction of changing the number of the verb may make the sentence awkward, and the better approach then is to rework the sentence:

Poor: My downfall are sweets.
Better: My downfall is sweets.
Better: Sweets are my downfall.

196 Misleading connectives: “as well as,” “along with,” “together with,” etc. Adding to a singular subject by using a phrasal connective such as along with, as well as, in addition to, together with, and the like does not make the subject plural. This type of distraction can be doubly misleading because the intervening material seems to create a compound subject, and the modifying prepositional phrase may itself contain one or more plural objects. If the singular verb sounds awkward in such a sentence, try the conjunction and instead:

Poor: The bride as well as her bridesmaids were dressed in mauve.
Better: The bride as well as her bridesmaids was dressed in mauve.
Better: The bride and her bridesmaids were dressed in mauve.
Agreement in first and second person. A personal pronoun used as a subject requires the appropriate verb form according to the person of the pronoun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Pronoun</th>
<th>Verb Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>he is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you are</td>
<td>she is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we are</td>
<td>it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they are</td>
<td>it goes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go</td>
<td>he goes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you go</td>
<td>she goes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we go</td>
<td>it goes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here comes the tricky point: pronouns joined by or, either–or, or neither–nor are traditionally said to take the verb form that agrees with the nearer subject {either he or I am in for a surprise} {either you or he is right} {*neither you nor I am a plumber}. Because these constructions are admittedly awkward, speakers and writers typically find another way to express the thought {one of us is in for a surprise} {one of you is right} {neither of us is a plumber}.

But the empirical evidence undercuts *neither you nor I am, *neither they nor I am, *neither she nor I am, etc. When the second element is the first-person singular, are predominates over am in post-1800 print sources by an average ratio of 5:1. Either you or I am is closest, but even that loses in frequency to either you or I are by a 2:1 margin.

Yet all such constructions are uncommon. The lesson here is to avoid having the first-person singular as the second subject element with a correlative conjunction: use a little preventive grammar.

Auxiliary Verbs

Generally. An auxiliary verb (sometimes termed a helping verb) is a highly irregular verb used with one or more other verbs to form voice, tense, and mood. It always precedes the principal verb. The most common auxiliary verbs are explained in the following sections.

Modal auxiliaries. A subset of auxiliary verbs, called modal auxiliaries or modals, are used to express ability, necessity, possibility, willingness, obligation, and the like {they might be there} {she could be leaving at this very moment}. They are so called because they indicate the principal verb’s mood. (See §§ 164–71.) All the verbs described below are modal auxiliaries except the last two: do and have.

“Can” and “could.” Can uses only its stem form in the present indicative {I can} {it can} {they can}. In the past indicative, can becomes could for all
persons {he could see better with glasses}. Can does not have an infinitive form (to be able to is substituted), or a present or past participle. (Such words lacking one or more inflected forms normal for their word class are traditionally called defective. Most modal auxiliaries are defective verbs.) When it denotes ability, capacity, or permission, can is always followed by an explicit or implicit bare infinitive as the principal verb {you can carry this trunk}. When used in the sense of permission, can is colloquial for may {can I go to the movies?}. Can also connotes actual possibility or common experience {storms can be severe in spring} {days can pass before a decision is announced}.

Could is often used to talk about the past {she could hum a tune at six months of age} or to discuss someone’s general ability at a given time {when he was 11, he could drive a golf ball 250 yards}. But could is also used as a softer, less definite equivalent of can in reference to future events {we could travel to Cancun if you wanted to}. In this use, the meaning is close to “would be able to” {you could be promoted within six months if you’d just apply yourself!}.

“May” and “might.” May denotes either permission {you may go to the movies} or possibility {I may go to the movies}. In negating permission, may not is sometimes displaced by the more intensive must not. Compare You may not climb that tree with You must not climb that tree.

May most commonly connotes an uncertain possibility {you may find that assignment too difficult}, and it often becomes might {you might find that assignment too difficult}. Is there a connotative difference? Yes: may tends to express likelihood {we may get there on time}, while might expresses a stronger sense of doubt {we might still get there on time—if the traffic clears}. Might can also express a contrary-to-fact hypothetical {we might have been able to make it if the traffic had been better}.

This verb has only its stem form in the present indicative {I may} {it may} {they may}. In the past indicative, may often becomes might, especially to connote uncertainty {the jeweler might have forgotten to call} {they might be delayed}. May does not have an infinitive form, or a present or past participle. As an auxiliary denoting wishfulness or purpose, may forms a subjunctive equivalent {may you always be happy} {give so that others may live}.

“Must.” Must denotes a necessity that arises from someone’s will {we must obey the rules}, from circumstances {you must ask what the next step is}, or from rule or obligation {all applications must be received by
May 31 to be valid}. Must also connotes a logical conclusion {that must be the right answer} {that must be the house we’re looking for} {it must have been Donna who phoned}. This auxiliary verb does not vary its form in either the present or past indicative. It does not have an infinitive form (to have to is substituted), or a present or past participle. Denoting obligation, necessity, or inference, must is always used with a bare infinitive {we must finish this design} {everyone must eat} {the movie must be over by now}.

203 “Ought.” Ought denotes either what is reasonably expected of a person as a matter of duty {they ought to fix the fence} or what we guess or conclude is probable {they left at dawn, so they ought to be here soon}. It is more emphatic than should but less strong than must. This verb does not vary its form in either the present or past indicative. It has no infinitive form, or present or past participle. Denoting a duty or obligation, ought is always used with an infinitive, even in the negative {we ought to invite some friends} {the driver ought not to have ignored the signal}. To is occasionally omitted after not {you ought not worry}, but the better usage is to include it {you ought not to worry}. See also § 147.

204 “Shall.” This verb uses only its stem form in the present indicative. It is a relatively rare word in present-day AmE, except in first-person jocular uses {shall we dance?} {shall I fetch you some coffee?}. Shall traditionally connotes necessity or compulsion, often, but not always, in the form of a promise or a legal obligation {each applicant shall be present at the meeting}. It may reflect the intent of the speaker {I shall return} {you shall never see me again} or another person {you shall have your money soon}. Shall also conveys a sense of potential or probability {the coupon shall expire soon}. In almost all senses, shall is archaic and replaceable with will or must. But should is still current.

205 “Should.” Should, the past-indicative form of shall, is used for all persons, and always with a principal verb {they should be at home} {should you read that newspaper?}. Should does not have an infinitive form, or a present or past participle. Should often carries a sense of duty, compulsion, or expectation {I should review those financial-planning tips} {you should clean the garage today} {it should be ready by now}. Sometimes it carries a sense of inference {the package should have been delivered today}. And sometimes it conveys the speaker’s attitude {how should I know?} {you shouldn’t have to deal with that}. Should and ought are quite similar and often interchangeable in discussions of what is required, what is advisable,
or what we think it is right for people either to do or to have done. *Should* is slightly less emphatic than *ought*, but it appears with greater frequency.

206 **“Will” and “would.”** In its auxiliary uses, *will* uses only its stem form in the present indicative {she *will*} {they *will*}. In the past indicative, the only form for all persons is *would* {we *would* go fishing on Saturdays} {she *would* say that!}. *Will* often carries a sense of the future {she *will* be at her desk tomorrow} or, in the past form *would*, expresses a conditional statement {I *would* recognize the house if I saw it again}. It can also express certainty {I’m sure you *will* understand}; decisions and other types of volition {I really *will* work out more}; requests, orders, and offers {will you stop that!} {will you take $5 for it?}; or typical behavior {she *will* read for hours on end}.

*Would* is often a softer, less definite equivalent of *will* {would you please stop that?}. It is used for reported speech (see § 180) {the porter said that he *would* be here in five minutes}; to talk about a past action that had not yet occurred at the time we are now discussing {within the two years after his 19th birthday, he *would* win four championships on the PGA Tour}; to make polite requests and offers {would you reshelve your books, please?} {would you prefer coffee or tea?}; to talk about typical behavior in the past {I remember that she *would* make weekly treks to the public library, hauling bagfuls of books}.

207 **“Dare” and “need.”** These two words are more commonly used as full verbs. Because they sound rather quaint as auxiliaries, they should be used sparingly and carefully. But their auxiliary uses haven’t completely atrophied. As an auxiliary, *dare* is used in interrogative and negative sentences, and in sentences containing uncertainty. *Dare* expresses the speaker’s attitude toward the action {she *dare* not tell me a lie} {dare he spend a night in that graveyard?}. Because the sound is somewhat archaic, the preference is to use *dare* as a full verb. Compare *he dare not come back alone* (*dare* is an auxiliary) with *he does not dare to come back alone* (*dare* is a full verb).

As a full verb, *need* expresses something that the subject requires {the zoo *needs* a new giraffe}. As an auxiliary verb, *need* states an immediate necessity {I *need* to leave now}. As in that example, *need* is usually followed by an infinitive—sometimes a bare infinitive {I *needn’t* be reminded [i.e., I’m already aware of something]} {we *needn’t* rush [i.e., there’s no reason to hurry]}. As with *dare*, the auxiliary *need* may sound old-fashioned. It is often replaced with *have to* or *don’t have to*.
“Do.” The auxiliary verb do (sometimes called a *dummy auxiliary*) frequently creates emphatic verbs. It has two forms in the present indicative: does for the third-person singular, and do for all other persons. In the past indicative, the only form for all persons is did. The past participle is done. As an auxiliary verb, do is used only in the present indicative {we do plan some charity work} and past indicative {did you speak?}. When the verb in an imperative statement is coupled with not, do also appears {do not touch!} {don’t be an idiot!}.

Examples:

Present indicative: I do think I can do it.
Past indicative: I did think I could do it.
Imperative: Do be in touch!

But do doesn’t always create emphasis: it is idiomatically required in negative statements and in some types of yes–no questions and their answers:

- He did not want to go.
- Do you really want to participate?
- I don’t believe it for a moment.
- Does Helen like Beethoven’s symphonies?
- Don’t you intend to edit this manuscript?

When used in these ways, the verb do is separated from the principal verb by the adverb not, by the subject of the sentence, or by both.

When denoting performance, do can also act as a principal verb {he does well in school} {they do good work}. Do can sometimes substitute for a verb, thereby avoiding repetition {Marion dances well, and so do you} {he caught fewer mistakes than you did}.

“Have.” This verb has two forms in the present indicative: has for the third-person singular, and have for all other persons. In the past indicative, the only form for all persons is had; the past participle is also had.

When have functions as an auxiliary verb, the present or past indicative of have precedes the past participle of a verb to form that verb’s present-perfect or past-perfect indicative mood {I have looked everywhere} {he had looked for a better rate}. When preceding an infinitive, have denotes obligation or necessity {I have to finish this paper tonight!}. Had plus to and an infinitive expresses the past form of must {I had to leave yesterday afternoon}. 


When denoting possession, action, or experience, *have* functions as a sentence’s principal verb {she has a car and a boat} {you have a mosquito on your neck} {we’ll have a party next week}. *Have* may also be used with *do* to express actual or figurative possession {do you have the time?} {do we have room?} {Vicky did not have her coat}.

Colloquially, *have got* is used to mean *acquired* or *possess* {I have got a new car} {she has got blue eyes}. But when *have got* precedes *to* plus an infinitive, it means *must* {I have got to pass this test!}. *Have got to* is somewhat more emphatic and more informal than *have to*. 

The Traditional Parts of Speech
Adverbs

Definition and Formation

Generically. An adverb is a word (more particularly, an adjunct) that qualifies, limits, describes, or modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb {she studied constantly [constantly qualifies the verb studied]} {the juggler’s act was really unusual [really qualifies the adjective unusual]} {the cyclist pedaled very swiftly [very qualifies the adverb swiftly]}. An adverb may also qualify a preposition, a conjunction, or an entire independent clause {the birds flew right over the lake [right qualifies the preposition over]} {this is exactly where I found it [exactly qualifies the conjunction where]} {apparently you forgot to check your references [apparently qualifies the rest of the clause]}. Some intensifying adverbs may modify an adjective {the bids differ by a very small amount} or an adverb {he moved along very quickly}, but not a verb. You can’t say *He spoke very or *She played very. Other adverbs of this sort—often called intensifiers—are more, most, much, quite, rather, really, somewhat, and too. Grammarians have also traditionally used the term adverb as a catchall category to sweep in words that aren’t readily put into other categories (such as not, please, and the infinitival to [see § 147] and the particle in a phrasal verb [see § 143]).

Sentence adverbs. An adverb that modifies an entire sentence is called a sentence adverb {fortunately, we’ve had rain this week} {undoubtedly he drove his car to the depot}. Sentence adverbs most commonly indicate doubt or emphasize a statement’s certainty. Some common examples are maybe, possibly, and however. They are sometimes called modal adverbs. They usually appear at the beginning of the sentence {still, I think you should leave} {anyway, the test is finished} {luckily, the car stopped in time}, but they can also appear within the sentence {you must realize, however, that his story was a lie}. On the use of hopefully and doubtfully as sentence adverbs, see pp. 266, 280.
Adverbial suffixes. Many adjectives have corresponding adverbs distinguished by the suffix -ly or, after most words ending in -ic, -ally {slow–slowly} {careful–carefully} {public–publicly} {pedantic–pedantically}. Most adjectives ending in -y preceded by a consonant change the -y to -i when the suffix is added, but some don’t {happy–happily} {shy–shyly}. A few adjectives ending in -e drop the vowel {true–truly} {whole–wholly}. If an adjective ends in an -le that is sounded as part of a syllable, it is replaced with -ly {terrible–terribly} {simple–simply}. An adjective that ends in a double -l takes only a -y suffix {dull–dully}. Many adjectives ending in -le or -ly do not make appealing adverbs {juvenile–juvenilely} {silly–sillily}. If an -ly adverb looks clumsy {ghastlily} {uglily}, either rephrase the sentence or use a phrase {in a ghastly manner} {in an ugly way}. A few other suffixes are used for adverbs, especially in informal speech {he rides cowboy-style} {park your cars curbside}. A few nouns form adverbs by taking the ending -ways {side–sideways}, -ward {sky–skyward}, or -wise {clock–clockwise}. And adverbial suffixes are sometimes added to phrases {she replied matter-of-factly}.

Finally, not every word ending in -ly is an adverb—some are adjectives {lovely} {curly}.

Adverbs without suffixes. Many common adverbs don’t have an identifying suffix {almost} {never} {here} {now} {just} {seldom} {late} {near} {too}. See § 215.

Distinguished from adjectives. Unlike an adjective, an adverb doesn’t modify a noun or pronoun {we made an early start and arrived at the airport early [the first early is an adjective modifying the noun start; the second is an adverb modifying arrived]}. Some adverbs are identical to prepositions (e.g., up and off) but are distinguishable because they are not attached to a following noun {he ran up a large bill} {let’s cast off}. These prepositional adverbs (sometimes called particles or particle adverbs) are typically parts of phrasal verbs. See § 143.

Simple vs. Compound Adverbs

Standard and flat adverbs. A simple adverb is a single word that qualifies a single part of speech {hardly} {now} {deep}. There are two types. A standard adverb has the ending -ly {quickly} {broadly}. A flat or bare adverb has no -ly ending {doubtless} {fast}. Some flat adverbs have an -ly form but may work equally well or even better without the -ly, especially
when used with an imperative in an informal context {drive slow} {hold on tight} {tell me quick}. Some flat adverbs are always used in their flat form {work fast} because the -ly has become obsolete (although it may linger in other words—e.g., steadfast and steadfastly). And the flat adverb may have a different meaning from the -ly adverb. Compare I am working hard with I am hardly working.

Because flat adverbs are less numerous than standard adverbs—some of them appearing only in literary usages {I was taken unawares} {I must needs go}—there is a tendency to add -ly to many of them as well, as with *doubtlessly and *thusly. These “double adverbs” are normally considered poor usage.

Among the more common flat adverbs are these:

- about
- across
- after
- afterward
- alike
- almost
- also
- altogether
- always
- anywhere
- around
- away
- below
- beyond
- by
- close
- deep
- doubtless
- down
- even
- far
- farther
- fast
- further
- hard
- here
- hereafter
- high
- how
- ill
- in
- indeed
- just
- late
- less
- little
- long
- loud
- low
- much
- near
- never
- not
- now
- nowhere
- off
- out
- perhaps
- quick
- quite
- rather
- right
- sharp
- since
- slow
- so
- somehow
- somewhat
- somewhere
- soon
- still
- straight
- there
- through
- thus
- too
- unawares
- under
- up
- very
- well
- when
- whenever
- where
- wherever
- why
- wide
- worse
- wrong
- yet
Phrasal and compound adverbs. A phrasal adverb consists of two or more words that function together as an adverb {in the meantime} {for a while} {here and there}. A compound adverb appears to be a single word but is a compound of several words {notwithstanding} {heretofore} {thereupon}. Compound adverbs should be used cautiously and sparingly because they tend to make the tone stuffy.

Types of Adverbs

Adverbs of manner. Some adverbs, called manner adverbs or adverbs of manner, describe “how,” “in what way,” or “by what method” an action or condition occurs {Ollie stubbornly refused to say where he’d been} {this novelist writes well} {the onlookers shouted with all their might} {Swadsi works unnecessarily hard} [the two adverbs of manner work differently here: unnecessarily modifies hard, which in turn modifies the verb works]} {the battle raged fiercely}. More examples of manner adverbs are foolishly, quickly, otherwise, and namely. A manner adverb may replace a prepositional phrase that functions adverbially—e.g., the customer shouted in an angry manner becomes the customer shouted angrily.

Adverbs of time. An adverb of time indicates duration {they walked two hours without stopping}, repetition {that picture has rarely fallen off the wall}, date {I met Martin when I was in Wales}, and frequency {deliveries are made weekly}. Some present-time adverbs are immediately, now, today, and tonight. Future-time adverbs include soon and tomorrow. Adverbs showing repetition or duration include always, often, rarely, and seldom. Some adverbs such as after, before, early, late, and soon indicate temporal relationships among periods or events. An adverb of time may replace a prepositional phrase—e.g., no one is available at this point in time is better rendered no one is now available.

Adverbs of place. An adverb of place or location (also called a locative adverb), or of direction, shows the place at which the action of the verb occurs or the direction that it takes. It often answers the question “where” or “in (at) what place” {we’ll be driving north in the morning} {the vicar traveled here through the woods} {they threw the sack over the fence} {walk around to the back door} {lying there by the roadside}. Some commonly used adverbs of place are about, anywhere, everywhere, here, inside, on, upon, within, in back, in front, in here, above, below, in, on, and forward.
A manner adverb may replace a locative adverbial phrase—e.g., *put your toys away in a proper place* becomes *put your toys away properly*.

**220 Adverbs of degree.** An adverb of degree describes the intensity or quality of an action in terms of “how much,” “how little,” or “in what degree” {the work was not so easy} {we were treated quite fairly} {he lectured very enthusiastically}. Adverbs of degree generally modify adjectives {the movie was rather dull} {the room is too bright} or other adverbs {you type much faster than I do} {don’t drink so deep}. Examples of adverbs of degree are *highly, too, and very.*

**221 Adverbs of reason.** An adverb of reason or cause answers the questions “why” or “for what purpose” {you can’t take that pen because it belongs to me} {he found out what the problem was; accordingly, we now know its source}. Several adverbs of reason are conjunctive {you didn’t turn in your term paper, so I think you might be penalized}. See § 228.

**222 Adverbs of consequence.** An adverb of consequence (sometimes called a consequential adverb) introduces a clause that states an inference {the governor named his erstwhile rival to a judgeship so that no serious competition would be around come reelection time}, conclusion {dogs eat steak, and a steak is missing; therefore the dog must have eaten the steak}, or result {there were no signs warning of danger; thus it seemed safe to go inside}. Examples of consequential adverbs are *so that, such that, therefore, and thus.*

**223 Adverbs of number.** An adverb of number (also called a numeric adverb) indicates order or position. Adverbs of number are traditionally formed by adding the -ly suffix to ordinal numbers {secondly} {thirdly}, but such forms are now generally considered less editorially desirable: the ordinal numbers alone can function adverbially {first, choose a subject; second, decide what to write about that subject}.

**224 Interrogative adverbs.** Interrogative adverbs are used to ask questions; they include words like *how, when, where, and why.* Such an adverb can be used to ask a direct question {how did you find it?} or an indirect question {I don’t know why Ken went to Italy}. It can also modify some word or phrase in the sentence. For instance, in *Where did you leave the keys?*, the adverb *where* asks the question and also modifies *did leave*. And in *When did the mail arrive?*, the adverb *when* asks a question and also modifies *did*
**The Traditional Parts of Speech**

*arrive*. Interrogative adverbs often present a question about manner {how did you get here?}, time {when does the seminar begin?}, place {where are you going for the holidays?}, degree {how accurate were those calculations?}, reason {why do you have an umbrella?}, and number {how many golf tournaments have you won?}.

**Exclamatory adverbs.** Many of the same words that function as interrogative adverbs can be used to introduce exclamations as well {how thoughtful of you!} {why, you’re a darling!}. When used in this way, these words are called exclamatory adverbs.

**Affirmative and negative adverbs.** Affirmative adverbs indicate assent or approval. They can be single words {certainly} {really} {absolutely} or expressions {by all means} {as you say}. Yes may be used as an affirmative adverb {yes, I will go with you}. Negative adverbs indicate disapproval or denial {not at all} {never}. No, not, and never are the most common negative adverbs {never repeat this to anyone} {your request will not be granted}. Yes and no are also independent adverbs and can stand alone; the rest of the answer is implied {Will you go with me? Yes [I will go with you is implied]} {Do we have enough sugar? No [We do not have enough sugar is implied]}. Not is never used as part of the verb even though it may be part of the verb phrase; it reverses the usual meaning of the verb—e.g., *not going means staying*. Some adverbs, such as hardly, scarcely, and barely, have negative meanings; if they appear with not or never, an ungrammatical double negative occurs—e.g., *they could never hardly expect it; we didn’t meet scarcely anybody; he hasn’t barely begun*. These constructions, of course, are nonstandard. In Standard English, two negatives cancel each other out and are generally equivalent to a weak affirmative {such things are not uncommon} {it’s invisible to the naked eye}.

**Relative adverbs.** A relative adverb joins a dependent (subordinate) clause to an independent (main) clause while modifying the clause of which it is a part:

- The team came to a point where any further progress depended on their leader. (adjective clause)
- The tournament begins when the gong is rung. (adverbial clause)
- We cannot tell why the business has lost so much money. (noun clause)
Conjunctive adverbs. A conjunctive adverb (sometimes called a connective adverb) is used as a conjunction to connect a dependent clause to an independent clause {Robin arrived after we had eaten dinner}. A conjunctive adverb may appear to modify the verbs in the introduced clauses, but its primary function is to connect the clauses; ordinary subordinate conjunctions merely introduce dependent clauses. Conjunctive adverbs may denote time {Jay returned before we could find the vitamin E}, place {I know the river where the largest trout can be caught}, or reason {he ran out of the theater because an emergency arose}, and can be used to introduce clauses that are used as nouns. Conjunctive adverbs also introduce noun clauses {why Simon skipped school today is a mystery [why Simon skipped school is the subject of the verb is]}; {I don’t see how I could possibly finish on time [how I could possibly finish is the direct object of don’t see]}. Conjunctive adverbs include as, as if (manner), where, whence, whither (place), after, as, before, ere, since, till, until, when, and while (time).

Adverbial Degrees

Generally. Like adjectives (see § 123), adverbs have three degrees: the positive, the comparative, and the superlative. A positive adverb simply expresses a quality without reference to any other thing {the nurse spoke softly} {the choir sang merrily}.

Comparative forms. A comparative adverb compares the quality of a specified action shared by two things {Bitey worked longer than Arachne} {Rachel studied more industriously than Edith}. Most one-syllable adverbs that do not end in -ly form the comparative by taking the suffix -er {sooner} {harder}. These forms are called synthetic comparatives. Multisyllable adverbs usually form the comparative with more or less {the Shakespearean villain fenced more ineptly than the hero} {the patient is walking less painfully today}. These forms are called periphrastic comparatives. But there are exceptions for adverbs that end in -ly if the -ly is not a suffix {early–earlier}.

Superlative forms. A superlative adverb compares the quality of a specified action shared by at least three things {Sullie bowled fastest of all the cricketers} {of the three doctoral candidates, Dunya defended her dissertation the most adamantly}. In a loose sense, the superlative is sometimes used for emphasis rather than comparison {the pianist played
most skillfully}. Most one-syllable adverbs that do not end in -ly form the superlative by taking the suffix -est {soonest} {hardest}. These forms are called synthetic superlatives. Multisyllable adverbs usually form the superlative with most or least {everyone’s eyesight was acute, but I could see most acutely} {of all the people making choices, he chose least wisely}. These forms are called periphrastic superlatives. There are exceptions for adverbs that end in -ly if the -ly is not a suffix {early–earliest}.

**232 Irregular adverbs.** A few adverbs have irregular comparative and superlative forms {badly–worse–worst} {little–less–least}. A good dictionary is the best resource for finding an irregular adverb’s forms of comparison.

**233 Noncomparable adverbs.** Many adverbs are noncomparable. Some, by their definitions, are absolute and cannot be compared {eternally} {never} {singly} {uniquely} {universally}. Most adverbs indicating time {now} {then}, position {on}, number {first} {finally}, or place {here} are also noncomparable.

### Position of Adverbs

**234 Placement as affecting meaning.** To avoid miscues, an adverb should generally be placed as near as possible to the word it is intended to modify. For example, in the marathoners submitted their applications to compete immediately, what does immediately modify—compete or submitted? Placing the adverb with the word it modifies makes the meaning clear—e.g., the marathoners immediately submitted their applications to compete. A misplaced adverb can completely change a sentence’s meaning. For example, we nearly lost all our camping equipment states that the equipment was saved; we lost nearly all our camping equipment states that almost everything was lost.

**235 Modifying words other than verbs.** If an adverb qualifies an adjective, an adverb, a preposition, or a conjunction, it should immediately precede the word qualified {our vacation was very short} {the flight took too long} {your fence is partly over the property line} {leave only when the bell rings}. The adverb or adverbs modifying a single adjective, grouped with that adjective, are called an adjective cluster {a classically trained pianist}. 
Modifying intransitive verbs. If an adverb qualifies an intransitive verb, it should immediately follow the verb {the students sighed gloomily when homework was assigned} {the owl perched precariously on a thin branch}. Some exceptions are always, never, often, generally, rarely, and seldom, which may precede the verb {mountaineers seldom succeed in climbing K2}.

Adverbs and linking verbs. Adverbs do not generally follow linking verbs (see § 142), such as be-verbs, appear, become, feel, hear, look, seem, smell, and taste. These verbs connect a descriptive word with the clause’s subject; the descriptive word applies to the subject, not the verb {he seems honest}. To determine whether a verb is a linking verb, consider whether the descriptive word describes the action or condition, or the subject. For example, *the sculptor feels badly literally describes an impaired tactile sense (though that couldn’t conceivably be the intended meaning). But the sculptor feels bad describes the sculptor as unwell or perhaps experiencing guilt (bad being not an adverb but a predicate adjective).

Adverb within verb phrase. When an adverb qualifies a verb phrase, the normal place for the adverb is between the auxiliary verb and the principal verb {the administration has consistently repudiated this view} {the reports will soon generate controversy} {public opinion is sharply divided}. (See § 145.) Some adverbs may follow the principal verb {you must go quietly} {are you asking rhetorically?}. There has never been a rule against placing an adverbial modifier between the auxiliary verb and the principal verb in a verb phrase. In fact, it’s typically preferable to put the adverb there {the heckler was abruptly expelled} {the bus had been seriously damaged in the crash}. Sometimes it is perfectly appropriate to split an infinitive with an adverb to add emphasis, clarify meaning, or produce a natural sound. (See § 148.) A verb’s infinitive or to form is split when an intervening word immediately follows to {to bravely assert}. If the adverb bears the emphasis in a phrase {to boldly go} {to strongly favor}, the split infinitive is justified and often even necessary. But if moving the adverb to the end of the phrase doesn’t suggest a different meaning or impair the sound, then you have an acceptable way to avoid splitting the infinitive. Recasting a sentence just to eliminate a split infinitive or to avoid splitting the
infinitive can alter the nuance or meaning of the sentence. For example, *it’s best to always get up early* (always modifies get up) is not quite the same as *it’s always best to get up early* (always modifies best). It can also make the phrasing sound unnatural—e.g., *it’s best to get up early always*.

**Importance of placement.** An adverb’s placement is also important because adverbs show time {we’ll meet again}, place or source {put the flowers here} {where did you get that idea?}, manner {speak softly}, degree or extent {sales are very good} {how far is it to the British pub?}, reason {I don’t know why Pat couldn’t find the right answer}, consequence {we should therefore hasten to support her candidacy}, and number {first, we need to get our facts straight}. Adverbs can also express comments or observations {Vic was undoubtedly late} {Imani clearly recalled everything}.

**Adverbial objective.** Sometimes a noun element functions as an adverb or adverbial phrase that completes a predicate: this is called an *adverbial objective*. The most frequently cited example is *home in* He went home. But other noun elements commonly have this function {we did it the new way} {she learned her lesson the hard way}.

**Adverbial clause.** A dependent clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb in the independent clause is called an *adverbial clause*. Essentially, it is a subordinate clause that functions as an adverb {I will call you when I’m ready} {she marked the manuscript as clearly as she could}. Although the placement of an adverbial clause is variable, generally it follows the word it modifies if it expresses place, manner, result, or comparison.

Adverbial clauses may indicate any of several things:

**Place**

Can you say where you have been?

**Time or circumstance**

He won the race at a time when most of his rivals were abroad.

**Manner**

She nodded her head in a way that suggested full understanding.

**Cause**

We stayed behind because we wanted to be sure that the house would be safe.
Adverbs

Result
He stayed behind, so he missed the opportunity.

Purpose
He hit the ball to the middle of the green so as to avoid the hazards both left and right.

Condition
Call if you’re going to be late.

Concession
Although the plane was delayed by 12 hours, we still made it back home for the party.

Comparison
Jane is not as tall as you are.

“Only.” The word only can function as an adverb {I’ll come by only if you call}, an adjective {the only equipment we have}, or a conjunction {I wanted to see you, only I had another appointment}—and it can modify any part of speech. In its adverbial uses, it is sometimes called a focusing adverb. When referring to the subject of a sentence, only usually precedes the subject {only Maritza could get away with that!} {only my father remembers that incident}. When referring to other parts of a sentence, only can be placed either fastidiously (and unambiguously) before what it logically modifies or else in “midposition” (maybe ambiguously) in a position that to many speakers of English feels more comfortably idiomatic.

Precise
He reads only nonfiction.

Midposition
He only reads nonfiction. (He does nothing else?)

Precise
She has traveled to Asia only once.

Midposition
She has only traveled to Asia once. (No real argument about meaning—but the fastidious editor will be bothered.)
The midposition *only* can cause ambiguities more frequently than its users suspect—which is why professional editors tend to think of *only* as being poorly placed more often than any other word in English. Consider: *I only talked to your daughter last night.* Does that mean that I did nothing else with her? That I talked with no one else? That it was (remarkably) just last night that we talked?

The midposition *only* may be acceptable in speech because the speaker can use intonation to make the meaning clear. But there is no guidance from intonation in writing, so the more words there are between *only* and the word it truly modifies, the greater the chance that the sentence will be genuinely ambiguous.

Speakers and writers of BrE tend to be less concerned or uptight about the fastidious placement of *only* than speakers and writers of AmE. And they tend to think that a precisely placed *only* is fussy and formal. If you’re working cross-culturally, you might want to be aware of this difference.
**Definition and Types**

**243 Generally.** A preposition is an uninflected function word or phrase linking a noun element (the preposition’s object) with another part of the sentence to show the relationship between them. Prepositions express such notions as position (about, above, below, on, under), direction (in, into, to, toward), time (after, before, during, until), and source (from, of, out of).

A preposition’s object (sometimes termed an *oblique object*) is usually a noun, or else a pronoun in the objective case {between me and them}. Usually a preposition comes before its object, but there are exceptions. For example, the preposition can end a clause, especially a relative clause, or sentence {this isn’t the pen that Steve writes with} {I’d like to see the problem through}. And a preposition used with the relative pronoun *that* (or with *that* understood) always follows the object {this is the moment (that) I’ve been waiting for}. It also frequently, but not always, follows the relative pronouns *which* {which alternative is your decision based on?} {this is the alternative on which my decision is based} and *whom* {there is a banker (whom) I must speak with} {I can’t tell you to whom you should apply}.

**244 Simple, compound.** Many prepositions are relatively straightforward. A simple preposition consists of a single monosyllabic word {as} {at} {by}. A compound preposition has two or more syllables; it may be made up of two or more words {into} {outside} {upon}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Prepositions</th>
<th>Compound Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by</td>
<td>across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down</td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from</td>
<td>alongside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off</td>
<td>beneath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Traditional Parts of Speech

Simple Prepositions       Compound Prepositions
on                       between
plus                      despite
since                     except
through                   inside
to                        onto
toward                    opposite
up                        throughout
with                      underneath
until
without

Phrasal prepositions. A phrasal preposition, sometimes called a complex preposition, is two or more separate words used as a prepositional unit. Many of these phrasal prepositions are symptoms of officialese, bureaucratese, or other types of verbose style. If a single-word preposition will do in context, use it. For example, if about will replace with regard to or in connection with, a judicious editor will inevitably prefer to use the simpler expression.

Phrasal Prepositions

according to     at the point of     in case of
alongside of     at the risk of      in comparison
along with       because of         with
apart from       by contrast with    in connection
as against       by means of        with
as between       by reason of       in consideration
as compared with contrary to       of
as distinct from exclusive of
as distinguished from for fear of
              for purposes of
              for the sake of
from          in front of
as far as       in place of
aside from     in regard to
as opposed to   in relation to
as regards     in respect of
as to          in respect to
as touching     insofar as
at the cost of  in spite of
at the hands of instead of
at the instance of in terms of
**Prepositions**

### Participial prepositions

A participial preposition is a participial form that functions as a preposition (or sometimes as a subordinating conjunction). Examples are *assuming, barring, concerning, considering, during, notwithstanding, owing to, provided, regarding, respecting, and speaking of*. Unlike other participles, these words do not create danglers when they have no subject {considering the road conditions, the trip went quickly} {regarding Watergate, he had nothing to say}. See § 159.

### Prepositional Phrases

**247** **Generally.** A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, its object, and any words that modify the object. A prepositional phrase can be used as a noun {for James to change his mind would be a miracle}, an adverb (also called an *adverbial phrase*) {we strolled through the glade}, or an adjective (also called an *adjectival phrase*) {we’d love to see the cathedrals of Paris}.

**248** **Prepositional function.** Prepositions signal many kinds of relationships. For example, a preposition may express a spatial relationship {to} {from} {out of} {into}; time {at} {for} {throughout} {until}; cause {because of} {on account of}; means {like} {with} {by}; possession {without} {of}; exceptions {but for} {besides} {except}; support {with} {for}; opposition {against}; or concession {despite} {for all} {notwithstanding}.

**249** **Placement.** A prepositional phrase with an adverbial or adjectival function should be as close as possible to the word it modifies to avoid awkwardness, ambiguity, or unintended meanings {is there a person with a small dog named Sandy here?} {the woman with the Popular Front circulates petitions}.
Refinements on placement. If a prepositional phrase equally modifies all the elements of a compound construction, the phrase follows the last element in the compound {the date, the place, and the budget for the wedding have been decided}. If the subject is singular and followed by a plural prepositional phrase, the predicate is singular—e.g., compare the predicate in the man and his two daughters have arrived with that in the man with two daughters has arrived and in the man has arrived with his two daughters.

Preposition-stranding. The traditional caveat of yesteryear against ending sentences or clauses with prepositions is an unnecessary and pedantic restriction. And it is wrong. As Winston Churchill is often said to have put it sarcastically, “That is the type of arrant pedantry up with which I shall not put.” A sentence that ends in a preposition may sound more natural than a sentence carefully constructed to avoid a final preposition. Compare, for example, This is the case I told you about with This is the case about which I told you. The “rule” prohibiting terminal prepositions was an ill-founded superstition based on a false analogy to Latin grammar. Today many grammarians use the dismissive term pied-piping for this phenomenon.

Clashing prepositions. If a phrasal verb {give in} precedes a prepositional phrase {in every argument}, the back-to-back prepositions will clash {he gives in in every argument}. Recast the sentence when possible to avoid juxtaposed prepositions—e.g., rather than continue arguing, he always gives in, or in every argument, he gives in. For more on phrasal verbs, see § 143.

Elliptical phrases. Sometimes a prepositional phrase is elliptical, being an independent expression without an antecedent. It often starts a clause and is normally detachable from the statement without affecting the meaning. Elliptical prepositional phrases include for example, for instance, in any event, in a word, in the last analysis, and in the long run {in any event, call me when you arrive}. 
**Case of pronouns.** If a pronoun appears in a prepositional phrase, the pronoun is usually in the objective case {with me} {alongside her} {between them}. (See §§ 56, 66.) But note that *than* may function as either a conjunction or a preposition {he’s taller than I [am]} {he’s taller than me}. In edited English, *taller than I* has predominated over *taller than me* in AmE from its very beginnings, and in BrE it predominated until the 1990s. Throughout the literary history of Modern English, *than me*, *than her*, etc. have been regarded as less polished (to say the least) than *than I*, *than she*, etc. That is to say, in formal registers *than* (like *as*) is considered a conjunction, not a preposition. But in spoken English, *than* and *as* are often treated as prepositions that take a pronoun in the objective case {you’re better than me} {you’re as well known as me}.

A possessive pronoun may be used before the preposition’s object {to my house}.

### Other Prepositional Issues

**Functional variation.** Some words that function as prepositions may also function as other parts of speech. The distinguishing feature of a preposition is that it always has an object. A word such as *above, behind, below, by, down, in, off, on, or up* can be used as either an adverb or a preposition. When used as a preposition, it takes an object {let’s slide down the hill}. When used as an adverb, it does not {we sat down}. Some conjunctions may serve as prepositions (e.g., *than* and *but*). The conjunction joins a clause containing an explicit or implied separate action. Compare the prepositional *but* in everyone but Fuzzy traveled abroad last summer (*but* is used to mean “except”) with the conjunctive *but* in I like the cut but not the color (*but* joins a clause containing an implied separate action: I don’t like the color).

**Use and misuse of “like.”** *Like* is probably the least widely understood preposition. Its traditional function is adjectival, not adverbial, so that *like* governs nouns and noun phrases {teens often see themselves as star-crossed lovers like Romeo and Juliet}. As a preposition, *like* is followed by a noun or by a pronoun in the objective case {the person in that old portrait looks like me}.

Increasingly today in ordinary speech, *like* displaces *as or as if* as a conjunction to connect clauses. For example, in *it happened just like I said it would happen*, traditional grammarians would want to replace *like* with
as; and in you’re looking around like you’ve misplaced something, like with as if. Because as and as if are conjunctions, they are followed by pronouns in the nominative case {do you work too hard, as I do?}.

Although like as a conjunction has been considered nonstandard since the 17th century, today it is common in dialectal and colloquial usage {he ran like he was really scared}.

**(Limiting Prepositional Phrases)**

257 **Avoiding overuse.** Prepositions can easily be overused. Stylistically, a good ratio to strive for is one preposition for every ten to fifteen words. Five editorial methods can reduce the number of prepositions in a sentence.

258 **Cutting prepositional phrases.** If the surrounding prose’s context permits, a prepositional phrase can be eliminated—e.g., *the most important ingredient in this recipe* could be reduced to *the most important ingredient* when it appears within a passage focused on a particular recipe.

259 **Cutting unnecessary prepositions.** A noun ending in -ance, -ence, -ity, -ment, -sion, or -tion is often formed from a verb {qualification–qualify} {performance–perform}. These nouns are sometimes called nominalizations or zombie nouns, and they often require additional words, especially prepositions (that is, during her performance of the concerto is essentially equivalent to while she performed the concerto, but it is somewhat more abstract and requires the preposition of). Using a verb instead of a nominalization often eliminates one or two prepositions. For example, toward maximization of becomes simply to maximize, so that our efforts toward maximization of profits failed might be edited down to our efforts to maximize profits failed.

260 **Replacing with adverbs.** A strong adverb may replace a weaker prepositional phrase. For example, *the president spoke with force* is weak compared with *the president spoke forcefully*. 

---

The overuse of prepositions is a severe and extremely common fault. Indeed, if I wanted to offer a single rule for improving the quality of writing, I would unhesitatingly say, Reduce the number of prepositions.

—Lester S. King

*Why Not Say It Clearly: A Guide to Scientific Writing*
261 **Replacing with genitives.** A genitive may replace a prepositional phrase, especially an of-genitive. For example, *I was dismayed by the complexity of the street map* essentially equals *The street map’s complexity dismayed me.* See § 36.

262 **Using active voice.** Changing from the long passive voice (with by after the verb) to an active-voice construction always eliminates a preposition. For example, *the ship was sailed by an experienced crew* equals *an experienced crew sailed the ship.*
Conjunctions

Definition and types. A conjunction is a function word that connects sentences, clauses, or words within a clause {my daughter graduated from college in December, and my son will graduate from high school in May [and connects two sentences]} {I said hello, but no one answered [but connects two clauses]} {we’re making progress slowly but surely [but joins two adverbs within an adverbial clause]}. In Standard English, conjunctions connect pronouns in the same case {he and she are colleagues} {the teacher encouraged her and me}. A pronoun following the conjunction than or as is normally in the nominative case even when the clause that follows is understood {you are wiser than I [am]} {you seem as pleased as she [does]}—except in informal or colloquial English {you are wiser than me}. In the latter instance, than can be read as a preposition.

Types of conjunctions: simple and compound. A conjunction may be simple, a single word such as and, but, if, or, or though. Most are derived from prepositions. Compound conjunctions are single words formed by combining two or more words. Most are relatively modern formations and include words such as although, because, nevertheless, notwithstanding, and unless. Phrasal conjunctions are connectives made up of two or more separate words. Examples are as though, inasmuch as, in case, provided that, so that, and supposing that. The two main classes of conjunctions are coordinating and subordinating.

Coordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions join words or groups of words of equal grammatical rank, i.e., elements of independent and equal rank, such as two nouns, two verbs, two phrases, or two clauses {are you speaking to him or to me?} {the results are disappointing but not discouraging}. Coordinating conjunctions are further broken down into copulative, adversative, disjunctive, and final. A coordinating conjunction may be either a single word or a correlative conjunction.

Correlative conjunctions. Correlative conjunctions are conjunctions used in pairs, often to join successive clauses that depend on each other to form a complete thought. Correlative conjunctions must frame structurally identical or matching sentence parts {she wanted both to win the gold medal and to set a new record}; in other words, each member of the pair
Conjunctions

should immediately precede the same part of speech {they not only read the book but also saw the movie} {if the first claim is true, then the second claim must be false}. Some examples of correlative conjunctions are as–as; if–then; either–or, neither–nor; both–and; where–there; so–as; and not only–but also. For more on parallelism with correlative conjunctions, see § 332.

267 **Copulative conjunctions.** Copulative or additive coordinating conjunctions denote addition. The second clause states an additional fact that is related to the first clause. These conjunctions include and, also, moreover, and no less than {one associate received a raise, and the other was promoted} {the jockeys’ postrace party was no less exciting than the race itself}.

268 **Adversative conjunctions.** Adversative or contrasting coordinating conjunctions denote contrasts or comparisons. The second clause, sometimes called an adversative clause, usually qualifies the first clause in some way. These conjunctions include but, still, yet, and nevertheless {the message is sad but inspiring} {she’s earned her doctorate, yet she’s still not satisfied with herself}.

269 **Disjunctive conjunctions.** Disjunctive or separative coordinating conjunctions denote separation or alternatives. Only one of the statements joined by the conjunction may be true; both may be false. These conjunctions include either, or, else, but, nor, neither, otherwise, and other {that bird is either a heron or a crane} {you can wear the blue coat or the green one}.

270 **Final conjunctions.** Final or illative coordinating conjunctions denote inferences or consequences. The second clause gives a reason for the first clause’s statement, or it shows what has been or ought to be done in view of the first clause’s expression. These conjunctions include consequently, for, hence, so, thus, therefore, as a consequence, as a result, so that, and so then {he had betrayed the king; therefore, he was banished} {it’s time to leave, so let’s go}.

271 **Subordinating conjunctions.** A subordinating conjunction connects clauses of unequal grammatical rank. The conjunction introduces a clause that is dependent on the independent clause {follow this road until you reach the highway} {that squirrel is friendly because people feed it} {Marcus promised that he would help}. A pure subordinating
conjunction has no antecedent and is not a pronoun or an adverb {take a message if someone calls}.

**Special uses of subordinating conjunctions.** Subordinating conjunctions or conjunctive phrases often denote the following relationships:

1. **Comparison or degree**—e.g., than (if it follows comparative adverbs or adjectives, or if it follows else, rather, other, or otherwise), as, else, otherwise, rather, as much as, as far as, and as well as {is a raven less clever than a magpie?} {these amateur musicians play as well as professionals} {it’s not true as far as I can discover}.

2. **Time**—e.g., since, until, as long as, before, after, when, as, and while {while we waited, it began to snow} {the tire went flat as we were turning the corner} {we’ll start the game as soon as everyone understands the rules} {the audience returned to the auditorium after the concert’s resumption was announced}.

3. **Condition or assumption**—e.g., if, though, unless, except, without, and once {once you sign the agreement, we can begin remodeling the house} {your thesis must be presented next week unless you have a good reason to postpone it} {I’ll go on this business trip if I can fly first class}.

4. **Reason or concession**—e.g., as, inasmuch as, why, because, for, since, though, although, and albeit {since you won’t share the information, I can’t help you} {Sir John decided to purchase the painting although it was very expensive} {she deserves credit because it was her idea}.

5. **Purpose or result**—e.g., that, so that, in order that, and such that {we dug up the yard so that a new water garden could be laid out} {he sang so loudly that he became hoarse}.

6. **Place**—e.g., where {I found a great restaurant where I didn’t expect one to be}.

7. **Manner**—e.g., as if and as though {he swaggers around the office as if he were an executive}.

8. **Appositions**—e.g., and, or, what, and that {the buffalo, or American bison, was once nearly extinct}.

9. **Indirect questions**—e.g., whether, why, and when {he could not say whether we were going the right way}.

**Adverbial conjunctions.** An adverbial conjunction connects two clauses and also qualifies a verb {the valet has forgotten where Alvaro’s car is parked [where qualifies the verb is parked]}. There are two types of
adverbial conjunctions: relative and interrogative. A relative adverbial conjunction does the same job as any other adverbial conjunction, but it has an antecedent {do you recall that cafe where we first met? [cafe is the antecedent of where]}. An interrogative adverbial conjunction indirectly states a question {Barbara asked when we are supposed to leave [when poses the indirect question]}. Some common examples of conjunctive relative adverbs are after, as, before, until, as, now, since, so, when, and where. Interrogative adverbs are used to ask direct and indirect questions; the most common are why, how, when, where, and what {I don’t see how you reached that conclusion}.

274 **Expletive conjunctions.** An expletive conjunction is a conjunction that connects two thoughts that are not expressed in the same sentence. The conjunction refers to a preceding sentence and often, but not always, begins the sentence {but then the professor pointed out the flaws in their reasoning} {survival is thus the most important motivation}.

275 **Disguised conjunctions.** So-called disguised conjunctions are participles that have long been used as conjunctions—e.g., barring, considering, provided, regarding, speaking, and supposing. A disguised conjunction does not have a subject, while a verb does {considering the poor road conditions, we traveled swiftly [considering as a preposition]} {we traveled swiftly, considering the poor road conditions [considering as a disguised conjunction]} {the committee is considering a budget increase [considering as a verb]}. The key distinction between a conjunction and a participial preposition is that a conjunction does not take an object but a preposition does. (See §§ 243, 246.) Compare the steak and eggs were perfectly cooked (eggs is part of the subject, not the object of and) with the steak comes with eggs (eggs is the object of the preposition with). The key distinction between a conjunction and an adverb is that a conjunction does not qualify any part of speech. Compare the use of before in I’ve seen this movie before (adverb) with the cart is standing before the horse (preposition) and it began raining before we left (conjunction).

276 **“With” used loosely as a conjunction.** The word with is sometimes used as a quasi-conjunction meaning “and.” This construction is nonstandard: the with-clause appears to be tacked on as an afterthought. For example, the sentence *Everyone else grabbed the easy jobs with me being left to scrub the oven* could be revised as *Since everyone else grabbed the easy jobs, I had to scrub the oven.* Or it could also be split into two independent clauses
joined by a semicolon—e.g., *Everyone else grabbed the easy jobs; I had to scrub the oven.* Instead of *with,* find the connecting word, phrase, or punctuation that best shows the relationship between the final thought and the first, and recast the sentence.

**277**  
*Beginning a sentence with a conjunction.* There is a widespread belief—one with no historical or grammatical foundation—that it is an error to begin a sentence with a conjunction such as *and,* *but,* or *so.* In fact, a substantial percentage (often as many as 10%) of the sentences in first-rate writing begin with conjunctions. It has been so for centuries, and even the most conservative grammarians have followed this practice. Charles Allen Lloyd’s 1938 words fairly sum up the situation as it stands even today:

> Next to the groundless notion that it is incorrect to end an English sentence with a preposition, perhaps the most widespread of the many false beliefs about the use of our language is the equally groundless notion that it is incorrect to begin one with “but” or “and.” As in the case of the superstition about the prepositional ending, no textbook supports it, but apparently about half of our teachers of English go out of their way to handicap their pupils by inculcating it. One cannot help wondering whether those who teach such a monstrous doctrine ever read any English themselves.

Still, *but* as an adversative conjunction can occasionally be unclear at the beginning of a sentence. Evaluate the contrasting force of the *but* in question, and see whether the needed word is really *and*; if *and* can be substituted, then *but* is almost certainly the wrong word. Consider this example: *He went to school this morning. But he left his lunch box on the kitchen table.* Between those sentences is an elliptical idea, since the two actions are in no way contradictory. What is implied is something like this: *He went to school, intending to have lunch there, but he left his lunch behind.* Because *and* would have made sense in the passage as originally stated, *but* is not the right word—the idea for the contrastive *but* should be explicit.

To sum up, then, *but* is a perfectly proper way to open a sentence, but only if the idea it introduces truly contrasts with what precedes. For that matter, *but* is often an effective way of introducing a paragraph that develops an idea contrary to the one preceding it.

---

Conjunctions

Beginning a sentence with “however.” However has been used as a conjunctive adverb since the 14th century. Like other adverbs, it can be used at the beginning of a sentence. But however is more ponderous and has less impact than the simple but. As a matter of style, however is more effectively used within a sentence to emphasize the word or phrase that precedes it {The job seemed exciting at first. Soon, however, it turned out to be exceedingly dull}. For purposes of euphony and flow, not of grammar, many highly accomplished writers shun the sentence-starting however as a contrasting word. Yet the word is fine in that position in the sense “in whatever way” (not followed by a comma) {however that may be, we’ve now made our decision}.

Conjunctions and the number of a verb. Coordinating and disjunctive conjunctions affect whether a verb should be plural or singular. Conjunctions such as and and through indicate that group sentence elements impart plurality, so a plural verb is correct {the best vacation and the worst vacation of my life were on cruises} {the first through seventh innings were scoreless}. But conjunctions such as or and either–or distinguish the elements and do not impart plurality, so the singular verb is used if the elements are singular {a squirrel or a chipmunk raids the bird feeder every day} {either William or Henry dances with Lady Hill}. Other types of conjunctions have no effect on the verb’s number; for example, if and is used as a copulative conjunction, the verb that follows may be singular {Andrés’s bicycle was new, and so was his helmet}.
Interjections

**Definition.** An interjection or exclamation is a word, phrase, or clause that denotes strong feeling {never again!} {you don’t say!}. An interjection has little or no grammatical function in a sentence; it is used absolutely {really, I can’t understand why you put up with the situation} {oh no, how am I going to fix the damage?} {hey, it’s my turn next!}. It is frequently allowed to stand as a sentence by itself {Oh! I’ve lost my wallet!} {Ouch! I think my ankle is sprained!} {Get out!} {Whoa!}. Introductory words like well and why may also act as interjections when they are meaningless utterances {well, I tried my best} {why, I would never do that}. The punctuation offsetting the interjections distinguishes them. Compare the different meanings of Well, I didn’t know him with I didn’t know him well, and Why, here you are! with I have no idea why you are here and Why? I have no idea.

**Usage generally.** Interjections are natural in speech {your order should be shipped, oh, in eight to ten days} and frequently used in dialogue (and formerly in poetry). As a midsentence interrupter, an interjection may direct attention to one’s phrasing or reflect the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward the subject, especially with informal and colloquial tone {because our business proposal was, ahem, poorly presented, our budget will not be increased this year}.

**Functional variation.** Because interjections are usually grammatically independent of the rest of the sentence, all other parts of speech may be used as interjections. A word that is classified as some other part of speech but used with the force of an interjection is called an exclamatory noun, exclamatory adjective, etc. Some examples are good! (adjective); idiot! (noun); help! (verb); indeed! (adverb); me! (pronoun); and! (conjunction); quickly! (adverb).

**Words that are exclusively interjections.** Some words are used only as interjections—for example, ouch, whew, ugh, psst, and oops.

**Punctuating interjections.** An exclamation mark usually follows an interjection {oh no!} or the point where the strong feeling ends {oh no, I’ve forgotten the assignment!}. But as with other interrupters, when an
interjection appears midsentence, it is typically set off by commas, parentheses, or dashes {he’s a nice enough lad, but his manners are—forgive me—somewhat lacking}.

“O” and “oh.” The interjections O and oh are similar in appearance but distinguished in meaning and use. O is always capitalized and is typically unpunctuated as a form of classically stylized direct address {O Jerusalem!}. It most often appears in poetry (especially pre-20th-century poetry). Oh takes the place of other interjections to express an emotion such as pain {ow!}, surprise {what!}, wonder {strange!}, or aversion {ugh!}. It is lowercase if it doesn’t start the sentence, and it is typically followed by a comma {oh, why did I have to ask?} {the scenery is so beautiful, but oh, I can’t describe it!}. Oh is more common in prose than in poetry.
II. Syntax
Definition. Syntax is the collective term we use to denote all the rules governing how words are arranged into sentences. In an analytic language like English—one that, unlike a synthetic language, uses word order to show word relations (as opposed to inflections of various kinds)—syntax is particularly important in expressing meaning. (See § 297.) Through syntax, we can make four types of utterances: statements, questions, directives, and exclamations.

Statements. Most sentences are statements having a declarative structure in which (1) the clause contains a subject and (2) the subject precedes the verb. Sometimes in speech and informal writing, the subject is merely implied {he missed the ball} {I think I’ll go to the store}. In a few negative idioms, the subject may follow part of the verb phrase {scarcely had we arrived when we had to return}.

Questions. Sentences that seek to elicit information are known as questions. They have an interrogative structure, which typically begins with a question word. There are three main types: (1) yes–no questions, which are intended to prompt an affirmative or negative response {will we be gone long?}; (2) wh- questions, so called because they characteristically start with who, what, when, where, why, which, or how (not quite a wh-word, but it counts) {which apples do you want?}; and (3) alternative questions, which prompt a response relating to options mentioned in the sentence {would you rather play golf or tennis?}.

Some exceptional types of questions. Four types of interrogative utterances aren’t classifiable under the three categories given just above. Two are yes–no questions. The first is the spoken sentence in which one’s pitch rises at the end, in a questioning way—but the structure is that of a declarative sentence {he’s going to Corpus Christi?}. To show vexation in such a question, the question marked may be paired with an exclamation mark {she’s going to Padre Island?!}. The second special type of yes–no question is the tag question, in which the interrogative inversion appears at the end of a statement {he has arrived, hasn’t he?} {it’s good, isn’t it?}. A few tag questions are signaled by particular words without the interrogative inversion {it’s raining, right?} {you’re tired, eh?} {you want to
go, yes?}. A third special type is the exclamatory question, in which the interrogative structure appears, but when the statement is spoken, one’s tone normally falls at the end {isn’t it nice out here!} {how great is this!}. Finally, a rhetorical question is phrased in the interrogative structure but is meant as an emphatic or evocative statement—with the expectation of an answer {why should I care?} {who knows how long it might take?}

290 **Directives.** A directive or imperative is a sentence that instructs somebody to do or not to do something. The word *command* is sometimes used as a synonym, but most grammarians consider the term *command* more appropriate for one of the eight main types of directives, all of which are in the imperative mood of the verb:
- command {come here now!};
- prohibition {don’t do that!};
- invitation {join us for dinner!};
- warning {watch out for rattlesnakes!};
- plea {stay here} {help!};
- request {put your book away};
- well-wishing {play well} {have a good time!}; and
- advice {put on some insect repellent}.

291 **Exceptional directives.** Several directives depart from these common patterns, as when the subject is expressed {sit you down} {you stay there}; they begin with *let* {let’s have a picnic} {let us wait}; or they begin with *do* {do help yourself}.

292 **Exclamations.** An exclamation expresses the extent to which a speaker is moved, aroused, impressed, or disgusted by something. It can take the form of a simple interjection (see § 280) {by golly!} {pishposh!}. Or it can follow a sentence structure consisting of *what* or *how* followed by a subject and verb {what an extraordinary novel this is!} {how well she writes!}. Exclamations are sometimes elliptically expressed {what finery!} {how pretty!} {how ugly!}. In formal, literary English, exclamations can be signaled by inverted word order {little did I expect such unfair treatment}. 

158
The Four Traditional Types of Sentence Structures

293 **Simple sentence.** A simple sentence consists of a single independent clause with no dependent clause {no man is an island}. A sentence can be simple despite having internal compound constructions such as subjects, main verbs, objects of prepositions, and others {time and tide wait for no man}.

294 **Compound sentence.** A compound sentence contains two independent clauses (called coordinate clauses) with no dependent clause {the rain was heavy, and my umbrella was not much help}. Grammarians are divided on the question whether one type of sentence should be labeled compound or simple: *She arrived early and stayed late*. Traditional grammarians have tended to call this a simple sentence with a compound predicate (where *arrived* and *stayed* are coordinate verbs). Transformational grammarians have tended to call it a compound sentence with an elided subject in the second clause {she arrived early[,] and [she] stayed late}.

295 **Complex sentence.** A complex sentence contains a single independent clause with one or more dependent clauses {I’ll be home after I finish work}. Such a sentence may have only one dependent clause {she won because she practiced so hard}, or it may contain a variety of dependent clauses {the books that were nominated argued that most behavioral differences among people aren’t genetic in origin [containing two dependent clauses: the adjective clause *that were nominated* and the noun clause *that most behavioral differences among people aren’t genetic in origin*]}. Good sentences do not spring into existence by a lucky accident, any more than does good architecture, or good painting, or a well-designed machine, or a properly-fitted suit of clothes. Why indeed should any rational person expect a good sentence to come by chance? Yet the person who writes an utterly makeshift sentence, the end of which is not even vaguely planned when he writes the beginning, will often fail to see anything wrong with what he has written.

—Louis Foley
*Beneath the Crust of Words*

296 **Compound-complex sentence.** A compound-complex sentence contains two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause {it was a beautiful evening, so after we left work we went for a walk [after we left work is a dependent clause between two independent clauses]}. It differs from a complex sentence only because it contains more than one independent clause. Like the independent clauses of a compound sentence, those of a compound-complex sentence are called coordinate clauses.
English Sentence Patterns

297 Importance of word order. English is known as an analytic language—one that depends largely on word order. (A synthetic language, such as Latin, depends largely on inflectional forms of words.) In the transition from Old English (A.D. 450–1100) to Middle English (1100–1500), the language lost most of its inflected forms—except those for pronouns (I–me–mine, etc.). Nouns no longer have nominative and accusative cases. Instead, word order governs meaning.

Consider this example: Michael likes crystal. Michael is the subject, likes the verb, and crystal the object. It’s the basic subject–verb–object (SVO) pattern. We deduce the meaning from the position of the words: Michael is an admirer and perhaps a collector of fine glass. If we change it to Crystal likes Michael, the meaning is transformed because of the SVO order. We now infer that someone named Crystal thinks fondly about someone named Michael. The SVO pattern is highly significant: it governs the meaning of most English statements. Departures from it typically signal either unusual emphasis or the posing of a question (as opposed to the making of a statement).

298 The basic SVO pattern. Despite the seeming potential for monotony in having sentence after sentence using the same fundamental word order, English offers enough variety in vocabulary and in sentence elements that can function as subjects, verbs, and objects to keep things interesting. Consider these examples, all of which use the pattern but with interesting levels of sophistication:

- Mary likes pomegranates.
- The man we were talking about objected to our arguments.
- The woman down the street is selling loaves of bread.
- The obstacles that we face create opportunities.
How you think of yourself affects both the way you approach the problems of everyday life and the degree to which you’re perceived as being well-adjusted.

All seven patterns. Syntactic patterns other than the SVO pattern are available, but they are limited to specific types that range from two to four of these elements: subject (S), verb (V), [direct] object (O), indirect object (IO), complement (C), adverbial (A). Here are all seven basic clause patterns:

- S + V        Sandy smiled.
- S + V + O    Sandy hit the ball.
- S + V + C    Sandy is eager.
- S + V + A    Sandy plays well.
- S + V + IO + O Sandy gave Jerry the ball.
- S + V + O + C Sandy got her bag wet.
- S + V + O + A Sandy wrote her score on the card.

Variations on ordering the elements. When clause elements appear in a different order, the inversion may indicate either a question {is Sandy all right? [V–S–C]} or a special kind of emphasis:

- Sandy Winn my name is!
- Bully you say!

Inversions of this type achieve a special emphasis precisely because they depart from the normal sequence of sentence elements.

Constituent elements. Grammarians use the term constituent to denote a word or phrase constituting part of a larger grammatical construction. As the fundamental building blocks of a grammatical sentence, the subject and predicate are the two broadest constituents. Unless the sentence comprises only a simple subject and a simple predicate {Bill runs}, one or both of these constituents will have constituents of their own, called immediate constituents.

In the sentence People who exercise regularly are healthier than those who don’t, both subject and predicate have immediate constituents.
The complete subject is *People who exercise regularly*, and its immediate constituents are the simple subject, *People*, and the adjective clause *who exercise regularly*. That clause’s immediate constituents are the relative pronoun *who* and the verb phrase *exercise regularly*, which itself breaks down into the verb *exercise* and the adverb *regularly*.

Likewise, the predicate, *are healthier than those who don’t*, divides into the simple predicate *are* and the subjective complement *healthier than those who don’t*. That clause’s immediate constituents are the adjective *healthier* and the adverbial clause *than those who don’t*, which comprises the subordinating conjunction *than* and the noun clause *those who don’t*. The noun clause contains its subject, *those*, and the relative clause *who don’t*, itself composed of the relative pronoun *who* and *don’t*, a contraction of the verb phrase *do not*. This verb phrase finally breaks down into its immediate constituents, the finite verb *do* and the negative particle *not*.

As you can see, each individual word is the constituent of a larger grammatical element. But for a group of words to be a constituent, it must form a discrete grammatical unit. So *People who*, *are healthier than*, and *regularly are*, for instance, are not valid constituents. Understanding constituent elements is essential to sentence diagramming, discussed at length in the next chapter.

**302 Identifying the subject.** Only a noun, noun phrase, or noun clause (any of these three being a noun element) can function as the subject of a clause. It normally appears before the verb in a statement {the crowd cheered constantly} and after the first verb in a question {are you planning to attend?}. The subject governs whether the verb is singular or plural {a golf pro was present} {several golf pros were present}. The subject also governs the form of certain objects and complements {Malik is my friend} {Malik and I are friends} {I helped myself} {you helped yourself} {they helped themselves}. The noun element is called the simple subject, and it along with any modifying elements constitutes the complete subject.

**303 Identifying the predicate.** The predicate of a sentence consists of everything but the subject—namely, the finite verb together with all its modifiers, objects, and complements. (This is sometimes called the complete predicate, and the finite verb alone the simple predicate.) It may be one word {the birds flew} or it may be many {I once saw a book that was printed in Venice in 1491}. The arrangement of component parts of the predicate accounts for variations in the seven patterns listed in § 299. Let us consider them in turn.
Identifying the verb. The verb is the most crucial part of a predicate—and indeed of the clause structure generally. Other elements can be more readily omitted than the verb. For example, each of the shaded words could potentially be omitted here: That guy shouts on his cellphone. True, when using the verb alone you’d have to be pointing to or nodding at the man to say merely “Shouts.” But it’s conceivable. Without the verb, though, the rest of the sentence is probably incoherent.

Identifying the object. An object element in a sentence typically follows the subject and verb. It must be a noun element, and it may be either a direct object {please pay cash} or an indirect object {please pay me cash} of a transitive verb. Remember that a transitive verb is one that requires a direct object to give the sentence a sense of completeness. Note that when both a direct and an indirect object are present, the indirect object comes first {he did us a favor}.

To identify a direct object, simply ask a “what” or “who” question using the verb in the sentence.

The child lost her bracelet.

The child lost what? Her bracelet. That’s the direct object of the verb lost. In particular, the noun bracelet is the object, her being a modifier (a possessive pronoun used adjectivally).

To identify an indirect object, ask: To whom? or For whom? But first understand that it will appear only in a sentence that has a direct object. An indirect object typically appears only in a sentence whose verb suggests giving, communicating, or transacting (common examples being bring, buy, get, give, send, teach, tell, and write). Start by identifying the direct object:

The boy gave his friend a present.

What did he give? A present. That’s the direct object (we asked a “what” question with the verb). To whom? To his friend. That’s the indirect object (we asked a “to whom” question).

Identifying complements. A complement is an adjunct expressing meaning that adds to that of the subject or object. A subjective complement normally follows a linking verb, most commonly a be-verb {she is a podiatrist} {the announcer looked angry}. An objective complement normally follows a direct object, and its meaning relates to that object {they called her Mitzi} {she made everyone cheerful}.
When the subjective complement is a pronoun, it most traditionally appears in the nominative case {this is he} {it is I}. But in informal contexts, native speakers of English have long said That's him and It's me. These usages are now considered unimpeachable in all but the most elevated prose.

**Inner and outer complements.** When a transitive verb is followed by two complements, they are typically either an indirect and a direct object {his actions earned him a medal} or a direct object and an objective complement {Susan's friends all think her trustworthy}. In either case, the first complement is called the inner complement (e.g., him in the first example, her in the second); the second is called the outer complement (e.g., medal in the first example, trustworthy in the second).

A verb that can take both a direct object and an objective complement (such as think in the second example above) is called a factitive verb. Some grammarians limit this term to only those verbs that effect a change in the object, such as appoint, choose, elect, make, and render {the board elected William its new chair} {her response rendered him speechless}. (Under this narrower definition, think, for instance, does not qualify because it doesn't change its object.)

**Identifying the adverbial element.** The adverbial element in a sentence may consist of a single adverb {they left suddenly}, a prepositional phrase {they left in a hurry}, a noun used adverbially {they went home}, or an entire clause {they left as soon as the band started playing hard rock}. Adverbials are distinctive clause elements because (1) several may occur in a single sentence {we called Thursday to talk about her needs}; (2) they can be used in several positions within a sentence {once he once suggested once that we start a band once}; (3) they have a broad range of semantic purposes, such as manner {we gushed exuberantly}, space {he stayed within his bounds}, and time {we rested all day}; and (4) they perform several functions in the construction of sentences, from modifying the verb {he quickly left} to linking clauses {he could tell when I needed help} to commenting on entire statements {obviously, he doesn’t care}.

Although most adverbials are purely optional, a few are required to complete the verb’s meaning {Laredo lies on the Texas–Mexico border} {we lived within our means} {I put the lobsters on the platter} {the baby’s croup lasted six months}. 
In general. A clause is a grammatical unit that contains a subject, a finite verb, and any complements that the verb requires. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence {José saw a squirrel}, while a dependent clause cannot stand alone because of the presence of a word by which it would normally be linked to an independent clause {because he was hungry, he sat down for a meal}. A dependent clause is usually introduced either by a relative pronoun (making them relative clauses) or by a subordinating conjunction, which establishes the semantic relationship between the independent clause and the dependent one. Combining related ideas by linking one or more dependent clauses to an independent one is called subordination, and the result is a complex sentence. See § 295.

Because a dependent clause is always subordinate to an independent clause for contextual meaning, it is also called a subordinate clause. A dependent clause commonly serves one of several functions, as:

- the direct object of a verb {everyone believed that the note was genuine [the that-clause is the direct object of believed]};
- an adjectival clause modifying a noun element {he who hesitates is lost [who hesitates adjectivally modifies he]}; or
- an adverbial clause modifying a verb or verb phrase {I bought the car despite my father’s warning not to [the despite-clause modifies the verb bought]}.

Relative clauses. A relative clause is a subordinate clause that is introduced by a relative pronoun and modifies the noun element (or sentence or clause) it follows {the car that you own} {those who follow his progress} {they were ten minutes late to the opera, which meant they couldn’t enter until the end of the first act}.

In some relative clauses, called contact clauses, the relative pronoun is merely implied {all the people you mention have already registered [the relative pronoun who is implied in people whom you mention]}. Because the necessary connective is omitted, contact clauses are a type of elliptical
clause—one often involving what is known as a whiz-deletion (so called because it so often amounts to the omission of who is). See § 315.

311 **Appositive clauses.** A clause used in apposition to a noun element in the sentence is called an appositive clause. Though these are often (but not always) introduced with the same words that introduce relative clauses (that, which, who), the two differ in that a relative clause functions only within the sentence, while an appositive clause is self-contained: with its introductory relative pronoun removed, it could stand on its own as a grammatical sentence {we all heard the report that the beloved broadcaster had died [without that, the remaining appositive clause is grammatically complete: the beloved broadcaster had died]}. 

312 **Conditional clauses.** A conditional clause (also called a protasis) is an adverbial clause, typically introduced by if or unless (or should, although, though, despite, or others), establishing the condition in a conditional sentence. Usually this is a direct condition, indicating that the main clause (also called the apodosis) is dependent on the condition being fulfilled. Sometimes, however, the clause may express an indirect condition {if I recall correctly, his assistant’s name is Miljana}, alternative conditions {the party will be a success whether or not it rains}, or an open range of possibilities {whatever you’re doing, it’s working}. 

Most often, though, a conditional clause expresses a direct condition, which may be open (real or factual) or hypothetical (closed or unreal). An open condition leaves unanswered the question whether the condition will be fulfilled {if you don’t finish the work on time, we’ll have to reevaluate our arrangement}. A hypothetical condition, on the other hand, assumes that the condition has not been, is not, or is unlikely to be fulfilled {if he had only remembered to wear a raincoat, he wouldn’t have ruined his new suit} {if I had a hammer, I could fix this creaky stair} {the transition would be much harder if she left without giving notice}. 

In the last three examples above, the hypothetical nature of the direct condition is conveyed by backshifting the verb tense. In the first sentence, the past hypothetical condition is expressed by the verb’s taking the past perfect in the conditional clause (had … remembered) and the modal past perfect in the main clause (would … have ruined). In the second and third sentences (present and future hypothetical conditions, respectively), the verb takes the past tense in the conditional clause (had/left) and the past modal in the main clause (could fix/would be).
Ellipsis

313 Generally. A grammatical ellipsis (sometimes called an omission) occurs when part of a clause is left understood and the reader or listener is able to supply the missing words. This “recovery” of omitted words is possible because of shared idiomatic knowledge, context, and what’s called the principle of recoverability {he preferred chocolate, she vanilla [preferred is understood in the second clause]}. A sentence containing such an ellipsis is called an elliptical sentence.

In colloquial speech, an ellipsis is useful to avoid repetition, shorten the message, and make it easier to understand. It’s particularly appropriate for commands and exclamations, and especially when asking or answering a question whose complete answer would essentially repeat the question. For example:

Thank you. (I thank you.)
One lump or two? (Would you like one lump of sugar or two?)
Glad you like it! (I’m glad that you like it!)
Which is better and why? (Which choice is better, and why is it better?)

[Can you tell me who built this house?] The Tucker family. (Yes, I can tell you. The Tucker family built this house.)

314 Anaphoric and cataphoric ellipsis. When an ellipsis refers to something already mentioned, it’s called an anaphoric ellipsis {I thought we had ordered more printer paper, but we didn’t [order more printer paper]}. When the elided information appears later in the sentence, the ellipsis is called a cataphoric ellipsis {unless you have no other choice [but to drink it], it’s best to avoid drinking the well water here}.

Ellipsis is often desirable when sentence elements are parallel and repetition is unnecessary. For example:

Not only classical but rock music is seriously studied by scholars now.
(Classical music is seriously studied by scholars now; rock music is also seriously studied by scholars now.)

We will drive to Louisville on Saturday and to Chicago next week.
(We will drive to Louisville on Saturday, and we will drive to Chicago next week.)
When a subordinate clause and main clause have the same subject, the subordinate clause may be elided:

When you are late for work, you are expected to call and explain why.

When late for work, you are expected to call and explain why.

While he was sailing, William encountered a pod of blue whales.

While sailing, William encountered a pod of blue whales.

But when the subject of the subordinate clause is an object (as of a preposition) in the main clause, an ellipsis leads to an illogical sentence:

If bread is kept too long in hot weather, mold will grow on it.

*If kept too long in hot weather, mold will grow on the bread.

In the second sentence, the writer or speaker creates a stumble for the reader or listener, who won’t at first see that it’s the bread that should not be kept too long. Avoid creating this type of misplaced modifier. See § 159.

If an ellipsis creates an ambiguity, restore the omitted words or recast the sentence to make the meaning clear. For example, the meaning of this sentence pair is unclear: Penguins consume huge amounts of fish. Seals, too. Does it mean that penguins eat seals? Or that seals eat fish? The meaning is clarified by restating the thought: Penguins consume huge amounts of fish. So do seals.

315 Whiz-deletions. A relative or subordinate clause is often introduced by a relative pronoun (who, which, or that) plus a linking verb. Although these introductory phrases can sometimes make it easier for a reader or listener to understand how the subordinate clause relates to the rest of the sentence, they can often be omitted {the man [who is] down the hall is my cousin}. This type of ellipsis is called a whiz-deletion or relative-clause reduction (whiz is the grammarian’s shorthand for “who is”). For example:

The man who is planning the ceremony wants to postpone the date.

The man planning the ceremony wants to postpone the date.

When it’s a natural idiomatic choice, the whiz-deletion can create a more economical expression. But it can also create ambiguity or change the meaning. Compare the sentences below before and after the whiz-deletion of that was.

The president needs the report that was written by the accountant.

The president needs the report written by the accountant.
In the first sentence, it’s clear that the report exists. In the second, the report might or might not yet exist: has the accountant written it already, or does the president want the accountant to write it? That is, might it be that the ellipsis consists of the infinitive to be after report?

The president needs the report [to be] written by the company’s accountant.

Negation

316 Negation generally. A statement may be expressed in positive or negative terms. Negation is the grammatical process of reversing the expression in a sentence. There are four common types: (1) using the negative particle not or no; (2) using negating pronouns such as nobody, none, no one, nothing, or negating adverbs such as nowhere, never, neither; (3) using the coordinating conjunctions neither and nor (or both of them as correlative conjunctions); (4) using words that are negative in meaning and function, such as hardly (= almost not), scarcely (= almost not), barely (= almost not), few (= not many; not much), little (= not much), rarely (= almost never), and seldom (= almost never)—or words having negative affixes such as a- {atypical}, dis- {disrobe}, in- {inimitable} (together with the assimilated forms im-, il-, and ir-), non- {nonemployee}, un- {untidy}, -less {careless}, and -free {hassle-free}.

317 The word “not.” The simplest and most common form of negation involves using the particle not. Used with ordinary verbs and with auxiliary verbs, not typically negates a verb, an object, a phrase, or a clause. Not typically precedes whatever sentence element is being negated.

To negate an ordinary verb in the present- or past-tense indicative mood (see §§ 173–74), the verb is replaced by a compound of do or did plus not and a bare infinitive.

They sell newspapers in the hotel.
They do not sell newspapers in the hotel.
Kerri sings at the opera today.
Kerri does not sing at the opera today.
The waiter returned with our order.
The waiter did not return with our order.
Syntax

Not usually immediately follows the principal verb or an auxiliary. If there are two or more verbs in the negative expression, not always follows the first of them.

I am happy.
I am not happy.
I should leave for work.
I should not leave for work.
I should leave for work, but I cannot find my glasses.

With participles, not precedes the participle {not given any warning, Tim nonchalantly opened the door} {not coming to any conclusions, the jury decided to suspend deliberations} {not having heard the news, Brett innocently asked how Tara was doing in school}. The subject is normally elided from the participial phrase.

Not doesn’t have to negate everything that follows it. It may be limited to the element immediately following {I discovered not a scientific breakthrough but a monstrous development}.

A sentence containing not may be qualified by another element that limits the extent of the negation. The word’s or clause’s placement may significantly alter the scope of negation. For example:

He definitely did not accept the job offer.
[It is final: he rejected the job offer.]
He did not definitely accept the job offer.
[It is uncertain: he might still reject the offer.]
We have not eaten yet.
[We have not eaten, but we expect to eat at some time.]

Not can be contracted to -n’t and appended to most auxiliary verbs without changing the form of the verb (e.g., are not → aren’t, would not → wouldn’t, has not → hasn’t). The exceptions, involving am, can, do, will, and shall, are well known to native speakers of the language:

am → am not → [no contraction with negative: use I’m not, etc.]
can → cannot → can’t
will → will not → won’t
shall → shall not → shan’t

Shan’t isn’t used in AmE except in jest; ¹ it still sometimes appears in BrE.

¹ For an illuminating anecdote about this word, see Garner on Language and Writing (Chicago: American Bar Ass’n, 2009), xix–xx.
The word “no.” Unlike *not*, which can negate any element of a sentence, *no* negates only adjectives and nouns. When used with an adjective phrase, it might produce ambiguity. For example, in *we found no eggs for sale*, it’s clear that the speaker found nothing. But in *we found no fresh eggs for sale*, does the speaker mean they found no eggs at all, only eggs that weren’t fresh, or eggs that were fresh but not for sale?

Using negating pronouns and adverbs. Pronouns such as *nobody*, *none*, *no one*, and *nothing* or adverbs such as *nowhere* and *never* also result in negation. These words make it unnecessary to use *not*. They can help reduce the number of words and improve the flow of a sentence.

- We did not see anyone in the audience.
- We saw no one in the audience.
- The children do not have anything to do.
- The children have nothing to do.
- You do not ever listen!
- You never listen!
- I cannot put the groceries anywhere.
- There’s nowhere to put the groceries.

Using “neither” and “nor.” The correlative conjunctions *neither* and *nor* negate alternatives simultaneously. Traditionally, only pairs are framed by *neither–nor*, but writers and speakers sometimes use a *neither–nor–nor* construction, as in the third example below.

- The dog and the cat are not friendly.
- Neither pet is friendly.
- Neither the dog nor the cat is friendly.
- The radiator does not leak, and the water pump also does not leak.
- Neither the radiator nor the water pump leaks.
- Neither John nor Sally nor Brenda can attend the meeting.

In that last example, some writers include only the last *nor*. But again, a simple *neither–nor* construction isn’t recommended with three or more elements, the sequence *neither–nor–nor* being preferable.
321 **Words that are negative in meaning and function.** Some words diminish or restrict the truth of a statement rather than entirely negating it. Words such as *few* and *little* convey the senses “not many” and “not much”; *barely, hardly,* and *scarcely* connote “almost not”; and *rarely* and *seldom* are equivalent to “not often” {there’s little doubt that the perpetrator will be identified} {it’s scarcely worth the trouble to finish} {I’ve seldom gotten enough sleep since the baby was born}.

322 **Affix negation.** Words that are inherently negative or opposite to other words, especially those with negative prefixes or suffixes, do not change the syntax of the sentence. While syntactical negation denies or negates a statement, it does not necessarily do any more than that. Negating by affix may produce a subtle semantic difference. For example, *I am unhappy* clearly conveys that the speaker is dissatisfied. But *I am not happy* conveys only that the speaker is experiencing some emotion other than happiness. Is the speaker sad? Angry? Confused? Stoically contented? The sentence doesn’t give an answer. Common negative prefixes include *dis-* {disrespectful}, *im-* {impolite}, *in-* {indecent}, *ir-* {irrelevant}, and *un-* {unplanned}. The most common negative suffixes are *-less* {hopeless} {useless} and *-free* {smoke-free} {trouble-free}. Such affixes expressing the loss, lack, or negation of some quality are also called *privative* (a word related to *deprive*).

323 **Negative interrogative and imperative statements.** In a negative interrogative statement, the first auxiliary verb may be contracted with *not*: *Aren’t you doing your homework tonight?* If it is not contracted, then *not* or *no* precedes the negated element {are you not doing your homework tonight?} {is there no satisfying you?}. Questions phrased with a negating word are called (unsurprisingly) **negative questions**; those without negation are **positive questions**.

In an imperative statement, the negative particle always follows the imperative verb or is contracted with it {come no closer!} {don’t talk back!}.

324 **Double negatives.** When a sentence contains two negatives, in Standard English they are usually thought to cancel each other out to make a mild positive {he didn’t not say anything [he did say something]} {this isn’t an uncommon problem [it’s more or less common]}. In dialect, by contrast, the sentence is often meant to express an emphatic negative {he didn’t say nothing [he said nothing at all]} {we’re not going nowhere special [we’re
going somewhere, but it isn’t special}. This linguistic trait has its roots in Old and Middle English, in which the use of multiple negatives (whether in odd or even numbers) served as emphasis.

Yet in Standard English today, one negative conveys the denial. Multiple negatives often lead to ambiguity. For example, in I wouldn’t be surprised if Dan doesn’t find the hammer, does the speaker expect Dan to find the hammer or not to find it? In general, though, multiple negation results in a cancellation of other negatives {we didn’t say the children couldn’t come along [we didn’t say anything about whether the children could come]}.

325 Other forms of negation. A sentence can express negation even though it doesn’t contain any plainly negative elements. Two common means of achieving this effect are using but in the sense “if not” and except in the sense “but not” {what is a pampered dog but [= if not] a child in a fur suit?} {you may borrow the car except [= but not] when it is raining}.

Then there’s the old joke about a grammar teacher who asserted that two positives could never make a negative. A student responded: “Yeah, right.”

326 “Any” and “some” in negative statements. When the negating particle is not, then any- words must be used with it, not some- words. Any- words include any, anyone, anybody, anything, and anywhere. Some- words include some, someone, somebody, something, and somewhere.

Not this: I don’t want to see somebody. [Unless the meaning is one particular person I’m not naming.]
But this: I don’t want to see anybody.

Not this: There aren’t some seats left.
But this: There aren’t any seats left.

Expletives

327 Generally. Though expletive commonly denotes a swearword {expletive deleted}, in grammar expletive signifies a word that has no lexical meaning but serves a merely structural role in a sentence—as a noun element. The two most common expletives are it {it is true!} and there {there must be an answer}. An expletive it or there may be in the subject position, especially when the subject of a sentence is a clause {it is a rule that children must
Syntax

raise their hands to speak during class \{the rule is that children must raise their hands to speak during class\}\} \{it is better to stay here than to go there \{to stay here is better than to go there\}\}. In this position, the expletive shifts the emphasis to the predicate containing the true subject. The sentence implies a “who” or “what” question that is answered by the subject. For example, It is foolish to ignore facts tells the reader “what” it is foolish to ignore and emphasizes “facts.”

An expletive it may also take the position of a direct object, especially when the real object is a clause or noun phrase \{some people don’t like it that stores are open for business on Thanksgiving \{some people don’t like stores’ being open for business on Thanksgiving\}\}. Using an expletive in this way can tighten a verb phrase and emphasize the object. Compare it was taken for granted that our team would win with we took for granted that our team would win.

328 **Expletive “it.”** Whereas the pronoun it adds meaning to a sentence because it has an antecedent or else is the formal subject of a be-verb in the sense of “a person” or “a thing,” an expletive it adds no meaning and takes the subject’s or object’s place when the subject or object shifts to the predicate: It is not known what happened → What happened is not known.

Usually readers have no difficulty intuitively understanding whether they’re encountering a pronoun it or an expletive it. But when the expletive and the pronoun appear close together, they may cause the reader to stumble \{The much-anticipated feast was a disappointment; it was poorly cooked and presented. It is hard to believe that such a famous chef thought it would be edible, let alone delight gourmands\}. Avoid having several its in a passage clash in this way.

Some other names for the expletive it are ambient it, anticipatory it, dummy it, empty it, introductory it, nonreferential it, and prop it.

329 **Expletive “there.”** The word there is also frequently used as an expletive with be or an intransitive verb (especially a linking verb) followed by the subject \{there are many different viewpoints presented in the students’ essays\} \{there were several hundred members present at the conference\}. An expletive there shouldn’t be confused with there as an adverb of place.

There seemed to be someone outside. \(\text{There is an expletive.}\)
Someone seemed to be there. \(\text{There refers to a place.}\)

There appear to be at least 50 people. \(\text{There is an expletive.}\)
At least 50 people appear to be there. \(\text{There refers to a place.}\)
There once reigned a king called Frederick the Great. (*There* is an expletive.)

A king called Frederick the Great once reigned there. (*There* refers to a place.)

As in those illustrations, the expletive *there* appears before the verb; the adverbial *there* normally appears in the predicate.

Parallelism

*Generally.* Parallel constructions—series of like sentence elements—are common in good writing. Compound structures may link words {win, lose, or draw}, phrases {government of the people, by the people, for the people}, dependent clauses {that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness}, or sentences {I came; I saw; I conquered}. Every element of a parallel series must be a functional match (word, phrase, clause, sentence) and serve the same grammatical function in the sentence (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, adverb). This syntactic linking of matching elements is called *coordination.* But when linked items do not match, the syntax of the uncoordinated sentence breaks down:

**Poor:** She did volunteer work in the community kitchen, the homeless shelter, and taught free ESL classes offered by her church.

**Better:** She did volunteer work in the community kitchen, the homeless shelter, and her church, where she taught free ESL classes.

**Poor:** The candidate is a former county judge, state senator, and served two terms as attorney general.

**Better:** The candidate is a former county judge, state senator, and two-term attorney general.

The examples illustrate how the syntax breaks down when a series is not parallel. In the second one, for instance, the subject, predicate, and modifier (*the candidate is a former*) fit with the noun phrases *county judge*...
and state senator, but the third item in the series renders nonsense: *The candidate is a former served two terms as attorney general.* The first two elements in the series are nouns, while the third is a separate predicate. The corrected version makes each item in the series a noun element.

331 **Prepositions.** In a parallel series of prepositional phrases, repeat the preposition with every element unless they all use the same preposition. A common error occurs when a writer lets two or more of the phrases share a single preposition but inserts a different one with another element:

- Poor: I looked for my lost keys in the sock drawer, the laundry hamper, the restroom, and under the bed.
- Better: I looked for my lost keys in the sock drawer, in the laundry hamper, in the restroom, and under the bed.

If the series had not included *under the bed,* the preposition could have been used once to apply to all the objects:

- Better: I looked for my lost keys in the sock drawer, the laundry hamper, and the restroom.

332 **Paired joining terms.** Correlative conjunctions such as *either–or, neither–nor, both–and,* and *not only–but also* and some adverb pairs such as *where–there, as–so,* and *if–then* must join grammatically parallel sentence elements. It is a common error to mismatch elements framed by correlatives.

- Poor: I’d like to either go into business for myself or else to write freelance travel articles.
- Better: I’d like either to go into business for myself or else to write freelance travel articles.

- Poor: Our guests not only ate all the turkey and dressing but both pumpkin pies as well.
- Better: Our guests ate not only all the turkey and dressing but both pumpkin pies as well.

In the second example, the verb *ate,* when placed after the first correlative, attaches grammatically to *all the turkey* but not to *both pumpkin pies as well.* When moved outside the two phrases containing its direct objects, it attaches to both—and the phrasing becomes parallel.
**Auxiliary verbs.** If an auxiliary verb appears before a series of verb phrases, it must apply to all of them. A common error is to include one phrase that takes a different auxiliary verb:

**Poor:** The proposal would streamline the application process, speed up admission decisions, and has proved to save money when implemented by other schools.

**Better:** The proposal would streamline the application process, speed up admission decisions, and save money.

**Better:** The proposal would streamline the application process and speed up admission decisions. It has proved to save money when implemented by other schools.

The auxiliary verb *would* in that example renders the nonsensical *would has proved* when parsed with the third element of the predicate series. The first solution resolves that grammatical conflict, while the second breaks out the third into a separate sentence—which also avoids shifting from future tense to past tense in midsentence.

**Verbs and adverbs at the outset.** A listing of dos and don’ts, for example, may be directives, each item being a complete clause. Most items in the list may begin with verbs in the imperative mood. Note that it does not destroy parallelism to have some of those verbs preceded by an adverb (e.g., *never*)—as in the third and fifth items here:

If you sometimes ignore care labels, you will minimize risks if you know that some care labels should never or rarely be disregarded:

- Obey care labels on expensive garments that you cannot afford to damage or replace.
- Obey care labels that are carefully written or provide a lot of detail.
- Never ignore “Dry-clean” or “Dry-clean only” instructions.
- Beware of defying dry-cleaning instructions on any crisp, tailored, or heavily sized linen or cotton garments.
- Never ignore instructions to use mild soap or detergent or cool water, especially with silk or wool.

**Longer elements.** Even with a longer list, such as one involving bullets, the individual elements must have parity. In the next example, what follows the colon within each item must be a verb (given the first two elements), but the parallelism breaks down in the third and in the sixth through
eighth elements with their noun strings. Also, the third and eighth elements are introduced by adjectives, not nouns.

**Poor:** Maslow boiled down volumes of existing research to a list of needs and desires that people try to fulfill:
- transcendence: help others realize their potential;
- self-actualization: realize our own potential, self-fulfillment, peak experiences;
- aesthetic: symmetry, order, beauty, balance;
- learning: know, understand, mentally connect;
- esteem: achieve, be competent, gain approval, independence, or status;
- belonging: love, family, friends, affection;
- security: protection, safety, stability; and
- physical: hunger, thirst, bodily comfort.

With minor adjustments, the structures are made fully parallel:

**Better:** Maslow boiled down volumes of existing research to a list of needs and desires that people try to fulfill:
- transcendence: help others realize their potential;
- self-actualization: realize our own potential, self-fulfillment, peak experiences;
- aesthetic: achieve symmetry, order, beauty, balance;
- learning: know, understand, mentally connect;
- esteem: achieve, be competent, gain approval, independence, or status;
- belonging: give and receive love and affection from family and friends;
- security: gain protection, safety, stability; and
- physicality: relieve hunger and thirst, achieve bodily comfort.

**Cleft Sentences**

**Definition.** A cleft sentence opens with a special type of subject clause (an *it*-clause, a *what*-clause, or a similar clause) that changes the focus by adding two or three words (such as *it, was,* and *who; there, are,* and *that; or what and was*) {it was the manager who handled the customer’s complaint} {there are still some missing items that have to be accounted for} {what the campaign lacked was a vibrant slogan}. Most often the sentence
begins with an expletive *it* and a *be*-verb (the *it*-clause). The subject clause emphasizes new information that identifies a person, a place, a time, an object, a cause, etc. For example:

It was Manuel who met Adam in college. (The focus is on the actor.)

It was Adam whom Manuel met in college. (The focus is on the person that the actor met.)

It was in college that Manuel met Adam. (The focus is on the time or place when they met.)

The part of a cleft sentence beginning with the relative pronoun usually refers to information already given. Hence it may be reduced when the information that would be in the final clause is understood:

When did Manuel and Adam become acquainted?

It was in college (that they met).

**Types.** A cleft sentence may be declarative {it is the quality of the work that concerns me} {there was an incident that led to the concert’s postponement}. Or it may be interrogative {is it the quality of the work that you’re concerned about?} {what was the incident that led to the concert’s postponement?}.

It may also be positive or negative. A positive cleft sentence states a truth. A negative cleft sentence uses simple negation (*not, no*) to state the contrary. Often the relative pronoun is elided in a whiz-deletion (as with the bracketed words below—see § 315)—e.g.:

**Positive:** There are many movies [that are] worth seeing this weekend.

**Negative:** There are not many movies [that are] worth seeing this weekend.

**Negative:** There are no movies [that are] worth seeing this weekend.

**Uses.** A cleft sentence is sometimes used for dramatic effect to signal a shift or a beginning, especially to create a more interesting lead-in for a topic:

It was hours later that Burns discovered he’d left his wallet on the counter.

It was in 1912 that shipbuilders and legislators learned the cost of not providing ocean liners with adequate numbers of lifeboats.
Syntax

In some contexts, a cleft sentence may imply a contrast or mistake. For instance, *It’s not Joan who wants to be a social activist* implies that Joan is being distinguished from another person or that someone else has been mistakenly identified.
Traditional Sentence Diagramming

339 History and description. The traditional system of sentence diagramming bears the names of its developers, Alonzo Reed and Brainerd Kellogg, who in 1878 introduced it in two grammar texts: *Graded Lessons in English* and *Higher Lessons in English*. Reed–Kellogg diagrams show each word in a sentence placed according to its function. The subject and the main verb—along with any predicate nominative, predicate adjective, direct object, or indirect object—occupy the main horizontal line and show the core thought communicated by the sentence (the kernel sentence). Adjectives and adverbs are attached to the words they modify on descending diagonal lines. Reed and Kellogg were not the first to develop such a scheme: predecessors date back to the first half of the 19th century, using rectangles or balloons to hold the words instead of lines. But Reed and Kellogg’s grammars were widely adopted, and Reed–Kellogg diagrams—with some refinements—were standard teaching tools for much of the 20th century. They fell out of favor in elementary and secondary schools in the 1960s, along with formal classroom units in grammar generally.

340 Benefits of diagrams. Diagrams help you recognize sentence patterns (e.g., a predicate nominative or predicate adjective with a linking verb, a direct object with a transitive verb, subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases). By showing the primary parts of the sentence on the baseline, diagrams can help you sort out how all the other words fit into the syntax. By separating the words according to their functions, diagrams can help you spot some common grammatical errors—such as disagreement in number and case, or lack of parallelism in compound constructions. With an especially complex sentence, a diagram can help reveal the writer’s meaning.

I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences. I suppose other things may be more exciting to others when they are at school but to me undoubtedly when I was at school the really completely exciting thing was diagramming sentences and that has been to me ever since the one thing that has been completely exciting and completely completing.

—Gertrude Stein
“Poetry and Grammar”
**Syntax**

341 *Using diagrams.* A sentence does not have to be diagrammed fully and rigorously for the exercise to be useful. An informal sketch of just a discrete syntactical unit can also help you decide whether a singular or plural verb is needed or whether a pronoun in a certain position should be in the nominative or objective case. An adept can diagram mentally rather than by physically drawing it on paper.

342 *Criticisms.* Critics of diagramming say that it does not reflect modern concepts of grammar and that by abandoning the flow of prose in favor of a logical reordering, a diagram can make understanding the meaning harder, not easier. The attack on the classroom use of diagrams was part of a larger assault on traditional grammar generally. More specifically, some curriculum reformers thought grammar lessons took away class time that could be better spent on other pursuits, such as literature. But many other teachers and students have found diagramming to be an extremely useful pedagogical device.

343 *How diagrams work.* While there are variations on the Reed–Kellogg forms for representing some grammatical functions, with each of these the core structure and the arrangement of related words, phrases, and clauses are largely unchanged. The alterations in style reflect such details as representing the two constituents of correlative conjunctions (e.g., *not only–but also*) together on a dotted line, or separating them so that each correlative appears close to the words it introduces.
Baseline. The main baseline of a sentence (or independent clause) is central to the sentence’s diagram, containing its nucleus of meaning—the subject and verb, plus any direct object or subjective complement. It consists of a horizontal line divided by a vertical line running through it. On the left of the line is the subject, on the right the predicate. It can be as simple as a noun or pronoun and a verb:

```
Time flies.
```

*Time* is the subject; *flies* is the verb.

With the imperative mood, a diagram may consist of the verb alone (the noun or pronoun being implied):

```
Wait.
```

*Wait* is the verb. The subject is understood as *you*.

Connected to the horizontal line is every other element of the sentence—usually modifiers (e.g., adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, relative clauses) but sometimes also appositives, absolute constructions, expletives, and more. Some attach above the line, some below. Similar lines are used for other clauses, whether independent or subordinate, so it’s helpful to indicate the priority of the main baseline of the sentence (or of each independent clause in a compound sentence) in some way, such as by using a thicker line or by starting the line a little farther to the left than other elements on the diagram.
Subject. The subject of a clause may be a single word, a noun phrase, or a noun clause. It is in the nominative case. In the active voice, the subject is the agent or actor causing the verb’s action or state; in the passive voice, the subject is the recipient of the verb’s action or state.

Justice prevails.

Justice prevails

Justice is the subject, prevails the verb.

Justice is served.

Justice is served

Justice is the subject of this passive-voice sentence. It is the recipient of the action of the verb is served.

Predicate. The predicate always contains the main verb and any auxiliary verbs and particles (idiomatic prepositions that are essential to the nonliteral meaning of a phrasal verb, as with out in I’ll check it out). Most predicates also include either a direct object or a subjective complement, and some also include a complement associated with the direct object.

Have you happened upon an answer?

Have happened upon

Happened upon (= to discover) is a phrasal verb. Have is capitalized because it begins the sentence; upon, usually a preposition, is an idiomatic particle that is part of the phrasal verb.

Direct object. A direct object is a noun or pronoun representing the recipient of the verb’s action or state. If it’s a pronoun, it’s in the objective case. A direct object appears on the predicate side of the baseline, next to the verb but separated from it by a vertical line above the baseline.

Hens lay eggs.

Hens lay eggs

Eggs is the direct object of the verb lay.
Objective complement. An objective complement functions as a noun or adjective and names or describes the outcome of some change the verb makes to the direct object (e.g., king in Who made you king? or wet in The rain got us wet). In other words, it completes the action of the verb. In a diagram, the objective complement appears to the right of the direct object and separated from it by a back-slanted line (pointing toward the direct object).

Peanuts make me thirsty.

Thirsty is an objective complement. Here it is an adjective completing the action that the verb, make, has on the direct object, me.

The board named Hale superintendent.

Superintendent is an objective complement. Here it is a noun referring to the direct object, Hale, and completing the action of the verb, named.

Indirect object. An indirect object names the recipient of the verb’s action on the direct object (e.g., me in Hand me the pliers). It is the functional equivalent of a to-prepositional phrase after the direct object (to me in Hand the pliers to me)—except that the indirect object is preposed and the to is dropped. On a diagram, the indirect object is placed on a horizontal line below the verb and connected to it by a diagonal line.

Did you give Casey tickets?

Casey is the indirect object of the verb did give; tickets is its direct object.
Subjective complement. A subjective complement is either a predicate nominative (e.g., accountant in Merrill is an accountant) or a predicate adjective (e.g., great in Indian food sounds great). It is separated from the verb by a back-slanted line above the baseline (pointing toward the subject). It may accompany either a be-verb or a linking verb such as seem, become, grow, or taste.

Something smells delicious.

Something smells delicious

Delicious is a subjective complement in the form of a predicate adjective. It describes the subject, something.

Allen Konigsberg became Woody Allen.

Allen Konigsberg became Woody Allen

Woody Allen is a subjective complement in the form of a predicate nominative. It refers directly to the subject, Allen Konigsberg.

One-word modifiers. A modifier adds information about a noun (in the case of an adjective) or a verb, adjective, or adverb (in the case of an adverb). It may be a one-word adjective, adverb, or article, or it may be a phrase (most frequently a prepositional phrase) or a subordinate clause. The function it plays in the sentence determines its placement in a diagram. A one-word modifier is placed on a diagonal line below the word it modifies.

Our first crop survived the long drought fairly well.

Our first crop survived the long drought fairly well

Our is a possessive pronoun and first is an adjective; both independently modify the noun crop. The adverb well modifies the verb survived and is itself modified by the adverb fairly. The article the and the adjective long independently modify the noun drought.
Prepositional phrases. A prepositional phrase couples a preposition (e.g., at, before, of) with a noun or pronoun as its object. It may function as an adjective or an adverb. In a diagram, a prepositional phrase appears under the word it modifies, on a branch consisting of a diagonal line holding the preposition and a horizontal line holding its object.

Adjective clauses. An adjective clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun in another clause, either further defining it (a restrictive clause) or adding supplementary but nonessential information about it (a nonrestrictive clause). It may be introduced by a relative pronoun (that, whichever, who, whom, or whose) or a subordinating conjunction (e.g., when, where, whatever, why, how). (See §§ 271–73.) The clause is put on a separate diagram below the diagram holding the word it modifies, and connected to it by a dashed line from the modified word to the relative pronoun or adverb that introduces the adjective clause.
Adverbial clauses. An adverbial clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb in another clause by specifying its time, place, duration, amount, cause, purpose, or condition. It is introduced by a subordinating conjunction (e.g., when, whenever, where, if, as soon as, although, once, before). In a diagram, an adverbial clause is much like an adjective clause, but the modified word in the independent clause is connected to the verb in the subordinate clause with a dashed line. The subordinating conjunction appears on the dashed line.

Noun clauses. A noun clause is a subordinate clause that functions as the subject or object of another clause. A noun clause is diagrammed on a separate baseline above the clause and connected to it by a “pedestal” (a vertical line atop a delta of two short diagonal lines). Its placement in the diagram depends on its function in the sentence.
A noun clause may be introduced by a conjunction (e.g., \textit{that}) or an adverb (e.g., \textit{where} or \textit{if}). Some writers tend to omit \textit{that} in a noun clause, but doing so can sometimes cause a brief miscue.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) at (0,0) {\textbf{The board believed that the accountant’s opinion was ill-considered.}};
\node (b) at (3,0) {Without the conjunction \textit{that}, opinion seems at first to be the object of \textit{believed}—when in fact it is the subject of the relative clause the accountant’s opinion was ill-considered.};
\node (c) at (-2,1) {opinion};
\node (d) at (-2,0) {was};
\node (e) at (-2,-1) {ill-considered};
\node (f) at (-3,1) {accountant’s};
\node (g) at (-3,0) {the};
\node (h) at (-3,-1) {was};
\node (i) at (-1,1) {board};
\node (j) at (-1,0) {believed};
\node (k) at (-1,-1) {The};
\node (l) at (-1,-2) {believed};
\node (m) at (-1,-3) {The};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

A noun clause may also be introduced by an interrogative pronoun (e.g., \textit{why, when, where}), an adjective (e.g., \textit{which, whose, what}), or an adverb (e.g., \textit{when, how, why}).

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) at (0,0) {Who knows where the time goes?};
\node (b) at (3,0) {The noun clause \textit{where the time goes} is the object of the main verb, \textit{knows}. Within the subordinate clause, \textit{where} modifies the verb \textit{goes}.};
\node (c) at (-2,1) {time goes};
\node (d) at (-2,0) {is};
\node (e) at (-2,-1) {the};
\node (f) at (-2,-2) {objects};
\node (g) at (-2,-3) {the};
\node (h) at (-2,-4) {verb, \textit{knows}.};
\node (i) at (-1,1) {Who};
\node (j) at (-1,0) {knows};
\node (k) at (-1,-1) {Where};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{Infinitives.} An infinitive is a verb typically introduced by \textit{to} (e.g., \textit{to fish} in \textit{I like to fish})—see § 147. With a bare infinitive, the \textit{to} is omitted (e.g., before \textit{laugh} in \textit{Don’t make me laugh}). When an infinitive is part of the main verb, it is diagrammed (with \textit{to} unless it’s a bare infinitive) on the baseline like any other verb. An infinitive phrase may take an object (e.g., \textit{a secret} in \textit{Do you want to know a secret?}) and may function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The phrase is diagrammed on a branch just as a prepositional phrase is, with \textit{to} on the diagonal line. If it serves as a noun, its diagram appears on a pedestal. If it serves as an adjective or adverb, it goes below the word it modifies.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) at (0,0) {You ought to think this through.};
\node (b) at (3,0) {The infinitive \textit{to think} is the main verb, along with its modal auxiliary \textit{ought}. In this function, the infinitive is diagrammed the same way as any other verb, on the baseline. \textit{To} is also put on the baseline as part of the infinitive phrase.};
\node (c) at (-2,1) {You};
\node (d) at (-2,0) {ought};
\node (e) at (-2,-1) {to think};
\node (f) at (-2,-2) {this};
\node (g) at (-2,-3) {through};
\node (h) at (-1,1) {ought};
\node (i) at (-1,0) {to};
\node (j) at (-1,-1) {think};
\node (k) at (-1,-2) {this};
\node (l) at (-1,-3) {through};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
**Syntax**

My original ambition was to become an architect.

The infinitive phrase *to become an architect* is used as a noun, serving as the sentence’s predicate nominative linked to the subject *ambition* by the main verb *was*.

She’s developed her capacity to reach the high notes.

The infinitive phrase *to reach the high notes* is used as an adjective modifying *capacity*. Its diagram is placed below the modified word.

**Participles.** The participles of a verb (see § 151) are its inflected forms typically ending in *-ed* (the past participle) and *-ing* (the present participle), though the past participle of an irregular verb may be unpredictable (e.g., *told, written*). With auxiliary verbs, participles function as verbs in the progressive and perfect tenses (e.g., *is missing or has missed*). The past tense is also used with a be-verb to form the passive voice (e.g., *is missed* in *He is sorely missed, or was missed in The deadline was missed*). A participle may also function without an auxiliary as an adjective (e.g., *the missing link, a missed opportunity*). Like a verb, it can take an object. As an adverb, a participle is diagrammed under the word it modifies, curved around a diagonal line connected to a horizontal line. Its object goes on the horizontal line, separated from the participle by a vertical line above the line.

The little man had spun all the straw into gold.

The main verb, *spun*, is the past participle of the irregular verb *spin*, used in this sentence to form the past-perfect tense. As a verb, it is diagrammed on the baseline with its auxiliary verb, *had*. 
Given those options, we took the guided tour.

Given those options is a participial phrase modifying the subject, we. Guided is a participle standing alone and modifying the direct object, tour.

**Gerunds.** A gerund is the present participle of a verb (with its -ing ending) functioning as a noun in the sentence {I enjoy reading and painting} (see § 155). It’s distinguished from the present participle when used as a verb in the progressive tenses {I have been reading all morning; this afternoon I’ll be painting}. A gerund may take an object and modifiers {I enjoy reading biographies and painting landscapes of the mountains}. It is diagrammed as a present participle just as any other verb is. A gerund phrase appears on a separate baseline above the main baseline on a pedestal, with the gerund draped around a line with a vertical offset. Like other nouns, a gerund may also be used attributively and function as an adjective. When that is so, it is diagrammed the same way as any other adjective, on a straight diagonal line below the word it modifies.

Since his retirement, fishing has been his whole life.

The gerund fishing is a noun functioning as the subject of the sentence. Because it is not part of a phrase, it needs no special formatting here.

Since his retirement, fishing tackle has been his whole life.

Here, the gerund fishing (still a noun) is used adjectivally to modify the subject tackle. Because it is not part of a phrase, it needs no special formatting.
Since his retirement, fishing the streams of Oregon has been his whole life.

Here, the subject is the gerund phrase fishing the streams of Oregon. The phrase is diagrammed with a separate main axis atop a pedestal linked to its place in the main sentence.

Appositives. An appositive is a noun, pronoun, or phrase standing beside a noun element and further identifying it or adding information about it (see § 40). An appositive usually follows the word with which it is associated, but it may also precede that word. An appositive is diagrammed in parentheses beside the word to which it refers (and atop a pedestal if it is a clause). Any modifiers in an appositive phrase are placed on the baseline below the main appositive and inside the parentheses.

Mrs. Roush, my fifth-grade teacher, taught me sentence diagramming.

Mrs. Roush (teacher) taught me diagramming

My fifth-grade teacher is an appositive, identifying Mrs. Roush.

Independent elements. Several types of constructions use words that serve no grammatical function in the sentence: vocatives (words of direct address), interjections (see § 280), expletives that stand in for the subject in an inverted sentence (see § 193), absolute constructions (see p. 401), and sentence adverbs (see § 211). They are all diagrammed on a separate line or lines above or beside the baseline but not connected to it.

Naturally, we had to stop at the snake farm.

Naturally is a sentence adverb. It serves no grammatical function in the sentence but addresses something about the sentence as a whole.
Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.

Mr. Gorbachev
(you) tear down
this

Mr. Gorbachev is a proper noun of direct address, serving no grammatical function in the sentence.

361 Conjunctions. A conjunction joins two or more sentence parts, whether words, phrases, or clauses. It is diagrammed on a dashed line connecting the things it joins. An internal compound structure is diagrammed on a branch that splits into as many separate but parallel structures as there are items in the compound, with the parallel structures connected by a dashed line holding the conjunction that joins them. Correlative conjunctions (e.g., either–or, not only–but also) go together on the connecting line, with each part close to the item with which it is associated in the sentence.

On his grueling but inspirational hike, Bill always wore a hat and a jacket.

The conjunction and joins two direct objects, hat and jacket. The conjunction but joins the adjectives grueling and inspirational, both of which modify hike.

362 Diagramming compound sentences. A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses, usually (but not always) joined by a conjunction. (See § 293.) The clauses are joined by a dashed line with a short horizontal section holding the conjunction. The dashed line attaches to the baselines at the main verbs.
Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

The independent clauses power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely could stand alone as complete sentences. And is a coordinating conjunction.

**Diagramming complex sentences.** A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and at least one dependent clause linked by a relative pronoun (e.g., that, which, who), an adverb (e.g., where, when, why), or a subordinating conjunction (e.g., if, after, because). (See § 295.) The clauses are joined by a slanting dashed line connecting the two linked elements.

We’ll be late because it started snowing.

The independent clause we’ll be late could stand alone. The subordinate clause because it started snowing could not, but serves as an adverbial modifier explaining why.

**Diagramming compound-complex sentences.** A compound-complex sentence contains two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. (See § 296.) The independent clauses are joined by a dashed line with a short horizontal section holding a conjunction (as with a compound sentence), and the dependent clause is joined by a slanting dashed line connecting it to one of the independent clauses (as with a complex sentence).

Because Suyash was late, he was rushing to class, and he forgot his phone.

The independent clauses are he was rushing to class and he forgot his phone. The dependent clause because Suyash was late attaches to the first.
Transformational Grammar

Overview

Definition. Transformational grammar is a descriptive approach that does not provide normative rules but instead seeks to derive and explain the rules of a language by showing how native speakers generate sentences. It is based on a theory first proposed by the linguist Noam Chomsky in 1957. Chomsky sought to describe how people produce and understand original sentences without formally learning rules for grammatical structures. Native speakers assimilate the natural rules of a language and internalize them. Transformational grammar derives those internal rules by examining sentence structures and producing a formulalike rule or a tree diagram to show how a sentence or a sentence part is formed. Widespread, mostly unsuccessful attempts to teach grade-school children transformational grammar were made during the 1960s and early 1970s. Today it is taught mostly in colleges and graduate schools. Outside linguistics, transformational grammar is used primarily in computer-language-processing applications. Although it has an alien look and feel to traditionalists, it can convey interesting insights into how the language works.

Scope of section. Entire books are devoted to deriving rules from sentences of increasing complexity and attempting to explain sentences that deviate from previously derived rules. This section will focus on the established transformational-grammar rules for fairly simple sentences. A list of further readings is provided in the bibliography.

Terminology of transformational grammar. Many aspects of transformational grammar have several different names, depending on the source consulted. For example, transformational grammar itself is also termed transformational-generative grammar, generative grammar, generative-transformational grammar, and generative-transformational theory. For the sake of simplicity, this section uses only the one name (with a few exceptions).
Likewise, because the abbreviations used in the rules vary depending on the source, this section uses only basic abbreviations.

**Tools of transformational grammar.** Because transformational grammar is a descriptive grammar, it uses tools that illustrate, rather than dictate, sentence structures. The tools include universal symbols, formulalike statements, and treelike diagrams. Symbols and formulas are useful because they are precise and apply to all sentences, not just particular ones or only sentences that have already been created.

**Universal symbols in rules.** In a rule, the first element is a symbol for the sentence part being defined, placed at the far left. Next is a right-pointing arrow (→), which means “rewrite as.” The elements are set out to the right of the arrow in the order of their appearance in a sentence. Parentheses ( ) around a component show that it is optional; not every sentence or sentence part will have that component. Curly brackets { } around a list of components mean that any of the components may be included but not necessarily all.

**Tree diagrams.** Besides the formula-style rules, diagrams can be helpful to show the structure of a sentence. Because the diagrams are branching and treelike, they are called tree diagrams. Every tree diagram begins with a sentence (S) consisting of a subject, or noun phrase (NP), plus a predicate, or verb phrase (VP):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
\text{NP} & \text{VP}
\end{array}
\]

That is the starting point.

**Base Rules in Transformational Grammar**

**Parts of speech.** Transformational grammarians use most of the same names for the individual parts of speech as traditional grammarians. These are used in formulating the rules for sentence structure, as discussed below.

**Sentence basics.** A sentence (S) consists of two components: a noun phrase (or *subject*) (NP) and a verb phrase (or *predicate*) (VP). A kernel
sentence (K) is a basic statement that can’t be derived from another sentence. In appearance, it is the simple subject plus the simplest verb phrase or predicate. Anything after the verb phrase is called a sentence modifier (SM). So the two most basic rules of transformational grammar can be expressed this way:

\[
K \rightarrow NP + VP \\
\text{We play.} \\
\text{We play soccer.}
\]

\[
S \rightarrow K + (SM) \\
\text{We play soccer on Saturday night in Rialto.}
\]

In a diagram, these rules would be expressed this way:

```
S
   NP
  VP
 SM
```

We play soccer on Saturday night in Rialto.

Nouns and Noun Phrases

373 Functions of noun phrases. In a kernel sentence, the subject is a noun phrase—so called even if it’s a simple noun. Anywhere in a sentence, a noun phrase can function in all the same ways as a noun.

374 Simple noun phrases. There are four types of simple noun phrases: (1) a proper noun, (2) a personal pronoun, (3) an indefinite pronoun, and (4) a common noun with or without a determiner (Det). These are rules of what constitutes a noun phrase:

\[
NP \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
\text{proper noun} \\
\text{personal pronoun} \\
\text{indefinite pronoun} \\
(\text{Det}) + \text{N}
\end{cases}
\]

For each type of noun, the symbol is “N.” So the rule can be reduced further to:

\[
NP \rightarrow N
\]
Determiners

Types of determiners. Nouns, especially singular common nouns, may require some kind of determiner, shown by the symbol “Det.” (If such nouns in the singular typically need a preceding determiner [ball, hat, shelf, house], they are called bounded nouns.) Determiners are definite and indefinite articles, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, and numbers. The rule is expressed this way:

\[
Det \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
\text{definite article} \\
\text{indefinite article} \\
\text{demonstrative pronoun} \\
\text{indefinite pronoun} \\
\text{number}
\end{cases}
\]

Numeric and nonnumeric determiners. There are two types of determiners. A number, whether cardinal or ordinal, is a numeric determiner (numDet). All other determiners are nonnumeric (nonDet). Given this information, we can write out each rule defining each kind of determiner:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{numDet} & \rightarrow \{ \text{cardinal number} \\
& \quad \text{ordinal number} \} \\
\text{nonDet} & \rightarrow \{ \text{definite article (nonDet:def)} \\
& \quad \text{indefinite article (nonDet:indef)} \\
& \quad \text{demonstrative pronoun (nonDet:demon)} \\
& \quad \text{indefinite pronoun (nonDet:pro)} \}
\end{align*}
\]

Multiple determiners. A noun phrase may have more than one determiner, of the same or of different types. A numeric determiner may follow a nonnumeric determiner {a second strike}, or it may stand alone {seven samurai}. With this information, we can refine the rule for a determiner:

\[
Det \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
\text{nonDet + (numDet)} \\
\text{nonDet + numDet} \\
\text{(nonDet) + numDet}
\end{cases}
\]

Determiners in noun phrases. The use of a determiner in a noun phrase is illustrated by these rules:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nonDet + NP} & \quad \text{some weekdays; each fish} \\
\text{numDet + NP} & \quad \text{three mice; two hundred soldiers} \\
\text{nonDet + numDet + NP} & \quad \text{the twelfth man; those four geese}
\end{align*}
\]
Prearticles. A prearticle (preArt) is a modifying phrase ending in of—such as a lot of, some of, nine of—that may precede a determiner. Hence we can rewrite the final rule for a determiner:

\[
\text{Det} \rightarrow \text{(pre-Art)} + \text{Det}
\]

Noun phrases with determiner and prearticle. The following phrases show how a prearticle may be used with a determiner and a noun phrase:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP} & \quad \text{onlookers} \\
\text{numDet} + \text{NP} & \quad \text{nine onlookers} \\
\text{nonDet:def} + \text{numDet} + \text{NP} & \quad \text{the nine onlookers} \\
\text{preArt} + \text{nonDet:def} + \text{numDet} + \text{NP} & \quad \text{some of the nine onlookers} \\
\text{preArt} + \text{nonDet:demon} + \text{numDet} + \text{NP} & \quad \text{some of those nine onlookers}
\end{align*}
\]

Noun-Phrase Modifiers

Modifiers. In Standard English, a one-word modifier (Mod) may precede the noun phrase and follow a determiner. There can also be multiple modifiers. The basic rule is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP} & \rightarrow (\text{Det}) + (\text{Mod}) + \text{N} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{N} \quad \text{sky} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{nonDet:def} + \text{N} \quad \text{the sky} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{Mod} + \text{N} \quad \text{blue sky} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{nonDet:def} + \text{Mod} + \text{N} \quad \text{the blue sky} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{nonDet:def} + \text{Mod} + \text{Mod} + \text{N} \quad \text{the endless blue sky}
\end{align*}
\]

Compound nouns. In an open compound noun, which is composed of a noun immediately followed by a modifier, such as body politic or battle royal, the modifier is part of the noun, not a separate element, so there is no separate rule for it. (In traditional grammar, the adjectives here—politic and royal—are termed postpositive adjectives because they are placed after the nouns.)
When all the rules are combined, a noun phrase is more fully defined.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP} & \rightarrow (\text{preArt}) + (\text{Det}) + (\text{Mod}) + \text{N} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{N} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{Mod} + \text{N} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{nonDet}:\text{demon} + \text{Mod} + \text{N} \\
\text{NP} & \rightarrow \text{preArt} + \text{nonDet}:\text{demon} + \text{Mod} + \text{N}
\end{align*}
\]

sugar
brown sugar
this brown sugar
part of this brown sugar

The basic rules covered to this point don’t reflect certain qualities in the noun phrase, such as number, person, and possession. In transformational grammar, these are shown in a tree diagram so that the sentence’s developmental structure is clear. The simplest way to show a noun’s number and whether it is possessive is to use an indicator in parentheses. For example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{child (PLURAL)} & \rightarrow \text{children} \\
\text{pronoun (SINGULAR) (FIRST PERSON)} & \rightarrow \text{I} \\
\text{I (POSSESSIVE)} & \rightarrow \text{my}
\end{align*}
\]

Verb Phrases

Verb phrases are much more complex than noun phrases. Different types of verbs behave differently and have different effects on other parts of the phrase. Hence verb phrases generate many more rules. This section surveys only the basic rules and reveals how quickly they become complicated.

The verb phrase (VP) consists of the verb or verbs plus other elements and functions as the sentence’s predicate. The simplest predicate is a principal verb standing alone or a principal verb plus an object (consisting of a noun phrase). The simple predicate is also termed a verbal (V). Not every kernel sentence will have an object, so the rule looks like this:

\[
\text{VP} \rightarrow \text{V} + (\text{NP})
\]

A principal verb (e.g., leave, practice, swim, write) is the simplest verb phrase (VP).

\[
\text{VP} \rightarrow \text{V}
\]
Auxiliaries. In transformational grammar, auxiliary refers to any verb in addition to the principal verb when that verb’s form is controlled by the subject and may cause a change in the verbal. There are three types: (1) auxiliary verbs, (2) be-verbs, and (3) have. The auxiliary always precedes the principal verb. For each type, the symbol “Aux” is used in the rewritten formula for a verb phrase:

$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ (\text{Aux}) + V$$

Auxiliary verbs. An ordinary auxiliary verb (Aux:a)—such as must, would, may—has no effect on the principal verb’s infinitive form.

$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ V \quad \text{go}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:a} + V \quad \text{must go}$$

But be-verbs (Aux:be) cause the principal verb to take an -ing ending.

$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ V \quad \text{go}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:be} + \text{Ving} \quad \text{be going}$$

“Have.” Although have (Aux:have) is classified as an auxiliary verb, it causes the principal verb to take the form of its past participle. The change in the verb is indicated by showing the verb’s tense.

$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ (\text{Aux:have}) + V(\text{present perfect}) \quad \text{go}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:have} + V(\text{present perfect}) \quad \text{have gone}$$

Multiple auxiliaries. Auxiliary verbs and either have or be may be used in the same sentence. The principal verb is still affected by the have or be.

$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ V \quad \text{(We) go.}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:a} + V \quad \text{(We) must go.}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:be} + \text{Ving} \quad \text{(We) are going.}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:have} +$$
$$\quad V(\text{present perfect}) \quad \text{(We) have gone.}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:a} + \text{Aux:be} + \text{Ving} \quad \text{(We) must be going.}$$
$$\text{VP } \rightarrow \ \text{Aux:a} + \text{Aux:have} +$$
$$\quad V(\text{present perfect}) \quad \text{(We) must have gone.}$$
“Be” as a principal verb. A be-verb is not always an auxiliary. When there is no other principal verb, the be-verb functions as the principal verb and behaves like any other principal when coupled with auxiliaries:

\[
\begin{align*}
VP & \rightarrow V \quad (I \text{ am (a dancer.)}) \\
VP & \rightarrow \text{Aux:a + V} \quad (I \text{ will be (a dancer.)}) \\
VP & \rightarrow \text{Aux:have + V} \quad (I \text{ have been (a dancer.)})
\end{align*}
\]

Different Types of Principal Verbs

Generally. Principal verbs generally fall into one of three categories: transitive (Vt), which must have a direct object, intransitive (Vi), which never takes an object, and linking (Vlk), which takes a predicate nominative, such as a noun phrase, or a predicate adjective (Adj). (Some verbs can be transitive or intransitive. See § 139.) You can distinguish between a transitive verb and a linking principal verb by seeing whether the sentence can be rewritten in passive voice. Only transitive verbs can be grammatically expressed in the passive voice. For example, Maribel caught the mistake bears essentially the same meaning as the passive-voice sentence the mistake was caught by Maribel. Both sentences are grammatical. But in Nancy became a real-estate agent, the phrase real-estate agent is a predicate nominative (Nancy and real-estate agent refer to the same person), and *a real-estate agent was become by Nancy isn’t idiomatically possible. So catch is a transitive verb and become is a linking verb. The rule for a principal verb, then, is:

\[
V \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
Vt \\
Vi \\
Vlk
\end{cases}
\]

And in the verbal:

\[
\begin{align*}
VP & \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
Vi & (Ted) \text{ swims.} \\
Vlk + NP & (Sue) \text{ is a conductor.} \\
Vlk + Adj & (She) \text{ seems tired.} \\
Vt + NP & (He) \text{ builds a house.}
\end{cases}
\end{align*}
\]

Middle verbs. Some verbs, such as cost, fit, have, resemble, suit, and weigh, must have a direct object but can’t be grammatically rewritten in the passive voice. A native speaker will produce a sentence like I have a head cold but never A head cold is had by me. So these are not true transitive
verbs. But they also never take a predicate nominative, so neither are they linking verbs. Because they fall somewhere between the two types, we call them *middle verbs* \((V_{mid})\).

\[
VP \rightarrow V_{mid} + NP
\]

(It) cost a fortune.

395 **Special subtypes.** Some transitive verbs can take either one object (a direct object) or two objects (one indirect, one direct). These verbs have two subtypes. When a verb has two objects and they are not appositives, then when the phrasing is in the passive voice, the direct object exchanges roles with the subject. It’s also possible for the indirect object to become the subject, although the sentence may sound archaic. We label this subtype \(V_{t:do}\). When a verb has two objects that are not appositives, a passive-voice phrasing has the indirect object become the subject. This verb subtype is \(V_{t:ido}\).

\[
K \rightarrow NP + V_{t:do} + NP + NP
\]

Active: My best friend sold me the painting.
Passive: The painting was sold to me by my best friend.
Passive: I was sold the painting by my best friend.

\[
K \rightarrow NP + V_{t:ido} + NP + NP
\]

Active: The voters elected Green mayor.
Passive: Green was elected mayor by the voters.

### Adverbials

396 **Adverbials with principal verbs.** Adverbials may be adverbs or other parts of speech functioning as adverbs, including prepositional phrases and noun phrases. The placement of an adverbial depends on the adverbial’s function and the type of verb. Not every verb has an adverbial, so this element is optional in kernel sentences.

397 **Simple adverbs.** A one-word adverb \((Adv)\) may immediately follow or precede a principal verb or may appear after a noun phrase that follows the principal verb or immediately after the first auxiliary in the verb phrase. Sometimes, too, the adverb may appear between the *to* and the infinitive \((V_{:inf})\). When an infinitive is split, the *to* becomes a particle \((Part)\). So we can further define a verbal this way:
Syntax

V → Adv + V  
(you) hesitantly refuse

V → V + Adv  
(you) drive carefully

V → Part + V:inf + Adv  
(I tried) to ask politely

V → Part + Adv + V:inf  
(I tried) to politely ask

V → V + NP + Adv  
(you) see your doctor alone

V → Aux:a + Adv + V  
(it) will not rain

V → Aux:have + Adv + V  
(it) has not rained

V → Aux:be + Adv + V  
(it) is not raining

V → Aux:a + Adv + Aux:be + V  
(it) must not be raining

398 Functions of simple adverbs. One-word adverbs can be more narrowly identified as adverbs of manner (Adv:man), time (Adv:time), place (Adv:place), and so on.

399 Prepositional phrase as adverbial. A prepositional phrase (PP) is any phrase that begins with a preposition and contains a noun phrase, which is the object of the preposition. As an adverbial (PP:adv), it usually follows the principal verb.

VP → (Aux) + V + (PP:adv)

400 Noun phrase as adverbial. A noun phrase may function as an adverbial when it is the object of a prepositional phrase from which the preposition has been dropped. A noun-phrase adverbial usually indicates manner (NPAdv:man), or especially time (NPAdv:time). A noun-phrase adverbial of time may be a noun phrase coupled with an adverb {last Monday} or a noun phrase followed by an adverb such as ago {a long time ago}.

Ving + NPAdv:man  
(We’re) going step by step.

Aux:a + V + NPAdv:time  
(The package) will arrive later tomorrow.

V(past) + NPAdv:time  
(We) finished an hour ago.

401 Adverbials of place, time, and manner. Three types of adverbials—manner (Adv:man), place (Adv:place), and time (Adv:time)—occur with transitive and intransitive verbs.

402 Number and tense of verbs. The general rules cover all possible sentences in present tense, but verbs must also be conjugated for number and for tense. The quality of the verb is stated in parentheses beside the affected word. For example, the basic rule for a sentence is expressed as NP + VP, but the underlying structure might be expressed as nonDet:def + num-Det + N(plural) + V(past) + nonDet:indef + Mod + N.
The four children rang a garden bell.

Transformations

403 Deep and surface structure. When we talk about what a speaker intends a sentence to mean, we are referring to the sentence’s deep structure. The sentence actually produced by the speaker and the meaning perceived by others is the surface structure.

404 Transformational rules. The rules of grammar that govern how words are inflected and their placement in sentences are transformational rules. For example, in English grammar, kernel sentences must consist of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). The rule is \( K \rightarrow NP + VP \).

405 Surface transformation. Once a sentence is formed, it may need an additional transformation to make it a question or a command, or to change its form from active to passive or vice versa. In the process of surface transformation, sentences are transformed from one form into another by rearranging, adding, or deleting small sentence elements.

All I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of the sentence, as definitely and inflexibly as the position of a camera alters the meaning of the object photographed. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences.

—Joan Didion

"Why I Write"
Simple-question transformation. Kernel sentences can be transformed into interrogative kernel sentences (IK) by rearranging the word order so that a verbal precedes the subject. The verbal remains where it was in the kernel sentence but may change form depending on the auxiliary.

Ex: kernel: There are snacks for the children.
(K → NP + VP)
interrogative: Are there snacks for the children?
(IK → VP + NP)

Ex: kernel: Al should paint the room.
(K → NP + VP)
interrogative: Should Al paint the room?
(IK → Aux:modal + NP + VP)

Ex: kernel: Al paints the walls.
(K → NP + VP)
interrogative: Does Al paint the walls?
(IK → Aux:do + NP + VP)

Ex: kernel: Al paints the room.
(K → NP + VP)
interrogative: Is Al painting the room?
(IK → Aux:be + NP + VP)

Ex: kernel: Al painted the room.
(K → NP + VP)
interrogative: Has Al painted the room?
(IK → Aux:have + NP + VP)

Imperative transformation. Kernel sentences can be transformed into imperative statements by deleting the subject and any auxiliary attached to the verbal.

Ex: kernel: You must file this.
(NP + VP)

imperative: File this.
(VP)
Active-to passive-voice transformation and back again. You form the passive voice by transposing the noun phrases (subject and direct object), putting a preposition (usually *by*) before the former subject, and coupling the past-participial form of the verbal with the appropriate *be*-verb.

active: Gordon prepared a gourmet dinner.
(NP:subj + V + NP:obj)

passive: The gourmet dinner was prepared by Gordon.
(NP:obj + be V(past) + V(past) + prep + NP:subj)

passive: The winning goal was kicked by Beckham.
(NP:obj + be V(past) + V(past) + prep + NP:subj)

active: Beckham kicked the winning goal.
(NP:subj + V + NP:obj)

For more on these transformations—and on the curious uses of *subject* and *object* in the depictions above—see § 413.

Spotting Ambiguities

Identification. Ambiguity is difficult or impossible to see in traditional Reed–Kellogg diagrams. As you will see in the next few sections, tree diagrams can help make ambiguity apparent because ambiguous sentences often have at least two logical diagrams.

Lexical ambiguity. Lexical or semantic ambiguity occurs when a word (or phrase) may have more than one meaning. A diagram won’t reveal the source of the problem if the word or phrase that is ambiguous serves the same function in both meanings.

For instance, in *We stopped at the bank*, the noun *bank* could refer to a financial institution or the land beside a river. A diagram can’t distinguish between them, since this is a problem not of grammar or syntax but of diction, or word choice, and so is beyond the scope of sentence diagramming.

But if the word that causes the ambiguity has different functions, then the sentence can be usefully diagrammed. For example, in *They are baking pots*, we can’t readily determine what function *baking* is serving: is it a verb or an adjective? We also can’t tell who or what *they* refers to. Should the sentence be read as “They (people) are baking the pots (in
a kiln)” or “They (the pots) are pots for baking (food)”?

The diagrams reveal the ambiguity:

They are baking pots (baking is a verb; they refers to someone).

They are baking pots (baking is an adjective; they refers to the pots).

411 Surface-structure ambiguity. In surface-structure ambiguity, a sentence has all the necessary elements but has two possible diagrams that reflect different interpretations. For example, in *The treasurer could not approve the budget*, does the sentence mean that the treasurer was unable to approve the budget or might yet disapprove it? The diagrams show the ambiguity:

The word *not* might modify *could*:

The treasurer could not approve the budget.
But with a different sense, the word *not* might modify *approve*:

```
S
  NP  V:aux  VP
   |       |     Adv  V  nonDet  N
   The treasurer  could  not  approve  the  budget.
```

412 **Deep-structure ambiguity.** When a sentence is being formed mentally, a deep-structure ambiguity may occur because elements have been omitted or are not grouped in a way that shows the intended meaning. For example, the statement *The chicken is ready to eat* could mean that *the chicken is ready to be eaten by someone* (it’s been cooked) or that *the chicken is ready to eat something* (it’s hungry). The sentence has three possible tree diagrams. The diagrams have the same branches, but in the first, the surface-structure diagram, it’s hard to say what function some of the words are serving or what their meaning is. The deep structures reveal the source of the ambiguities. In those, you can see that minor edits would clarify the sentence’s meaning.

**Surface structure:** *The chicken is ready to eat.* It isn’t clear what the meaning of *to eat* is or how it is related to *the chicken.* It could be a prepositional phrase or an infinitive principal verb.

```
S
  NP  V:aux  VP
   |       |     Det  N  V  Mod  Prep  V
   The  chicken  is  ready  to  eat.
```
**Deep structure 1: The chicken is ready to be eaten (by somebody).**
This possible meaning is in passive voice. The actor is not named. The *be*-verb is an auxiliary, and *to be eaten* is an infinitive.

```plaintext
S
  NP
    Det N Aux:be Adj Phrase
      Adj

The chicken is ready (for somebody) to eat.
```

**Deep structure 2: The chicken is ready to eat (something).** This possible meaning is in active voice. *The chicken* is the actor. The *be*-verb is the principal verb, and *to* is a preposition heading the adverbial phrase *to eat (something)*.

```plaintext
S
  NP
    Det N Aux:be Adj PP
      Prep V N

The chicken is ready to eat (something).
```

**Active- and passive-voice diagrams.** Passive-voice sentences are more complicated than those in active voice. When both the actor and recipient of the action are identified, the emphasis may shift slightly to whichever is named first. But unless you have a good reason to emphasize the object instead of the actor, the active voice is preferable. Diagrams show how much easier it is to understand an active-voice sentence and how much more work is required to produce a passive-voice sentence:
Active voice: *Daisy stopped Willard.*

Active-voice rules:
- Actor is subject.
- Direct object receives or is affected by the action.

```
S
  NP
    N(actor)  V(past)  NP
      Daisy    stopped    N(object)  Willard.
```

Passive voice: *Willard was stopped by Daisy.*

Passive-voice rules:
- Object receiving or affected by the action is the subject.
- Principal verb must have a *be*-verb auxiliary.
- Actor is object of a preposition.
- Prepositional phrase follows verb and acts as adverb.

```
S
  NP
    N(object)  Aux:be  V(past)  PP
      Willard  was  stopped  by    N(actor)  Daisy.
```

Both diagrams have the same key elements in common, although they are arranged differently: *stop (V)(past), Willard (N)(object), and Daisy (N)(actor).*

One confusing aspect of many transformational approaches is that the word *object* is used for the recipient of the action—and in a passive-voice construction, it is actually the subject of the sentence. *Object*, then, bears a counterintuitive sense to anyone familiar with traditional grammatical approaches. In the sentence above, *Willard* is conventionally termed the grammatical subject and *Daisy* is the object of a preposition.

So be wary of the terminological transformations that occur in studying one grammatical approach as opposed to another. Again, the extensive glossary at the back of this book should prove useful to you.
III. Word Formation

Generally. Word formation, also known as *morphology*, has already come up in the discussions about the parts of speech. The inflections of verbs, the special suffixes of nouns and verbs, and the -ly suffix for most adverbs are all matters of word formation. It is the study of morphemes—the component parts of words. For example, *un-mis-giv-ing-ly* contains five morphemes: two prefixes, a base word or stem (*give*), and two suffixes. One of morphology’s major aims is studying how specific morphemes, and changes in morphemes, express grammatical categories and relationships, such as part of speech, case, number, and tense. This subfield is called *inflectional morphology*, or *accidence*.

Criteria for morphemes. A morpheme is a short word segment that meets three tests: (1) it’s a word or word part that conveys meaning; (2) it can’t be divided into smaller meaningful segments without losing its meaning or leaving meaningless remainders; and (3) it retains a fairly stable meaning regardless of the context in which it appears.

Consider as an example the word *strength*. First, it’s a word that is listed in every English-language dictionary. Second, it can’t be divided into smaller units that would have independent meanings. Third, it has a fairly stable meaning whether in reference to someone’s physical prowess, someone’s moral fiber or courage, the sturdiness of a metal, or the volume of a sound. Literally or metaphorically, the word conveys a fairly consistent set of analogous senses.

Take another example: the differences between *cheap*, *cheapen*, and *cheapened*. *Cheap* is one morpheme; *cheapen* consists of two (*cheap + -en*); *cheapened* consists of three (*cheap + -en + -ed*). To *cheapen* is to make something cheap: *-en* carries the sense “to make.” This morpheme occurs also in such words as *brighten*, *darken*, *enlighten*, *soften*, and *stiffen*. Hence
-en is a morpheme. So is -ed, the past-tense morpheme for countless regular verbs.

416 **Free and bound morphemes.** Morphemes are either free or bound. A free morpheme can be uttered meaningfully by itself. Simple words such as *itch* and *look* and *speak* are free morphemes. But a bound morpheme cannot be uttered by itself: it must be attached to one or more other morphemes to form a word. You would never say -er, -ly, -non, pre-, re-, or un- in isolation. Some words consist entirely of bound morphemes, examples being *combine*, *eject*, *internal*, *manual*, *modify*, *semblance*, *tenacious*, and *uxorial*.

417 **Stems and affixes.** Morphemes can also be classed as either stems or affixes. A *stem*, essentially, is the morpheme that carries the central meaning within a word {likable} {relist} {readability} {unmistakable}. Although most stems in English are free morphemes, some are not (e.g., the *dent-* in *dental*, *dentist*, *denture*, and *dentition*). These are called *bound stems*.

An affix is a bound morpheme appearing before or after a stem. English uses two types of affixes: prefixes, which occur before the stem {abnormal} {antithesis} {consent} {impersonate} {preview}; and suffixes, which occur after the stem {spillage} {licensure} {threads} {immortalize} {viewed}. Although prefixes are normally single or double in a given word—one double especially when *un-* is one of the two {unexpected} {undis solved}—suffixes may come in threes and fours {atomizers [3]} {personalities [3]} {normalizers [4]}. The long word *antidisestablishmentarianism* has three prefixes (*anti-* , *dis-* , *es-*) and three suffixes (*-ment*, *-arian*, *-ism*). Forming a word by adding an affix to another word is called *derivation*.

Some languages, such as Austronesian languages, use infixes, a third type of affix inserted within a stem itself. (Prefixes and suffixes, which attach before or after a stem, are collectively called *adfixes* by contrast.) Rare examples of English infixes do occur in slang. For example, -*ma-* can imply ironic pseudosophistication {edumacation}, and -*iz-* appears in hip-hop slang {hizouse} (though this doesn’t affect the word’s meaning). Some technical terminology, such as chemical nomenclature, also uses infixes.

A similar process, called *tmesis*, sometimes occurs in colloquial English, whereby a speaker inserts a word (typically profanity) between the parts of a compound or other polysyllabic word for emphasis {fan-freaking-tastic} {when-the-hell-ever} {a-whole-nother}. But since these are
whole words, not bound morphemes, they aren’t true infixes. And though some grammarians consider all but the last suffix in a string to be infixes (e.g., *-ify* and *-er* in *pacifiers* or *-ize* in *colonization*), a true infix must appear within a word stem. Hence true infixes in Standard English are virtually nonexistent.

**Inflectional and derivational suffixes.** An inflectional suffix attaches to a word to mark it as a particular part of speech. There are eight of them:

1. the noun plural *-s* {*cats*};
2. the noun possessive *-’s* {*cat’s*};
3. the present-tense verb’s third-person-singular *-s* {*permeates*};
4. the present-participial *-ing* {*permeating*};
5. the past-tense verb’s *-ed* {*permeated*};
6. the past-participial *-en* {*eaten*};
7. the comparative *-er* {*smarter*}; and
8. the superlative *-est* {*smartest*}.

All others are derivational suffixes, and they typically have three characteristics. First, they don’t close off a word—hence you can often add another derivational suffix, so that *pole* becomes *polar* becomes *polarize* becomes *polarization*. Second, a derivational suffix usually changes the part of speech of the word to which it’s added (note how this happened in the example of *pole* just given). Third, the derivational affixes that get added to specific words are known to competent users of the language but are often unpredictable. To make a noun from the verb *to establish*, we use *-ment*; for *to fail*, we use *-ure*; for *to act*, we use *-ion*; and so on.

**Compounding.** When two stems are combined to form a new word, they are said to be compounded. The stems may but don’t have to be the same part of speech. For example:

adjective–adjective: *bitter + sweet* → *bittersweet*

adjective–noun: *black + board* → *blackboard*
adjective–verb: white + wash → whitewash
noun–noun: basket + ball → basketball
noun–verb: tooth + pick → toothpick (though pick can also be a noun)
preposition–preposition: in + to → into
preposition–verb: out + run → outrun
verb–adverb: stand + still → standstill
verb–noun: work + room → workroom
verb–preposition: run + down → rundown
verb–verb: stir + fry → stirfry

A compositional compound is one whose meaning comes from the meanings of its parts. For example, *redbird* denotes a bird that is red, and *lawbook* denotes a book about law. (The process of making such compounds is called *agglutination*.) A noncompositional compound has a meaning that is different from those of its parts. For example, *breakdown* has never meant “a fracture in a downward direction.”

**420 Conversion.** The process of conversion occurs whenever a word is changed from one part of speech to another {we watched tomatoes being canned} {we pickled some pears} {that was a fine throw}. There are two types of conversion: complete and partial. In complete conversion, the word can take all the prefixes and suffixes used for a particular part of speech. A completely converted word has all the characteristics of the part of speech that it functions as and none of any other. For example, when *slow* is used as a verb, it can take suffixes to change the tense: *slow*–*slowed–slowed*. And when it’s an adjective, it can take suffixes to show comparison: *slow*–*slower–slowest*. In partial conversion, a word functioning as a different part of speech won’t take some characteristics (such as affixes) or function as only one part of speech. For instance, *boy* may be an adjective or a noun at the same time {boy king [the king is very young; the boy is a king]}

For more on noun conversions, see §§ 41–44; for more on adjective conversions, see §§ 133–36.

**421 Shortened forms.** Many words are truncated forms of longer words. Speakers of English are notoriously parsimonious with their syllables—hence they will lop off the beginning of a word (*bus* comes from *omnibus*, *copter* from *helicopter, plane* from *airplane*); the end of a word or phrase (*coed* comes from *coeducational student,* *co-op* from *cooperative,* *comp* from *composition,* *math* from *mathematics*); and sometimes both the beginning and the end of a word (*flu* comes from *influenza,* *fridge* from *refrigerator*).
There are technical terms denoting the processes resulting in clipped forms. If the initial syllable or syllables are dropped (phone), it’s called *aphaeresis*. If the middle of a word is dropped (ne’er) (*apothegm* — an epigram or aphorism), it’s called *syncope* or *hyphaeresis*. If the end of a word is dropped (ad) (oft), it’s called *apocope*. The sounds are typically lost because they are unstressed in speech. Compounds may also have clipped forms (compound-clipping). Part of one or each word may be dropped (*pop music* from *popular music*), and the result may form one word (*navicert* from *navigation certificate*, *sitcom* from *situation comedy*).

Clippings typically begin as slang within special groups that are so familiar with a word that hearing only part of it is sufficient to get the whole meaning. For example, a business plans to run an *ad* (*advertisement*), a doctor performs a physical *exam* (*examination*), and a paratrooper packs a *chute* (*parachute*). If clippings are adopted by the general public, they become part of standard language; otherwise, they remain group-specific slang.

### Elongations

Sometimes words get lengthened, usually unnecessarily. Hence *preventive* often becomes *preventative* — the addition of the extra syllable in the middle of a word being called *epenthesis*. There are many common forms of epenthesis in dialectal English. One is the addition of a consonant, such as *r*, to separate vowel sounds in adjacent syllables (*drawing* becomes */draw-ring/* or to lengthen a sound (*wash* becomes */warsh/*). Another is the addition of a consonant with a labial sound, such as *p* or *b*, before one with an alveolar (*something* becomes */somepthing/*) (*family* becomes */fambly/*). Or a vowel may be inserted between consonants (*athlete* becomes */athalete/*) (*realtor* becomes */realator/*).

Another type of elongation occurs with back-formed words, in which a longer form of a verb is created from a cognate noun. Hence *administrate* is a back-formation (or *denominal verb*) from the noun *administration* — the verb *administer* being standard. Other examples are *cohabitate*, *delimitate*, *filtrate*, *interpretate*, *revolute*, *solicitate*.

Still another type of elongation occurs with slangy infixes — discussed previously as *t mesis* in § 417.
Reduplicative forms. Many two-part words consist of repeated syllables, rhyming syllables, or syllables that sound like an earlier one but with a change in vowel or in an initial consonant. Many are solid:

- boohoo
- flimflam
- froufrou
- hobnob
- hodgepodge
- humdrum
- knickknack
- kowtow
- powwow
- riffraff
- zigzag

Others are treated as hyphenated compounds or even unhyphenated phrases:

- boo-boo
- boogie-woogie
- helter-skelter
- hocus pocus
- hurly-burly
- jiggery-pokery
- pooh-pooh
- willy-nilly

Loan translations. A loan translation, or calque, is a word formed by translating the elements of a foreign word to produce a word consisting of native elements—the word’s meaning generally corresponding closely to that of the foreign word. Hence masterpiece seems to have been formed in the 18th century to correspond either to the Dutch word meesterstuk or to the German word Meisterstück, both meaning “a piece of work so good as to qualify a worker as a master craftsman.” Other examples are standpoint from the German Standpunkt and homesickness from Heimweh.

Acronyms and initialisms. The two types of abbreviations known as acronyms and initialisms are similar but distinct. An acronym consists of the first letters of parts of a compound term and is treated as a single word {scuba = self-contained underwater breathing apparatus} {NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization}. Some acronyms, such as scuba,
laser, and radar, eventually become words. An initialism is also made of the first letters, but each letter is sounded separately {DNA = deoxyribo-
nucleic acid} {rpm = revolutions per minute}.

426 Neologisms. Neologisms, or newly coined words, may be introduced into
the language in many ways. They may be made from people’s names {the
special interests are trying to bork our nominee}, they may be portman-
teau words {this family uses hangry for someone who is angry because
of hunger}, they may be colorfully metaphorical {they’re all a bunch of
couch potatoes}, they may take nontraditional affixes {he’s become an
online shopaholic}, they may denote new technological phenomena {Dad
took a selfie!}, or they may be nontraditional collocations newly taken
to form a lexical unit {he’s doing some online training}. There are oth-
ers. Because lexicographers monitor new entrants into the language, it’s
always a good idea to consult an up-to-date, reputable dictionary. Often
it can take a long time for neologisms to settle into the language and lose
their newfangled feel. That is less true of technological innovations that
become an everyday part of people’s lives {cellphone} {handheld device}
{podcast} {webinar}.

Launching neologisms is no easy matter: reputable lexicographers
won’t admit a term into their dictionaries until it has proved itself by
gaining a significant degree of currency. How and why words take root in
the language—or fail to—remains something of a mystery. A successful
word somehow fills a need. Speakers of a language hear it and read it. If
enough of them find it serviceable—and “enough” is really not very many,
in real numbers—then it will be recorded in various writings, including
transcripts of the spoken word. Ultimately it will be enshrined in a dic-
tionary. But it’s a word, assuredly, long before that.
IV. Word Usage
Grammar vs. usage. The great mass of linguistic issues that writers and editors wrestle with don’t really concern grammar at all—they concern usage: the collective habits of a language’s native speakers. It’s an arbitrary fact, but ultimately an important one, that corollary means one thing and correlation something else. Yet there seems to be an irresistible law of language that two words so similar in sound will inevitably be confounded by otherwise literate users of language—a type of mistake called catachresis. Some confusions, such as the one just cited, are relatively new. Others, such as lay vs. lie and infer vs. imply, are much older.

Standard Written English. In any age, careful users of language will make distinctions; careless users of language will blur them. We can tell, by the words that someone uses and the way they go together, something about the education and background of that person. We know whether people speak educated English and write what is commonly referred to as Standard Written English.

Just as the best-written English reads as if it were spoken—it is speakable—the best-spoken English is refined enough that it could be transcribed with minimal editing. But few speakers approach that ideal—and no sensible person would want to at all moments. Even so, polished writers and speakers tend to narrow the gap between the written word and the spoken word.

Dialect. Of course, some writers and speakers prefer to use dialect, and use it to good effect. Will Rogers is a good example. He had power as a speaker of dialect, as when he said: “Liberty don’t work near as good in practice as it does in speeches.” And fiction writers often use dialect in dialogue. They may even decide to put the speaker’s voice in dialect. Such decisions fall outside the scope of this book.

Focus on tradition. In the short space of this chapter, only the basics of Standard Written English can be covered. Because no language stands still—because the standards of good usage change, however slowly—no guide could ever be written to the satisfaction of all professional editors.
What is intended here is a guide that steers writers and editors toward the unimpeachable uses of language—hence it takes a fairly traditional view of usage. For the writer or editor of most prose intended for a general audience, the goal is to stay within the mainstream of literate language as it stands today.
431 **Good usage vs. common usage.** Several first-rate American desktop dictionaries are now available. The best dictionary-makers are signaled by the imprints of Merriam-Webster, Webster’s New World, American Heritage, Oxford University Press, and Random House.

But one must use care and judgment in consulting any dictionary. The mere presence of a word in the dictionary’s pages does not mean that the word is in all respects fit for print as Standard Written English. The dictionary merely describes how speakers of English have used the language; despite occasional usage notes, lexicographers generally disclaim any intent to guide writers and editors on the thorny points of English usage—apart from collecting evidence of what others do. So *infer* is recorded as meaning, in one of its senses, *imply*; *irregardless* as meaning *regardless*; *restauranteur* as meaning *restaurateur*; and on and on. That is why, in the publishing world, it is generally necessary to consult a style or usage guide, such as *Fowler’s Modern English Usage* or my own *Garner’s Modern English Usage*.

The standards of good usage make demands on writers and editors, whereas common usage can excuse any number of slipshod expressions. Even so, good usage should make only reasonable demands—not setting outlandishly high standards. The purpose of the following glossary is to set out the reasonable demands of good usage as it stands today, with the benefit of longtime empirical study of the subject together with new tools that rely on big data.

432 **Using big data to assess linguistic change.** Since the late 20th century, so-called corpus linguistics has allowed researchers to assess the relative prevalence of words, phrases, and linguistic constructions within a huge sampling of texts. Many vast corpora have been assembled and used, but in recent years they have all been dwarfed by the Google ngram, which reflects a corpus of almost all the books published in the English language—about 5.2 million of them—from 1500 to (at present) 2008. The Google ngram allows you to search for a string of up to five words; to
limit the temporal range as you wish, as long as the years occur from 1500
to 2008; and to define the corpus as World English, American English,
British English, and even subsets such as English fiction. (To use
ngrams
yourself, simply search “ngram viewer” and start tinkering with searches:
it’s extraordinarily easy to use. For comparative searches, separate the
terms you’re searching for with a comma.) What is especially useful
for our purposes is that the word-frequency data reflect the considered
choices of published authors and professional editors. Because the type-
faces used since 1700 or so are more reliably susceptible of optical-char-
acter-recognition (OCR) technology, the ngrams reproduced throughout
the following glossary display mostly post-1700 results.

The numbers to the left of an online ngram are relatively unimportant
for understanding the significance of the graph: they indicate the fre-
quency of a given search term in
relation to the entire corpus and
are expressed in infinitesimal per-
centages. Although these numbers
are omitted from the ngrams here
reproduced, their data have been
translated into word-frequency
ratios—typically using the most
recent data available (from 2008).
What is important is the graph
line over time, indicating the
emergence of a search term and its
frequency in comparison with
another search term. Here you can
see which of two expressions has
preponderated in printed works over what period of time. From that
information about word frequency, it is possible to draw certain conclu-
sions—circumspectly, one hopes. You can certainly imagine how a rash
partisan might use ngrams to urge fallacious conclusions, as by arguing
that any evidence of use in print is enough to say that a given wording is
standard. Statistics are always subject to abuse and distortion. With pru-
dent use, however, ngrams introduce a healthy dose of empiricism to dis-
cussions of English usage.

The effect is to base linguistic judgments about word frequency, and
therefore about many elements of Standard Written English, on solid
empirical evidence. It is now possible, through big data, to know with
some certainty which usages are mainstream in Standard Written English

There are, of course, degrees of cor-
rectness, and there is no such thing as
speaking a language perfectly. There
must always be room, on the frontiers,
as it were, even among the best author-
ities on usage. But a certain minimal
conformity to rules of pronunciation,
syntax, and meaning is a necessary
condition for speaking a language even
“badly” or “incorrectly.” The idea of
somebody “getting everything wrong”
while speaking English makes no more
sense than that of somebody playing
the Moonlight Sonata but never hitting
a right note. We recognize “error” by its
presence against a background of rule
conformity.

—Max Black
The Labyrinth of Language
and which ones are linguistic outliers, variants, and anomalies—and to chart changes over time. Up to now, pronouncements of this kind were necessarily based on linguistic guesswork and extrapolation.

Note that some degree of savvy is necessary in framing ngram searches. You can’t get reliable results if you simply search for “home in, hone in” because of the innumerable false hits you’ll receive: every instance of her home in Malibu (or Katmandu, etc.) will skew the results. And the vast literature may contain instances of such constructions as he preferred to hone in his shed (hone his tools, that is). So the search terms must give enough context to retrieve useful results. Hence “home in on, hone in on”—or even the past-tense forms “homed in on, honed in on”—will yield reliable results. For past participles, the contextualizing auxiliaries are critically important: one can’t simply search for “swam, swum” to know whether swum is the predominant past participle, but instead “had swam, had swum.” Variations with has and have will yield similar results, as you can test for yourself.

**Preventive grammar.** If a technically correct form of words might sound pretentious, awkward, or untrue to your voice, try another phrasing that sounds more natural. Sentences like these may be strictly “correct,” but they’re odd:

- It is I to whom thanks are due.
- He gave it to me, who am grateful.
- Neither they nor he is responsible.
- Would it were she had been there!

Instead of trying to defend those sentences against someone who suggests they might be “wrong,” you’re better off not having the question arise at all, as by writing:

- They owe me a thank-you.
- He gave it to me—and I’m grateful.
- They’re not responsible, and neither is he.
- If only she had been there!

It is hardly good to use “defensible” language that sounds alien, creaky, or artificial to ordinary readers—that is, to ordinary educated readers. The best course is to find an alternative expression.
434  Glossary of troublesome expressions.

a; an. Use the indefinite article a before any word beginning with a consonant sound {a euphonious phrase} {a utopian dream}. Use an before any word beginning with a vowel sound {an officer} {an honorary degree}. The word historical and its variations cause missteps, but if the h- in these words is pronounced, it takes an a {an hour-long talk at a historical society}. The accompanying illustration shows this to be the strong trend since the early 20th century.

Likewise, an initialism (whose letters are sounded out) may be paired with one article, while an acronym (which is pronounced as a word) beginning with the same letter is paired with the other {an HTML website for a HUD program}. See § 111.

ability; capability; capacity. Ability refers to a person’s physical or mental power or skill to do something {the ability to ride a bicycle}. Capability refers more generally to power or ability to do something challenging {she has the capability to play soccer professionally} or to the quality of being able to use or be used in a certain way {a jet with long-distance-flight capability}. Capacity refers especially to a vessel’s ability to hold or contain something {a high-capacity fuel tank}. Used figuratively, capacity refers especially to a person’s physical or mental power to learn {an astounding capacity for mathematics}. It can also be used as a synonym for ability {capacity for love}, as a formal word for someone’s job, position, or role {in an advisory capacity}, as a word denoting an amount that can be produced or dealt with {full capacity}, or as a means of denoting size or power {engine capacity}.

abjure; adjure. To abjure is to deny or renounce publicly, esp. under oath {the defendant abjured the charge of murder} or to declare one’s permanent abandonment of a place {abjure the realm}. To adjure is to charge someone to do something as if under oath {I adjure you to keep this
secret} or to try earnestly to persuade {the executive committee adjured all the members to approve the plan}. Some writers misuse adjure for either abhor (= to detest) or require (= to mandate).

**about; approximately.** When idiomatically possible, use the adverb about instead of approximately. In the sciences, however, approximately is preferred {approximately 32 coding-sequence differences were identified}. Avoid coupling either word with another word of approximation, such as guess or estimate.

**abridgment.** So spelled in AmE. In BrE, the medial -e- is preferred (except in law).

**abrogate; arrogate.** To abrogate something is to repeal or disregard it {abrogate a treaty} {abrogate one’s duties}. To arrogate something is to take it (usu. an office or a responsibility) for oneself without the authority or right to do so {once in office, the former general arrogated full control of the military} or, less often, to give responsibility to someone else {arrogate the decision to a subcommittee}.

**abstruse.** See obtuse.

**accept; except.** To accept something is to receive it {accept this gift} or regard it as proper {accept the idea}. To except something is to exclude it or leave it out {club members will be excepted from the admission charge}, and to except to something is to object to it.

**acceptance; acceptation.** Acceptance is the general term, referring to approval, toleration, or admission {acceptance into law school}. Acceptation is a highly specialized term referring to the common (or “accepted”) meaning, usage, or pronunciation of a word {hopefully in its oldest acceptation denotes “in a hopeful manner”}.

**access, vb.** The conversion of nouns to verbs has long been one of the most common ways that word-usage changes happen in English. Today, few people quibble with using contact, debut, or host, for example, as a verb. Access can be safely used as a verb when referring to computing {access a computer} {access the Internet} {access a database}. Outside the digital world, though, it can be jarring and is best avoided. Cf. impact.
The ngram illustration is intended not to show whether a given usage is standard, but only the relative frequency of wholly unrelated terms—and the precipitate rise of *access* as a verb.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

**accord; accordance.** The first word means “agreement” {we are in accord on the treaty’s meaning} {we have reached an accord}. The second word means “conformity” {the book was printed in accordance with modern industry standards}.

**accuse; charge.** A person is *accused of* or *charged with* a misdeed. *Accused* is less formal than *charged* (which suggests official action). Compare *Jill accused Jack of eating her chocolate bar* with *Maynard was charged with theft*.

**acknowledgment.** So spelled in AmE. In BrE, the -dgem- spelling is preferred (except in law).

**acquiesce.** To *acquiesce* is to do what someone else wants or to passively allow something to happen. The connotation is usually acceptance without enthusiasm or even with opposition that is not acted on. The word traditionally takes the preposition *in* {the minority party acquiesced in the nomination}, although *to* is also accepted. *With* is not standard.

**actual fact, in.** Redundant. Try *actually* instead, or simply omit.

**acuity; acumen.** What is *acute* is sharp, and these two words apply to mental sharpness. *Acuity* most often refers to sharpness of perception—the ability to think, see, or hear clearly {visual acuity}. *Acumen* always refers to mental prowess, esp. the ability to think quickly and make good judgments.

**adapt.** See *adopt*. 
addenda (= [1] additional items, or [2] a list of additional items) is a plural {the addenda are in order}. The singular is addendum {we have a single addendum}.

addicted; dependent. In the best usage, one is physically addicted to something but psychologically dependent on something.

adduce; deduce; induce. To adduce is to give as a reason, offer as a proof, or cite as an example in order to prove that something is true {as evidence of reliability, she adduced her four years of steady volunteer work as a nurse’s aide}. Deduce and induce are opposite processes. To deduce is to reason from general principles to specific conclusions, or to draw a specific conclusion from general knowledge {from these clues about who committed the crime, one deduces that the butler did it}. In a related logical sense, to induce is to form a general principle based on specific observations {after years of studying ravens, the researchers induced a few of their social habits}. In its mere common uses, however, to induce is (1) to persuade someone to do something, esp. something unwise {nothing could induce me to try that again}; (2) to make a woman give birth to her baby, as by administering a drug {induce labor}; or (3) to cause a particular physical condition {induce vomiting}.

adequate; sufficient; enough. Adequate refers to the suitability of something in a particular circumstance {an adequate explanation} {adequate provisions}. Sufficient refers to an amount that is enough to meet a particular need (always with an abstract concept, a mass noun, or a plural) {sufficient water} {sufficient information} {sufficient cause} {sufficient resources}. Enough, the best word for everyday purposes, meaning “as much or as many as are needed or wanted,” modifies both count nouns {enough people} and mass nouns {enough oil}.

adherence; adhesion. With a few exceptions, the first term is figurative, the second literal. Your adherence to the transportation code requires the adhesion of an inspection sticker to your windshield.

adjure. See abjure.

administrator. See executor.

admission; admittance. Admission is generally figurative, suggesting particularly the rights and privileges granted with permission to enter {the student won admission to a first-rate university} or
the price paid for entry {admission is $10}. Admittance is more limited and more a matter of physical entry, but it too is tinged with the idea of permission {no admittance beyond this point}.

adopt; adapt. To adopt something is to take it as your own, most often a child but also a belief, cause, name, hobby, pet, and so forth. To adapt something is to apply it to a new use or to change it to make it suitable for a different purpose {adapting the car to run on ethanol}; the word is often used reflexively {adapt herself to a new job}.

adopted; adoptive. Adopted applies to a child or dependent {adopted son}. It is incorrect when applied to the ones who do the adopting; instead, use adoptive, the more general adjective corresponding to adopt {adoptive parents}.

adverse; averse. Though etymologically related, these words have undergone differentiation. Adverse means either “strongly opposed” or “unfavorable” and typically refers to things (not people) {adverse relations between the nations complicated matters} {an adverse wind blew the ship off course}. Averse means “feeling negatively about” or “having a strong dislike or unwillingness,” and it refers to people {he’s averse to asking for directions}.

advise; advice. To advise is to give advice. Some writers have trouble with words whose noun form ends in -ice and verb form in -ise. It might help to remember the pronunciation of -ice; if that doesn’t fit the word you’re writing, you know to make it -ise. Avoid using advise as a pretentious substitute for tell—save it for times when actual advice is given.

adviser; advisor. The first spelling has long been editorially preferred. Yet -or now rivals it in frequency, perhaps through the influence of the adjective advisory.

1960 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 4:1

affect; effect. Affect, almost always a verb, means “to influence or do something that produces a change; to have an effect on” {the adverse publicity
afflicted the election}. To affect can also mean “to pretend to have a particular feeling or manner” {affecting a Scottish accent}. (The noun affect has a specialized meaning in psychology: emotional expressiveness. Consult your dictionary.) Effect, usually a noun, means “an outcome, result” {the candidate’s attempted explanations had no effect} or “a change caused by an event, action, occurrence, etc.” {harmful effects of smoking}. But it may also be a verb meaning “to make happen, produce” {the goal had been to effect a major change in campus politics}.

affirmative, in the; in the negative. These are slightly pompous ways of saying yes and no. They result in part because people are unsure how to punctuate yes and no. The ordinary way is this: he said yes (without quotation marks around yes, and without a capital); she said no (ditto).

afflict. See inflict.

affront. See effrontery.

*after having [+ past participle]. Though common, this phrasing is redundant. Try instead after [+ present participle]: change after having passed the audition, she . . . to after passing the audition, she . . . . Or this: having passed the audition, she . . . .

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 11:1

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 11:1

afterward, adv.; afterword, n. The first means “later”; the second means “an epilogue.” On afterward(s), see toward.

*aged (four) years old. Redundant. Write aged four years, four years old, or four years of age.

agenda. Though the Latin etymon is plural—and although even the singular agendum sometimes appears in English—the noun agenda has taken on singular senses in Modern English: either “a list of subjects or problems to be dealt with” {high on the agenda} or, “collectively, the ideas, esp. social or political ideas, that a person or group hopes to promote”
{hidden agenda}. Even though some hard-core Latinists object to it, *agendas* is the plural in English.

**aggravate.** Traditionally, *aggravate* most properly means “to intensify (something bad)” {aggravate an injury} {an aggravated crime}. If the sense is “to bother,” try *annoy* or *irritate* or *exasperate* instead.

**aid; aide.** *Aid* can be a verb (= to help) or a noun (= assistance). *Aide* is a noun (= helper), as in *teacher’s aide*; in military parlance, it denotes someone assigned to help a superior officer {general’s aide}.

*ain’t.** This contraction is famously dialectal—a word not to be used except either in the dialogue of a nonstandard speaker or in jest.

**alibi.** Avoid this as a synonym for *excuse*. The traditional sense is “the defense of having been elsewhere when a crime was committed.”

**all (of).** Delete the *of* whenever possible {all the houses} {all my children}. The most common exception occurs when *all of* precedes a nonpossessive pronoun {all of us} {all of them}.

1803 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 210:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 8:1

**alleged.** Traditional usage applies this participial adjective to things, esp. acts {alleged burglary}, not to the actors accused of doing them {alleged burglar}. That distinction is still observed by some publications, but it has largely been abandoned. Although *allegedly* /ə-lej-əd-lee/ has four syllables, *alleged* has only two: /ə-lejd/.

**all ready.** See already.
all right. Two words. Avoid *alright—which has long been regarded as nonstandard.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 8:1

all together. See altogether.

allude; elude; illude. To allude is to hint at something indirectly {he alluded to the war by mentioning “our recent national unpleasantness”}. It’s often loosely used where refer or quote would be better—that is, where there is a direct mention or quotation. To elude is to avoid capture {the fox eluded the hunters}. To illude (quite rare) is to deceive {your imagination might illude you}.

allusion; reference. An allusion is an indirect or casual mention or suggestion of something {the cockroach in this story is an allusion to Kafka}. A reference is a direct or formal mention {the references in this scholarly article have been meticulously documented}. See reference.

alongside. This term, meaning “at the side of,” should not be followed by of.

a lot. Two words, not one.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 111:1

already; all ready. The first refers to time {the movie has already started}; the second refers to people’s preparation {are the actors all ready?}.

*alright. See all right.
altar, n.; alter, vb. An altar is a table or similar object used for sacramental purposes. To alter is to change.

alternate, adj. & n.; alternative, adj. & n. Alternate implies (1) a substitute for another {we took the alternate route} or (2) every other or every second {alternate Saturdays}. Alternative implies availability as another, usu. sounder choice or possibility {alternative fuel sources}. The noun uses are analogous {the awards committee named her as alternate} {we have no alternative}.

although; though. Euphony governs the choice. Although is somewhat more formal.

altogether; all together. Altogether means “wholly” or “entirely” {that story is altogether false}. All together refers to a unity of time or place {the family will be all together at Thanksgiving}.

alumnus; alumna; alumni; alumnae. Traditionally male, alumnus has in recent decades been considered unmarked or gender-neutral. The casualism alum is more obviously unmarked. Alumna is marked as feminine, as is its plural alumnae; both are used primarily at girls’ schools and women’s colleges and universities. The plural alumni is unmarked for sex, esp. where the people referred to are males and females. Using alumna as a singular {*I’m an alumna of that school!} is poor usage.

amend; emend. The first is the general term, meaning “to change or add to something written or spoken” {the city amended its charter to abolish at-large council districts} or “to make better” {amend your behavior!}. The second means “to remove one or more mistakes from (a text, etc.)” {for the second printing, the author emended several typos that had reached print in the first}. The noun corresponding to amend is amendment; the one corresponding to emend is emendation.

amiable; amicable. Both mean “friendly,” but amiable refers to people who are easy to like {an amiable waiter} and amicable to relationships that involve goodwill and a lack of quarreling {an amicable divorce}.

amid. See between.

among. See between.

amount; number. Amount is used with mass nouns {a decrease in the amount of pollution} {a small amount of money}. Number is used with count nouns {a growing number of dissidents} {the number of coins in your pocket}.

an. See a.
and. Popular belief to the contrary, this conjunction usefully begins sentences, typically outperforming moreover, additionally, in addition, further, and furthermore. (See § 277.) Yet it does not occur as a sentence-starter as often as but. See but.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books (And vs. Further): 19:1

and/or. Avoid this Janus-faced term. It can often be replaced by and or or with no loss in meaning. Where it seems needed {take a sleeping pill and/or a warm drink}, try . . . or . . . , or both {take a sleeping pill or a warm drink, or both}. But think of other possibilities {take a sleeping pill, perhaps with a warm drink}.

anecdotal. This adjective corresponds to anecdote, but in one sense the words have opposite connotations. An anecdote is a story that is thought (but not known) to be true. But anecdotal evidence refers to accounts that are suspect because they are not objectively verified.

anecdote; antidote. An anecdote is a story, usu. illustrative of a situation or of a person’s character. An antidote counteracts poison or, by extension, a problem or a bad situation.

angry. See mad.

anticipate. Avoid this word as a loose synonym for expect. Strictly, it means either “to foresee, take care of in advance, or forestall” {a good writer anticipates a reader’s queries as they arise} or “to do something before someone else” {ancient rhetoricians anticipated the findings of modern reader-expectation theorists}.

anxious. Avoid it as a synonym for eager. The standard sense is “worried, nervous, distressed.”

anyone; any one. The one-word anyone is a singular indefinite pronoun used in reference to no one in particular {anyone would know that}. The two-word phrase any one is a more emphatic form of any, referring to a
single person or thing in a group {do you recognize any one of those boys?} {I don’t know any one of those stories}.

anyplace. See anywhere.

anyway; *anyways. The former is standard; the latter, traditionally considered dialectal, has made inroads into the speech of many otherwise educated people born since about 1980. But it remains nonstandard.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 84:1

anywhere; any place. The first is preferred for an indefinite location {my keys could be anywhere}. But any place (two words) is narrower when you mean “any location” {they couldn’t find any place to sit down and rest}. Avoid the informal one-word *anyplace.

apparatus. Pl. apparatuses—not *apparati (false Latin). The correct Latin plural, apparatus (unchanged in form as a fourth-declension noun), is sometimes used in technical contexts. The false Latin *apparati typifies a common form of hypercorrection.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 21:1

appendix. Pl. appendixes or appendices.

appertain. See pertain.
appraise; apprise. To *appraise* is to assess or put a value on something {the jeweler appraised the necklace}. To *apprise* is to inform or notify someone about something {keep me apprised of any developments}.

appreciate. Three senses: (1) to understand fully; (2) to increase in value; (3) to be grateful for (something). Sense 3 often results in verbose constructions; instead of *I would appreciate it if you would let me know*, try *I would appreciate your letting me know* or, more simply, *please let me know*.

approve; endorse. *Approve* implies positive thought or a positive attitude rather than action apart from consent. *Endorse* implies both a positive attitude and active support.

approve (of). *Approve* alone connotes official sanction or acceptance {the finance committee approved the proposed budget}. *Approve of* suggests thinking favorably about {she approved of her sister’s new hairstyle}.

approximately. See *about*.

apt; likely. Both mean “fit, suitable,” but *apt* is used for general tendencies or habits {the quarterback is apt to drop the football}. *Likely* expresses probability {because he didn’t study, it’s likely that he’ll do poorly on the exam}. Although *likely* is traditional as a synonym of *probable*, many writers and editors object to its use as a synonym of *probably*.

Apt has two other senses: (1) “exactly right for a given situation or purpose” {an apt remark}, and (2) “quick to learn” {an apt pupil}.

area. Often a nearly meaningless filler word, as in *the area of partnering skills*. Try deleting the *area of*. In the sciences, however, its more literal meaning is often important and should be retained. Cf. *space*.

arrogate. See *abrogate*.

as far as. Almost always wordy. Avoid the nonstandard phrasing that uses *as far as* in place of *as for*—that is, avoid using *as far as* without the completing verb *is concerned* or goes. Compare *as far as change is concerned, it’s welcome* with *as for change, it’s welcome*.

as is. In reference to an acquisition, *as is* is framed in quotation marks and refers to the acceptance of something without guarantees or
representations of quality {purchased “as is”}. The phrase on an “as is” basis is verbose.

*as of yet. See *as yet.

*as per. This phrase, though common in the commercial world, has long been considered nonstandard. Instead of *as per your request, write as you requested or (less good) per your request. The recent innovation *as per usual for as usual is an illiteracy.

assault; battery. These are popularly given the same meaning. But in law assault refers to a threat that causes someone to reasonably fear physical violence, and battery refers to a violent or repugnant intentional physical contact with another person. In the strict legal sense, an assault doesn’t involve touching; a battery does.

assemblage; assembly. An assemblage is an informal collection of people or things. An assembly is a group of people, esp. decision-makers, organized for a purpose {a national assembly}, a meeting {regular public assemblies}, or the process of putting together the parts of something {instructions for assembly}.

assent; consent. The meanings are similar, but assent connotes a more affirmative agreement after careful consideration; consent connotes mere allowance, or sometimes grudging acquiescence.

as such. This pronominal phrase always requires an antecedent for such {satellite TV is a luxury and, as such, has a limited market}. The phrase is now often loosely used as a synonym for therefore. Avoid this misusage.

Poor: Science seeks out truth in an organized way and, as such, must be looked upon as an end in itself.

Better: Science is the organized search for truth and, as such, must be looked upon as an end in itself.

assumption; presumption. An assumption is not drawn from strong evidence; typically, it is a hypothesis that one accepts as true without definite proof {your assumption can be tested by looking at the public records}. A presumption implies a basis in evidence or at least experience; if uncontradicted, a presumption may support a decision {the legal presumption of innocence}.

assure. See ensure.

as to. This two-word preposition is best used only to begin a sentence that could begin with on the question of or with regard to {as to those checks, she didn’t know where they came from}. Otherwise, use about or some other preposition.
as well as. If a singular noun or pronoun precedes as well as, the verb following the phrase should be singular {Juan, as well as Eleanor, is eager to hear the recital}. That is, the phrase as well as introduces an aside. It doesn’t function like the coordinating conjunction and to create a compound subject.

*as yet; *as of yet. Stilted and redundant. Use yet, still, so far, or some other equivalent.

attain; obtain. To attain something is either to accomplish it through effort (e.g., a goal) {she soon attained a position of power}, or to reach a particular age, size, level, etc. {the stock market attained a new high this morning}. To obtain something is to get it or gain possession of it {obtaining information}. In best usage, you attain a degree and obtain a diploma. It can be a fine distinction, and in common usage the words are often treated as synonyms.

at the present time; at this time; at present. These are turgid substitutes for now, today, currently, or even nowadays (a word of perfectly good literary standing). Of the two-word versions, at present is least suggestive of bureaucratese.

at the time that; at the time when. Use the plain and simple when instead.

auger; augur. The spellings of these words can be tricky because they are pronounced the same \aw-gar\'. The tool for boring is an auger. Augur means “a clairvoyant or seer” (noun) or “to foretell” (verb). Augurs well is an idiomatic equivalent of bodes well. The related noun augury refers to an indication of what will happen in the future.

aveng[e], vb.; revenge, vb. & n. Avenge connotes a just exaction for a wrong {historically, family grudges were privately avenged}. The corresponding noun is vengeance. Revenge connotes the infliction of harm on another out of anger or resentment {the team is determined to revenge its humiliating loss in last year’s championship game}. Revenge is much more commonly a noun {they didn’t want justice—they wanted revenge}.

averse. See adverse.

avocation; vocation. An avocation is a hobby or pleasant pastime {stamp-collecting is my weekend avocation}. A vocation is one’s profession or, especially in a religious sense, one’s calling {she had a true vocation and became a nun}.

awhile; a while. The one-word version is adverbial; it means “for a short time” {let’s stop here awhile}. The two-word version is a noun phrase that
follows the preposition for or in {she worked for a while before beginning graduate studies}.

backward(s). See toward.

bacteria. This term is plural {the bacteria are no longer present}, the less-well-known singular being bacterium {a new bacterium has been discovered}. Avoid *this bacteria is for these bacteria are.

bale; bail. The more common term is bale (= a bundle or to form into a bundle, as of hay or cotton). Bail is most often a verb (= to drain by scooping, as of getting water out of a boat using a pail); it is also a noun and verb regarding the posting of security to get out of jail pending further proceedings. Bail is also used informally to denote leaving quickly or escaping {the couple bailed from the party}. To bail out someone (a phrasal verb) is to get the person out of trouble.

barbecue. Preferably so spelled—not *barbeque or *Bar-B-Q.

based on. This phrase has two legitimate and two illegitimate uses. It may unimpeachably have verbal force (base being a transitive verb, as in they based their position on military precedent) or, in a passive sense, adjectival force (based being read as a past-participial adjective, as in a sophisticated thriller based on a John le Carré novel). Two uses, however, are traditionally considered slipshod. Based on should not have adverbial force {rates are adjusted annually, based on the 91-day Treasury bill} or prepositional force (as a dangling participle) {based on this information, we decided to stay}. Try other constructions {rates are adjusted annually on the basis of the 91-day Treasury bill} {with this information, we decided to stay}.

basis. Much overworked, this word most properly means “foundation; the facts, things, or ideas from which something can be developed.” It often appears in the phrase on a . . . basis or some similar
construction. When possible, substitute adverbs (personally, not on a personal basis) or simply state the time (daily, not on a daily basis). The plural is bases {the legislative bases are complicated}.

bated breath. So spelled—not *baited breath. Someone who waits with bated breath is anxious or excited (literally “holding [abating] one’s breath”).

battery. See assault.

because. This word is normally a subordinating conjunction that introduces a dependent clause that expresses cause, reason, or motive {the grass is soggy because it’s been raining} {I re-sent the message because it kept getting bounced back}. When because follows a negative, it is preceded by a comma if the because-clause explains the negative {I didn’t call yesterday, because I was traveling all day [without the comma, the suggestion might be that I didn’t call for a different reason]}.

Some uses of because are casualisms best avoided in Standard Written English {he seemed drunk because he kept slurring his words} {just because I was late is no reason to be angry!} On *reason is because, see reason.

beggar, vb. Literally “to make very poor (i.e., to make into a beggar),” this verb commonly appears in such phrases as to beggar description (meaning “to be impossible to describe”) {her beauty beggars description} or to beggar belief {his lack of common sense beggars belief}. Avoid such distortions as *begs description and *begs belief.

begging the question. This phrase traditionally denotes a logical fallacy of assuming as true what has yet to be proved—or adducing as proof for some proposition something that’s every bit as much in need of proof as the first proposition. For example, someone might try to “prove” the validity of a certain religion by quoting from that religion’s holy text. But the phrase gets misused in many ways—as (erroneously) meaning “prompting a question,” “inviting an obvious question,” “evading a question,” and “ignoring a question.”

behalf. In behalf of means “in the interest or for the benefit of” {the decision is in behalf of the patient}. On behalf of means “acting as agent or representative of” {on behalf of Mr. Scott, I would like to express heartfelt thanks}.

bemused. This word means “bewildered, distracted, or confused.” It is not a synonym of “amused.”
benevolence; beneficence. Benevolence is the attribute of being disposed to kindness or capable of doing good {the priest’s benevolence was plainly evident}. It applies most often to people but may also apply to things that are beneficial. Beneficence is a major act of kindness or the performance of good deeds generally {the villagers thanked him for his beneficence}. The first term denotes a quality, the second conduct.

beside; besides. Beside is a preposition of position, whether literal {beside the road} or figurative {beside the point}. Besides may be a preposition meaning “other than” {who’s going besides us?} or an adverb meaning “also” or “anyway” {besides, who wants to know?}.

better. In the idiomatic verb phrase had better [+ verb], don’t drop the auxiliary verb had—though you may reduce it by contraction {I’d better go now}.

between; among; amid. Between indicates one-to-one relationships {between you and me}. Among indicates undefined or collective relationships {honor among thieves}. Between has long been recognized as being perfectly appropriate for more than two objects if multiple one-to-one relationships are understood from the context {trade between members of the European Union}. The ngram below may surprise you.

Amid is often used with mass nouns {amid talk of war}—though it can often be used with abstract nouns in the plural {resigned amid rumors of misconduct} {the investigation comes amid growing concerns}. Among is invariably used with plurals of count nouns {among the children}. Avoid amidst and amongst, especially in AmE.

1813 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 15:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

between you and me. This is the correct phrasing—not *between you and I, which is a classic example of hypercorrection. Both pronouns function as objects of the preposition between. See I. See also § 58.
This point, however, requires some elaboration. Corpus linguistics shows that when coordinated pronouns form the complement of a preposition, “hypercorrect nominative forms are generally rare.”\(^1\) The ratio of 18:1 in printed books confirms this conclusion. But in recent years some grammarians who have become apologists for the hypercorrect *between you and I* have gone so far as to call it “standard” and to disclaim labeling the usage *hypercorrect.*\(^2\) The idea is that with coordinated pronouns, both cases—nominative and objective—are so common as to make either choice “standard” variety. This lax evaluation underdescribes the threefold linguistic reality that (1) the traditional objective case of pronouns functioning as objects of a preposition continues to predominate in Standard Written English—and vastly so; (2) the most knowledgeable, refined speakers and writers choose the correct objective pronouns as objects; and (3) although the hypercorrect forms may be spreading, they continue to bespeak linguistic insecurity, which perhaps is also spreading as a result of maleducation.

True, Shakespeare put the phrase ’tween you and I in a character’s mouth, but that was at a time when English grammar was much less settled than it came to be in the 18th century. And in any event, that usage was an outlier even in the Elizabethan era. Further, the sociolinguistic point that Shakespeare might have been making by having a character mouth that phrase may well be lost in the mists of time. But just as Shakespeare used many locutions that would have been considered nonstandard by the 18th century, his use of ’tween you and I cannot be considered a significant datum in the modern argument.

**bi-; semi-.** Generally, bi- means “two” (biweekly means “every two weeks”), while semi- means “half” (semiweekly means “twice a week”). Because

---

these prefixes are often confounded, writers should be explicit about the meaning.

**biannual; semiannual; biennial.** *Biannual* and *semiannual* both mean “twice a year” {these roses bloom biannually}. But *biennial* means “once every two years” or “every other year” {our legislature meets biennially}. To avoid confusion, write *semiannual* instead of *biannual*, and consider writing *once every two years* instead of *biennial*.

**biceps.** Although *biceps* was traditionally a singular noun, the word is now regarded as plural (the more traditional plural being *bicepses* [anglicized] or *bicipites* [Latin]). The standard terms are now *bicep* as the singular and *biceps* as the plural.

**billion; trillion.** The meanings can vary in different countries. In the United States, a *billion* is 1,000,000,000. In Great Britain, Canada, and Germany, a *billion* is traditionally a thousand times more than that (a million millions, or what Americans call a *trillion*)—though the AmE sense now predominates even in BrE. Further, in Great Britain a trillion is traditionally a million million millions, what Americans would call a quintillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000). Although the American definitions are gaining acceptance, writers need to remember the historical geographic distinctions.

**blatant; flagrant.** An act that is *blatant* is both bad and plain for all to see {a blatant error}. One that is *flagrant* is done brazenly as well as openly, often with a stronger suggestion of shocking illegality or immorality {a flagrant violation of the law}.

**bombastic.** A *bombastic* speech or essay is pompously long-winded and self-important but essentially empty of real substance. The word has nothing to do with temper.

**bona fide; bona fides.** The first is the adjective meaning “good-faith” {that’s a bona fide contention—not disingenuous in the slightest} or “genuine” {that’s a bona fide first edition}. It’s pronounced /boh-nə fid/. *Bona fides*, a noun pronounced /boh-nə fi-deez/, means “sincerity and honesty of purpose” {he has thoroughly established his conservative bona fides}.

**born; borne.** *Born* is used only as an adjective {a born ruler} or in the fixed passive-voice verb *to be born* {the child was born into poverty}. *Borne* is the general past participle of *bear* {this donkey has borne many heavy loads} {she has borne three children}. It is also used as a suffix {foodborne} {vectorborne}.
both–and. These correlative conjunctions should frame matching syntactic parts. Hence don’t write *She is both a writer and she skis professionally, but instead She is both a writer and a professional skier. See §§ 266, 332.

breach, n. & vb.; breech, n. A breach is a gap in or violation of something {a breach of contract}, or a serious disagreement {healing the breach between the nations}. To breach is to break, break open, or break through {breach the castle walls}. Breech refers to the lower or back part of something, especially the buttocks {a breech birth} or the part of a modern firearm where bullets are inserted {the rifle’s breech}.

bring; take. The distinction may seem obvious, but the error is common. The simple question is, where is the action directed? If it’s toward you, use bring {bring home the bacon}. If it’s away from you, use take {take out the trash}. You take (not bring) your car to the mechanic.

broadcast. It’s an irregular verb that doesn’t change its form in the past tense or past participle. *Broadcasted is a solecism.

burn. Inflect this verb burn–burned–burned in AmE (burnt being the usual past form only in BrE). But in AmE and BrE alike, burnt is the past-participial adjective {burnt toast}.

but. Popular belief to the contrary, this conjunction usefully begins contrasting sentences, typically with greater strength and speed than however. Avoid putting a comma after it. As the following ngram shows, the sentence-starting but has been prevalent throughout literary history. It is an exceedingly useful device that one finds throughout the work of the best writers. Note, too, that the ngram numbers for however also reflect the unimpeachable uses of the word to mean “in whatever way” or “to whatever degree” {however trivial you may think the issue is, most people care about it}. See § 277. Cf. and.

1900 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 24:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

by means of. Often verbose. Use by or with if either one suffices.
by reason of. Use because or because of unless by reason of is part of an established phrase {by reason of insanity}.

cache; cachet. Cache, a count noun, refers either to a quantity of goods or valuables that have been stashed away or to a storage buffer within a computer. Cachet, generally a mass noun, refers most commonly to prestige or fetching appeal—or else a seal on a document or a commemorative design.

cactus. Pl. cacti or cactuses.

can; could. Can means “to be able to” and expresses certainty {I can be there in five minutes}. Could is better for a sense of uncertainty or a conditional statement {could you stop at the cleaners today?} {if you send a deposit, we could hold your reservation}. See § 200.

can; may. Can most traditionally applies to physical or mental ability {she can do calculations in her head} {the dog can leap over a six-foot fence}. In colloquial English, can also expresses a request for permission {can I go to the movies?}, but this usage is not recommended in formal contexts. May suggests possibility {the class may have a pop quiz tomorrow} or permission {you may borrow my car}. A denial of permission is properly phrased formally with may not {you may not borrow my credit card} or, less formally, with cannot or can’t {you can’t use the computer tonight}. See §§ 200–201.

candelabra. This is the plural, the singular being candelabrum, meaning “a decorative object that holds several lamps or candles.” The double plural *candelabras is a solecism.

cannon; canon. A cannon is an artillery weapon that fires metal balls or other missiles. A canon is (1) a general rule or principle, (2) an established criterion, (3) the sum of a writer or composer’s work, (4) the collective literature accepted by a scholastic discipline, (5) a piece of music in which a tune is started by one performer and is mimicked by each of the others, or (6) a Christian priest having special duties within a church or cathedral.

cannot. One word, except in expressions such as can not only . . . but also.

capability. See ability.

capacity. See ability.

capital; capitol. A capital is a seat of government (usually a city) {Jefferson City is the capital of Missouri}. A capitol is a building in which a legislature meets {the legislature opened its new session in the capitol today}. 
carat; karat; caret. Carat measures the weight of a gemstone; karat measures the purity of gold. To remember the difference, think of 24K gold. (In BrE, the spelling carat serves in both senses.) Caret is a mark on a manuscript indicating where matter is to be inserted; borrowed from Latin in the 17th century, it literally means “(something) is lacking.”

career; careen. The word career’s career as a verb meaning “to go full speed” may be about over—except in BrE (in which the two verbs contend in what is still a tight race). In AmE, its duties have been assumed by careen (traditionally, “to tip to one side while moving”), even though nothing in that verb’s time-honored definition denotes high speed. So today in AmE it’s typically careened down the hill but in BrE careered down the hill.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 7:1

caret. See carat.

case. This multifaceted word is often a sign of verbal inflation, especially in its uses as a near-synonym of situation. For example, in case means “if”; in most cases means “usually”; in every case means “always.” The word is justifiably used in law (in which a case is a lawsuit or judicial opinion) and in medicine (in which the word refers to an instance of a disease or disorder). Of course, the word can also denote a box or container {briefcase}, an argument or set of reasons {state your case}, or a grammatical word form of the type you studied in § 15.

cause célèbre. This word most strictly denotes a legal case, esp. a prosecution, that draws great public interest. By extension, it refers to a notorious episode, event, or even person. It does not properly denote a person’s pet cause. Though it retains its acute and grave accents, the phrase is now considered naturalized enough not to be italicized (except when called out as a phrase, as in the next sentence). Yet the plural retains its French form: causes célèbres.

censer; censor, n.; sensor. The correct spellings can be elusive. A censer is either a person who carries a container of burning incense or the
container itself. A censor is a person who suppresses objectionable subject matter. A sensor is a mechanical or electronic device for discovering light, heat, movement, etc.

censor, vb.; censure, vb. To censor is to review books, films, letters, etc. to remove objectionable material—that is, to suppress {soldiers’ letters are often censored in wartime}. To censure is to criticize strongly or disapprove, or to officially reprimand {the House of Representatives censured the president for the invasion} {in some countries the government censors the press; in the United States the press often censures the government}.

*center around. Although this illogical phrasing does have apologists, stylists tend to use either center on or revolve around.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 4:1

certainty; certitude. If you are absolutely sure about something, you display both certainty (firm conviction) and certitude (cocksureness). That fact you are sure about, however, is a certainty but not a certitude—the latter is a trait applied to people only.

chair; chairman; chairwoman; chairperson. Chair is widely regarded as the best gender-neutral choice. Since the mid-17th century, chair has referred to an office of authority. See § 439.
chaise longue. So written—not *chaise lounge, the product of metathesis resulting from folk etymology. Pl. chaises longues (/shayz long/).

1945 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 20:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 1.4:1

charge. See accuse.

chastise. So spelled—not *chastize.

cherub. The plural is cherubs when referring to adorable children but cheru-bim (a naturalized Hebrew phrase) when referring to angelic beings.

childish; childlike. Childlike is used positively to connote innocence, eagerness, and freshness {a childlike smile}. Childish is pejorative; it connotes immaturity, silliness, and unreasonableness {childish ranting}.

chord; cord. Chord denotes (1) a group of harmonically consonant notes {major chords} {minor chords} or (2) a straight line joining the ends of an arc (sense 2 being a technical term in mathematics and engineering). Cord is the word denoting a thick string or rope {spinal cord} {umbilical cord} {vocal cord}, an electrical wire that supplies electricity to an appliance or other equipment, or a quantity of firewood.

circumstances. Both in the circumstances and under the circumstances are acceptable, but under is now much more common in AmE. In predominates in BrE.
Word Usage

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 6:1

under the circumstances

in the circumstances

公民; subject. 在政府意义上，这些是近义词，应当区分。公民对一个国家的主权有隶属关系{公民德国}{一个公民}。一个主体对一个个体的主权有隶属关系，因为政府形式是君主制{一个主体女王}。

等级。这个单词指一个类别或一组事物，因为它们有相似性{乐器类}{乐器等级}。正确地，一个等级绝非一种{单簧管是一种木管乐器}或一种种类{鼓是一种打击乐器}。

经典;古典。经典意为“重要、权威、杰出”{《午夜情》是英格玛·伯格曼的经典电影}。古典应用于文学、音乐、设计等的传统文化集{古典希腊}{古典作曲家}或到明确或最早的特征化形式{古典EEC综合征}。

干净;清洁。尽管各种清洁剂被称为“清洁剂”，
clean 推翻了 cleanse 很久以前在该单词的字面意思。Cleanse 保留了盎格鲁-撒克逊语根意为“纯净”，其用法目前通常指的是精神或道德的净化。

cleave. 这个动词最初是两个不同动词，而这种差异反映在 cleave 的相反意义中：(1) 分割 {cleave 肉} 和 (2) 相互粘连 {站在雨中，他的衣服紧贴着身体}。这些动词的词形是(1) cleave, cleft (or clove), cleft (or cloven); and (2) cleave, cleaved, cleaved.
clench; clinch. *Clench, which connotes a physical action, normally involves a person’s hands, teeth, jaw, or stomach {he clenched his hand into a fist}. *Clinch, the more common term, has mostly figurative uses about finally achieving something after a struggle {clinched the title} {clinched the victory}. But there is an exception to the nonphysical uses of clinch: if two people clinch, they hold each other’s arms tightly, as in boxing.

climactic; climatic. *Climactic is the adjective corresponding to climax {during the movie’s climactic scene, the projector broke}. Climatic corresponds to climate {the climatic conditions of northern New Mexico}.

clinch. See clench.

*close proximity. Redundant. Write either close or in proximity.

closure; cloture. *Closure denotes the temporary or permanent closing or final resolution of something. Cloture denotes the parliamentary procedure of closing debate and taking a vote on a legislative bill or other measure.

cohabit; *cohabitate. *Cohabit is the traditional verb for living with another person in a sexual relationship without being married. *Cohabitate, a back-formation from cohabitation, is best avoided.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 6:1

cohabiting

*cohabitating

cohabiting

cohort. From the name for a division in the Roman army, cohort is traditionally a collective noun denoting a large group that is either undergoing a similar experience or being studied, as by sociologists or psychologists. But the accepted senses of the term have broadened substantially. Today it most often appears in AmE in a sense that was first recorded in 1952: as a count noun denoting a single colleague or friend, sometimes in a mildly disapproving way.

coin a phrase; coin a word. To coin something is to make it, as a mint stamps a coin. So to coin a phrase or a word is to create it, not merely repeat it.
coleslaw. So spelled—not *coldslaw.
collaborate; corroborate. To collaborate is to cooperate on some undertaking, esp. in the arts or sciences {the participants are collaborators}. To corroborate something is to back up its reliability with proof or evidence {the expert corroborated the witness’s testimony}.
collegial; collegiate. Collegial answers to colleague {a healthy collegial work environment}; collegiate answers to college {collegiate sports}.
commendable; commendatory. What is done for a worthy cause is commendable {commendable dedication to helping the poor}. What expresses praise is commendatory {commendatory plaque}.
common; mutual. What is common is shared by two or more people {borne by different mothers but having a common father}. What is mutual is reciprocal or directly exchanged by and toward each other {mutual obligations}. Strictly, friend in common is better than mutual friend in reference to a third person who is a friend of two others.
commonweal; commonwealth. The commonweal is the public welfare. Traditionally, a commonwealth was a state established by public compact or by the consent of the people to promote the general good (commonweal), and where the people reserved supreme authority. In the United States, the word is synonymous with state, four of which are still called commonwealths: Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is also a U.S. territory.
compare. To compare with is to discern both similarities and differences between things. To compare to is to liken things or to note primarily similarities between them, especially in the active voice {Are you comparing me to him? I hope not!}.
compelled; impelled. If you are compelled to do something, you have no choice in the matter {Nixon was compelled by the unanimous Supreme Court decision to turn over the tapes}. If you are impelled to do something, you still may not like it, but you are convinced that it must be done {the voter disliked some candidates but was impelled by the income-tax issue to vote a straight-party ticket}. Whereas compel connotes an outside force, impel connotes an inner drive.
compendious; voluminous. These are not synonyms, as many apparently believe. Compendious means “concise, abridged.” Voluminous, literally “occupying many volumes,” most commonly means “vast” or “extremely lengthy.”
complacent; complaisant; compliant. To be complacent is to be content with oneself and one’s life—with the suggestion that one may be smugly unwilling to improve or unprepared for future trouble. To be complaisant is to be easygoing and eager to please others. To be compliant is to be amenable to orders or to a regimen imposed by others.

compliment; complement. A compliment is a flattering or praising remark {a compliment on your skill}. A complement is something that completes or brings to perfection {the lace tablecloth was a complement to the antique silver}. The words are also verbs: to compliment is to praise, while to complement is to supplement adequately or to complete. In the grammatical sense, a complement is a word or phrase that follows the verb to complete the predicate.

The corresponding adjectives are complimentary, meaning (1) “expressing praise,” or (2) “given to someone free of charge”; and complementary, meaning (1) “going well together, despite differences,” or (2) “consisting of two geometric angles that, added together, take up 90 degrees.”

comprise; compose. Use with care. To comprise is “to consist of, to include” {the whole comprises the parts}. To compose is “to make up, to form the substance of something” {the parts compose the whole}. The phrase *is comprised of, though increasingly common, remains nonstandard. Instead, try is composed of or consists of. See include.

concept; conception. Both words may refer to an abstract thought, but conception also means “the act of forming an abstract thought.” Avoid using either word as a high-sounding equivalent of idea, design, thought, or program.

concerned. See as far as.

condole, vb.; console, vb. These are closely related but not identical. To condole with is to express sympathy to {community leaders consoled
with the victims’ families}. The corresponding noun is *condolence* {they expressed their condolences at the funeral}. To *console* is to comfort in a time of distress or disappointment {the players consoled their humiliated coach}. The corresponding noun is *consolation* {their kind words were small consolation}.

**confidant; confidante; confident.** A *confidant* is a close companion, someone (male or female) you confide in. *Confidante*, a feminine form, is a fading alternative spelling of *confidant* (used only in reference to a female confidant). It reflects French gender spellings. *Confident* is the adjective meaning “sure that something will happen in the way one wants or expects” or “sure that something is true.”

**congruous; congruent.** Both terms mean “in harmony, in agreement.” The first is seen most often in its negative form, *incongruous*, meaning “strange, unexpected, or unsuitable in a particular situation” {the modern house looks incongruous in this old neighborhood}. The second is used in math to describe triangles that are identical in their angles as well as in the length of their sides {congruent angles}.

**connote; denote.** To *connote* (in reference to language) is to convey a meaning beyond the basic one, especially through emotive nuance {the new gerund *parenting* and all that it connotes}. To *denote* (again in reference to language) is to specify the literal meaning of something {the phrase *freezing point* denotes 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius}. Both words have figurative uses {all the joy that parenthood connotes} {a smile may not denote happiness}.

**consent.** See *assent*.

**consequent; subsequent.** The first denotes causation; the second does not. A *consequent* event always happens after the event that caused it, as does a *subsequent* event. But a subsequent event does not necessarily occur as a result of the first: it could be wholly unrelated but merely later in time.

**consider.** Add *as* only when you mean “to examine or discuss for a particular purpose” {handshaking considered as a means of spreading disease}. Otherwise, omit *as* {we consider him qualified}.

**consist.** There are two distinct phrases: *consist of* and *consist in*. The first, by far the more common one, applies to the physical components that make up a tangible thing {the computer-system package consists of software,
the CPU, the monitor, and a printer}. The second refers to the essence of a thing, especially in abstract terms {moral government consists in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked}.

carousel. See condole.

contact, vb. If you mean write or call or e-mail, say so. But contact is undeniably a brief way of referring to communication without specifying the means.

contagious; infectious. Both broadly describe a disease that is communicable. But a contagious disease spreads by direct contact with an infected person or animal {rabies is a contagious disease}. An infectious disease is spread by germs on a contaminated object or element, such as earth or water {tetanus is infectious but not contagious}.

contemporary; contemporaneous. Both express coinciding time, but contemporary usually applies to people, and contemporaneous applies to things or actions. Because contemporary has the additional sense “modern,” it is unsuitable for contexts involving multiple times. That is, a reference to Roman, Byzantine, and contemporary belief systems is ambiguous; change contemporary to modern.

contemptuous; contemptible. If you are contemptuous, you are feeling and showing that you think someone or something deserves no respect. If you are contemptible, others will have that attitude toward you.

content; contents. Content applies to the ideas, facts, or opinions in a written or oral presentation {the lecture’s content was offensive to some who were present}. Contents usually denotes physical ingredients: the things that are inside a box, bag, room, etc. {the package’s contents were difficult to discern by X-ray}. If the usage suggests many items, material or nonmaterial, contents is correct {table of contents} {the investigative report’s contents}.

continual; continuous. What is continual may go on for a long time, but always there are brief interruptions, so that it can be characterized as
intermittent or frequently repeated {continual nagging}. What is continuous never stops—it remains constant or uninterrupted {continuous flow of water}. A line that is continuous has no gaps or holes in it.

**contravene; controvert.** To contravene is to conflict with or violate (the law, a rule, etc.) {the higher speed limit contravenes our policy of encouraging fuel conservation}. To controvert is to challenge or contradict {the testimony controverts the witness’s prior statement}.

**convince.** See **persuade**.

**copyright, vb.** This verb, meaning “to obtain the legal right to be the only producer or seller of a book, play, film, or other creative work for a specific length of time,” is conjugated copyright–copyrighted–copyrighted. Note the spelling, which has nothing to do with write.

**cord.** See **chord**.

**corollary; correlation.** A corollary is either (1) a subsidiary proposition that follows from a proven mathematical proposition, often without requiring additional evidence to support it, or (2) a natural or incidental result of some action or occurrence. A correlation is a positive connection between things or phenomena. If used in the context of physics or statistics, it denotes the degree to which the observed interactions and variances are not attributable to chance alone.

**corporal; corporeal.** What is corporal relates in some way to the body {corporal punishment}; what is corporeal has a physical form that can be touched {not our spiritual but our corporeal existence}.

**corps; core.** A corps is a body of like workers, as in an army, with special duties and responsibilities {Marine Corps} {press corps}. It is often misspelled like its homophone, core, which denotes the central or most important part of something {the core of the problem} {the earth’s core}.

**correlation.** See **corollary**.

**corroborate.** See **collaborate**.

**could.** See **can**.

**could have.** This phrase is often contracted to could’ve—but the homophone *could of* is an illiteracy.

**couldn’t care less.** This is the standard phrasing. Avoid the illogical form *could care less*—which, though never understood in its literal sense,
is a badge of linguistic carelessness. Try adding the word *possibly* after *couldn’t*. The less-than-overwhelming ratio in the ngram is doubtless attributable to the phrase’s being a colloquialism—one that rarely occurs in Standard Written English. Please care about even your oral phrasing. And if you habitually use the exclamation *Whatever!*, try replacing it with *I couldn’t possibly care less!*

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

---

councillor; counselor. A *councillor* is one who sits on a council {city councillor}. A *counselor* is one whose job is to help and advise people with problems {personal counselor}. In BrE, the spelling is *counsellor*.

couple. Using *couple* as an adjective has traditionally been regarded as non-standard phrasing—though it is increasingly common as a casualism. Add *of* {we watched a couple of movies}.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 8:1

---

When referring to two people as a unit {married couple}, the noun *couple* takes either a singular or a plural verb {the couple is happy} {the couple are honeymooning in Ravello}. When the pronoun *they* follows *couple*—if a pronoun is used at all, it is normally plural—the plural verb is preferable {the couple were delighted by their friends’ responses}.

court-martial. Two words joined by a hyphen, whether the phrase functions as a noun or as a verb. Because *martial* acts as an adjective meaning “military,” the plural of the noun is *courts-martial*.
third-person-singular verb is court-martials {if the general court-martials him, he’ll have much to answer for}. In AmE, the inflected spellings of the verb are court-martialed, court-martialing; in BrE, the spellings are court-martialled, court-martialling.

credible; creditable; credulous. Credible means “believable; deserving trust”; creditable means “praiseworthy; deserving approval”; credulous means “gullible; tending to believe whatever one is told—and therefore easily deceived.” The most common error involving cognate forms of these words is in the malapropism *strains credulity. If some form of that cliché must be used, it should read strains credibility.

creep—crept—crept. So inflected—except in the phrase creep out {that movie creeped me out!}.

crevise; crevasse. Size matters. A crack in the sidewalk is a crevice (accent on the first syllable) because it’s narrow and typically not very deep; a fissure in a glacier or a dam is a crevasse (accent on the second syllable) because it’s a deep open crack.

criminal. See unlawful.

criteria. This is the plural form of criterion (= a standard for judging): one criterion, two criteria. The double plural *criterias is a solecism.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 16:1

current, adj.; currently, adv. Often redundant when used with the present tense, these words should be omitted when possible {CMA is currently preparing to publish its membership directory} {he is currently working on a book about the world’s largest unsolved art heist}.

damp, vb.; dampen. Both words convey the sense “to moisten.” Damp also means “to reduce with moisture” {damp the fire} or “to diminish vibration or oscillation of (a wire or voltage)” {damp the voltage}. In a figurative sense, dampen means “to make [a feeling, mood, activity, etc.] less intense or enjoyable” {dampen one’s hopes}. 
Troublesome Words and Phrases

data. Though originally this word was a plural of datum, it is now commonly treated as a mass noun and coupled with a singular verb. In formal writing (and always in the sciences), use data as a plural. Whatever you do, though, use the term consistently within a single writing—either singular or (more formally) plural.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

deadly; deathly. Deadly means “capable of causing death” {deadly snake venom} or “likely to cause as much harm as possible {deadly enemies}. Deathly means “arousing thoughts of death or a dead body” {deathly silence}.

deceptively. This word is famously ambiguous. Consider: The towns are deceptively far apart from each other. Does this statement mean that they seem far apart but in fact are close? Or that they seem close but are in fact far apart? Avoid the word whenever it might cause confusion. Sometimes, admittedly, the word is clear {he answered the questions deceptively time after time}.

decide whether; decide if. See determine whether.

decimate. This word literally means “to kill every tenth person,” a means of repression that goes back to Roman times. But the word has come to mean “to inflict heavy damage or destroy a large part of something,” and this use has long been predominant. Avoid decimate when you are referring to complete destruction. That is, don’t say that a city was *completely decimated.

deduce. See adduce.

defamation; libel; slander. Defamation is the communication of a falsehood that damages someone’s reputation. If it is recorded, especially in writing, it is libel, otherwise, it is slander.

definite; definitive. Definite means “clear, exact” {a definite yes}. Definitive means either “not subject to further revision in the near future” {we have
a definitive agreement} or “of such high quality as to be unimprovable for a long time” {the definitive guide}.

defuse; diffuse. The first means "to reduce the danger or tension in (a situation, etc.)" {they defused a ticking time bomb}. The second means “to spread or disperse” {books diffuse knowledge}.

delegate. See relegate.

deliberate, adj.; deliberative. As an adjective, deliberate means either “planned; carefully thought out” {a deliberate response} or “slow and steady” {deliberate progress}. Deliberative means “of, characterized by, or involving debate”; the word most often applies to an assembly {deliberative body} or a process {deliberative meetings}.

denote. See connote.

denounce; renounce. To denounce is either to criticize harshly, especially in public {they denounced the prisoner swap}, or to accuse, as by giving incriminating information about someone’s illegal political activities to the authorities {denounced him to the police}. To renounce is either to relinquish or reject {renounced her citizenship} or to declare publicly that one no longer believes something or will no longer behave in some way {renounce violence}.

dependant, n.; dependent, adj. & n. In BrE, the first is the preferable noun {he claimed three dependants on his tax return}; the second is the adjective {the family has become dependent on welfare}. But in AmE, dependent is the usual form as both noun and adjective.

dependent, adj. See addicted.

depend on. Although upon is best reduced to on in this phrase, no further reduction is idiomatic: depend demands an on. Hence don’t write *That depends how we approach the problem, but rather That depends on how we approach the problem.

deprecate. In general, to deprecate is to strongly disapprove or criticize. But in the phrase self-deprecating—which began as a mistaken form of self-depreciating but is now standard—the sense of deprecate is “to belittle.” In the computer-software world, deprecate serves as a warning: a deprecated feature or
function is one that will be phased out of future release of software, so that users should quickly begin looking for alternatives.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 23:1

**derisive; derisory.** What is *derisive* ridicules as stupid or silly {derisive laughter}. What is *derisory* invites or deserves ridicule {that derisory “banana” hat}, especially when a laughably small amount of money is offered or given {my derisory paychecks}.

**deserts; desserts.** The first are deserved {he got his just deserts}, the second eaten {the many desserts on the menu}. *Just desserts* is a common misspelling (unless the meaning is “only postprandial sweets”).

**despite; in spite of.** For brevity, prefer *despite*.

**determine whether; determine if.** The first phrasing is irreplicable style; the second is acceptable as a colloquialism. The same is true of *decide whether vs. decide if*.

**detract.** See *distract*.

**device; devise.** Like other -ice and -ise words, the -c- marks the noun {mechanical device} and -s- the verb {devise a plan}. For a possible tip on keeping them straight, see *advise*.

**dice.** This word is plural: one *die*, two *dice* {the dice we were using weren’t legitimate}.

**different.** The phrasing *different from* is generally considered preferable to *different than* {this company is different from that one}, but sometimes the adverbial phrase *differently than* is all but required {she described the scene differently than he did}. In BrE, *different to* is
not uncommon—but it is distinctively BrE, whereas different from is standard everywhere.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books (from vs. than): 11:1

**differ from; differ with.** *Differ from* is the usual construction denoting a contrast {the two species differ from each other in subtle ways}. *Differ with* regards differences of opinion {the state’s senators differ with each other on many issues}.

diffuse. See defuse.

diphtheria; diphthong; ophthalmology. Don’t forget that these words have a *ph-* before the *th-* both orthographically and in speech.

disburse; disperse. To *disburse* is to distribute money, especially from a large sum available for some specific purpose. To *disperse* is (1) to spread in various directions over a wide area {the clouds dispersed} or (2) to cause to go away in different directions {police dispersed the unruly crowd}.

disc. See disk.

discomfort; discomfit. *Discomfort* is a noun meaning “ill at ease.” It can also be used as a verb meaning “to put ill at ease.” But doing so often invites confusion with *discomfit*, which originally meant “to defeat utterly.” Today it means “to thwart, confuse, annoy, or embarrass” {the ploy discomfited the opponent}. The distinction has become a fine one, since a *discomfited* person is also uncomfortable. *Discomfiture* is the corresponding noun.

discreeet; discrete. *Discreet* means either “careful about not divulging secrets or upsetting others” {a discreet silence} or “showing modest taste; nonostentatious” {discreet jewelry}. *Discrete* means “separate, distinct, unconnected” {six discrete parts}.

discriminating, adj.; discriminatory. The word *discrimination* can be used in either a negative or a positive sense, and these adjectives reflect that
ambivalence. Discriminatory means “reflecting a biased, unfair treatment” {discriminatory employment policy}. Discriminating means “analytically refined, discerning, tasteful” {a discriminating palate}.

disinterested. This word should be reserved for the sense “not having a financial personal interest at stake and therefore able to judge a situation fairly; impartial.” Avoid it as a replacement for uninterested (which means “unconcerned, bored”).

disk; disc. Disk is the usual spelling {floppy disk} {disk drive}. But disc is preferred in a few specialized applications {compact disc} {disc brakes} {disc harrow}.

disorganized; unorganized. Both mean “not organized,” but disorganized suggests (1) a group in disarray, either thrown into confusion or inherently unable to work together {the disorganized 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago}, or (2) a person who is exceedingly bad at arranging or planning things {disorganized students}.

disperse. See disburse.

dissociate. So written—preferably not *disassociate.

distinctive; distinguished; distinguishable. A distinctive feature is something that makes a person (or place or thing) easy to recognize {U2’s distinctive sound}. But it does not necessarily make that person distinguished (respected and admired) {the distinguished professor wears a distinctive red bow tie}. It does, however, make the person distinguishable (easy to see as being different from something else) — a term that does not carry the positive connotation of distinguished.

distract; detract. Distract (= to turn [something] away) is always transitive {distract attention}. Detract can be transitive (= to take [something] away) {grief detracts something from the buoyancy of life} but is more often intransitive (= to diminish) with from {detracts from the value}.

dive, vb. The preferred conjugation has traditionally been dive—dived—dived. The irregular form dove, though, has become the slightly predominant
past-tense form in AmE and should be accepted as standard: *dive–dove–dived*. Traditionalists will stick to the older inflection.

1911 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 6:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 1.1:1

**doctrinal; doctrinaire.** *Doctrinal* means “of, relating to, or constituting a doctrine”; it is neutral in connotation {doctrinal differences}. *Doctrinaire* means “dogmatic,” suggesting that the person described is stubborn and narrow-minded {a doctrinaire ideologue}.

**doubtfully, adv.** In recent years, this term has come into use as a sentence adverb (see § 211) functioning as a correlative of *hopefully* and as an antonym of *undoubtedly* {Will you be attending the party? Hopefully—but doubtfully [That is, I hope I’ll be able to go, but I doubt it]}. Should you abstain from this usage in Standard Written English? No doubt.

**doubtless, adv.** Use this form (it’s called a flat adverb [see § 215])—not *doubtlessly*.

**doubt that; doubt whether; doubt if.** *Doubt that* conveys a negative sense of strong skepticism or questioning {I doubt that you’ll ever get your money back}. *Doubt whether* also conveys a sense of skepticism, though less strong {the official says that he doubts whether the company could survive}. *Doubt if* is a casual phrasing for *doubt that*.

**downward, adj. & adv.** Preferably so written in AmE—not *downwards* (normal in BrE). See **toward**.

**drag.** Conjugated *drag–dragged–dragged*. The past form *drug* is dialectal.

**dream.** Either *dreamed* (more typical in both AmE and BrE) or *dreamt* is acceptable for the past-tense and past-participial forms.

**drink, vb.** Correctly conjugated *drink–drank–drunk* {they had not drunk any fruit juice that day}.

**drown, vb.** Conjugated *drown–drowned–drowned*. 
drunk, adj; drunken. Drunk describes a current state of intoxication {drunk driver}. (By contrast, a drunk—like a drunkard—is someone who is habitually intoxicated.) Drunken describes either a trait of habitual intoxication {drunken sot} or intoxicated people’s behavior {a drunken brawl}.

dual; duel. Dual is an adjective meaning “having two parts or two of something” {dual exhaust}. A duel is a fight between two people, esp. a formal and often deadly combat with pistols or swords.

due to. In strict traditional usage, due to should be interchangeable with attributable to {the erratic driving was due to some prescription drugs that the driver had taken} or owed to {thanks are due to all who helped}. When used adverbially, due to is often considered inferior to because of or owing to. So in the sentence Due to the parents’ negligence, the entire family suffered, the better phrasing would be Because of [or Owing to] the parents’ negligence, the entire family suffered.

due to the fact that. Use because instead.

dumb. This word means either “stupid” or “unable to speak.” In the second sense, the adjective mute is clearer (and less offensive) for most modern readers. But on the noun use of mute, see moot.

dwarf. Pl. dwarfs, not *dwarves.

dying; dyeing. Dying is the present participle of die (= to cease living); dyeing is the present participle of dye (= to color with a liquid).

each. As a noun serving as the subject of a clause, each takes a singular verb {each of them was present that day}. But when it serves as an emphatic appositive for a plural noun, the verb is plural {they each have their virtues} {the newspapers each sell for $3}.

each other; one another. Traditionalists use each other when two things or people are involved, one another when more than two are involved. See § 76.

eatable. See edible.

economic; economical. Economic means “of, relating to, or involving large-scale finances” {federal economic policy} or “profitable enough to
persist” {the business is no longer economic}. Economical means “thrifty; financially efficient; cheap and not wasteful” {an economical purchase}.

**edible; eatable.** What is *edible* is fit for human consumption {edible flowers}. What is *eatable* is at least minimally palatable {the cake is slightly burned but still eatable}.

**effect.** See affect.

**effete.** Traditionally, it has meant “worn out, sterile” or “lacking power, character, or vitality.” Today it is often used to mean “snobbish,” “effeminate,” or “unduly pampered.” Because of its ambiguity, the word is best avoided altogether.

**effrontery; affront.** Effrontery is an act of shameless impudence or shocking audacity. An *affront* is a deliberate insult.

d.e. See i.e.

either. Like *neither*, this word takes a singular verb when it functions as subject {is either of the spouses present today?}. For *either–or* constructions, see § 266.

**either–or.** For these correlative conjunctions, see §§ 266, 332.

**elemental; elementary.** Something that is *elemental* is an essential constituent {elemental ingredients} or a power of nature {elemental force}. Something that is *elementary* is basic, introductory, or easy {an elementary math problem}.

**elicit; illicit.** To *elicit* information or a reaction is to get it from someone, especially in challenging circumstances {to elicit responses}. Something *illicit* is disallowed by law or rule and usually also condemned generally by society {an illicit scheme}. Writers often mistakenly use the adjective *illicit* when they need the verb *elicit*.

**elude.** See allude.

**embarrass.** See harass.

**emend.** See amend.

**emigrate.** See immigrate.

**eminent; imminent.** What is *eminent* is famous, important, and respected {the eminent professor} or derives from high standing or authority {eminent domain}. What is *imminent* is looming, likely to happen soon, and almost always bad {imminent disaster}.

**emotive; emotional.** The first means “arousing intense feeling” {emotive language calculated to persuade the jury}; the second means “of, relating to, or involving intense feelings” {an emotional response}.
**empathy; sympathy.** *Empathy* is the ability to understand other people's feelings and problems {tremendous empathy with others}. *Sympathy* is generally compassion and sorrow one feels for another's misfortunes, especially on a particular occasion {our sympathies are with you}—but it can also be support for a plan or idea {right-wing sympathies} or a mutual understanding and warmth arising from compatibility {there was no personal sympathy between them}.

**endemic.** See epidemic.

**endorse.** See approve.

**enervate; innervate.** These words are antonyms. To *enervate* is to weaken or drain of energy. To *innervate* is to stimulate or provide with energy.

**enormity; enormousness.** *Enormity* means “monstrousness, moral outrageousness, atrociousness” {the enormity of the Khmer Rouge’s killings}. *Enormousness* means “hugeness” or “immensity” {the enormousness of Alaska}.

**enough.** See adequate.

**enquire.** See inquire.

**ensure; insure; assure.** *Ensure* is the general term meaning “to make sure that something will (or won’t) happen.” In best usage, *insure* is reserved for underwriting financial risk. So we *ensure* that we can get time off for a vacation, and *insure* our car against an accident on the trip. We *ensure* events and *insure* things. But we *assure* people of things by telling them what’s what, so that they won’t worry. The important thing to remember is that we ensure occurrences and assure people.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books (*ensure* vs. *insure*): 37:1
*enthused, adj. Use enthusiastic instead.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 15:1

enumerable; innumerable. What’s enumerable is countable and listable {the enumerable issues that we need on the agenda}. What’s innumerable can’t be counted, at least not practically {innumerable stars in the sky}. The second word is far more common. Because the two are pronounced so similarly, be wary of using them in speech.

envy. See jealousy.

epidemic; endemic; pandemic. An epidemic disease breaks out, spreads through a limited area (such as a state), and then subsides {an epidemic outbreak of measles}. (The word is frequently used as a noun {a measles epidemic}.) An endemic disease is perennially present within a region or population {malaria is endemic in parts of Africa}. (Note that endemic describes a disease and not a region: it is incorrect to say *this region is endemic for [a disease].) A pandemic disease is prevalent over a large area, such as a nation or continent, or the entire world {the 1918–19 flu pandemic}.

*equally as. This is typically faulty phrasing. Delete as.

espresso. So spelled—not *expresso.

et al. This is the abbreviated form of et alii (“and others”)—the others being people, not things. Since al. is an abbreviation, the period is required—but note that no period follows the et (Latin for “and”). Cf. etc.

e tc. This is the abbreviated form of et cetera (“and other things”); it should never be used in reference to people. Etc. implies that a list of things is too extensive to recite. But often writers seem to run out of thoughts and tack on etc. for no real purpose. Also, two redundancies often appear with this abbreviation: (1) *and etc., which is poor style because et means “and,” and (2) etc. at the end of a list that begins with for example, such as, e.g., and the like. Those terms properly introduce a short list of examples. Cf. et al.
event. The phrase *in the event that* is a verbose and formal way of saying *if.*

eventuality. This term often needlessly displaces more specific everyday words such as *event, result,* and *possibility.*

every day, *adv.; everyday, adj.* The first is adverbial, the second adjectival. You may wear your *everyday* clothes *every day.*

every one; *everyone.* The two-word version is an emphatic way of saying “each” (*every one of them was there*); the second is a pronoun equivalent to *everybody* (*everyone was there*).

everywhere. This is the preferable word—not *everyplace.*

**evoke; invoke.** To *evoke* something is to bring it out (*evoke laughter*) or bring it to mind (*evoke childhood memories*). *Invoke* has a number of senses, including to assert (something) as authority (*invoke the Monroe Doctrine*), to appeal (to someone or a higher power) for help (*invoke an ally to intervene*), and to conjure up (*invoke spirits of the past*).

exceptional; *exceptionable.* What is *exceptional* is uncommon, superior, rare, or extraordinary (*an exceptional talent*). What is *exceptionable* is objectionable or offensive (*an exceptionable slur*).

executor; *administrator.* In a will, a person designates an *executor* to dis-tribute the estate after death. When a person dies without a will or without specifying an executor, the court will appoint an *administrator* to do the same. The feminine forms *administratrix* and *executrix* are unnec-es-sary and should be avoided. See § 443.

explicit; *implicit.* If something is *explicit,* it is deliberately and clearly spelled out, as in the text of a well-drafted statute. If it is *implicit,* it is not specifically stated but is either suggested in the wording or necessary to effectuate the purpose. Avoid *implicit* to mean “complete, unmitigated.”

**fact that, the.** This much-maligned phrase is not always avoidable. But hunt for a substitute before deciding to use it. Sometimes *that* alone suffices.

farther; *further.* The traditional distinction is to use *farther* for a physical distance (*we drove farther north to see the autumn foliage*) and *further* for a figurative distance (*let’s examine this further*) (*look no further*). Although it’s a refinement of slight importance, connoisseurs will appre-ciate it.

**fax, n. & vb.** Derived from *facsimile transmission,* the shortened *fax* is almost universally preferred for convenience. The plural is *faxes.* Note that the
Word Usage

A word is governed by the same rules of capitalization as other nouns.

*FAX is incorrect: the word is not an acronym.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 19:1

faze; phase, vb. To faze is to disturb or disconcert {Jones isn’t fazed by insults}. To phase (usually phase in or phase out) is to schedule or perform a plan, task, or the like in stages {phase in new procedures} {phase out the product lines that don’t sell}. The negative adjective for “unaffected” is unfazed, not *unphased.

feel. This verb is weak when used as a substitute for think or believe.

feel bad. Invariably, the needed phrase is feel bad (not *feel badly). See § 237.

fewer. See less.

fictional; fictitious; fictive. Fictional (from fiction as a literary genre) means “of, relating to, or involving imagination” {a fictional story}. Fictitious means “imaginary; counterfeit; false” {a fictitious name}. Fictive means “possessing the talent for imaginative creation” {fictive gift}; although it can also be a synonym for fictional, in that sense it is a needless variant. Also, anthropologists use fictive to describe relationships in which people are treated as family members despite having no bond of blood or marriage {fictive kin}.

finalize. Meaning “to bring to an end or finish the last part of,” this word has often been associated with inflated jargon. Although its compactness may recommend it in some contexts, use finish when possible.

first. In enumerations, use first, second, third, etc. Avoid the -ly forms.

fish. The usual plural is fish {thousands of fish}—although the older plural is sometimes used for different varieties {the indigenous fishes of the Mississippi} or for small groups {look at the three fishes!}.

fit. This verb is undergoing a shift. It has traditionally been conjugated fit–fitted–fitted, but today fit–fit–fit is prevalent in AmE {when she tried on the dress, it fit quite well}. In the passive voice, however, fitted is still normal {the horse was fitted with a new harness}.
flagrant. See blatant.

flair. See flare.

flammable; inflammable. Flammable was invented in the early 20th century as an alternative to the synonymous word inflammable, which some people misunderstood—dangerously—as meaning “not combustible.” Today flammable is the standard term. Its antonym is nonflammable.

flare; flair. A flare is an unsteady and glaring light {an emergency flare} or a sudden outburst {a flare-up of fighting}. A flair is an outstanding talent {a flair for mathematics} or originality and stylishness {performed with flair}.

flaunt; flout. The first means “to show off ostentatiously” {they flaunted their wealth}. The second means “to openly disobey” {they flouted the rules}.

fleshy; fleshly. The first is literal and physical—usually meaning “plump” {fleshy arms} {fleshy peaches}. The second is metaphorical and abstract—usually meaning “carnal, sexual” {fleshly desires} {fleshly dreams}.

flounder; founder. Although the figurative sense of both verbs is “to go wrong,” the literal senses evoke different images. To flounder is to struggle awkwardly, as though walking through deep mud {the professor glared while the unprepared student floundered around for an answer}. To founder (usually in reference to a boat or ship) is to sink or run aground {the ship foundered on the rocks}.

flout. See flaunt.

following. Avoid this word as an equivalent of after. Consider the possible miscue in Following the presentation, there was a question-and-answer session. After is both simpler and clearer.
forbear, vb.; forebear, n. The terms are unrelated, but the spellings are frequently confused. To *forbear* is to refrain {he wanted to speak but decided to forbear [the conjugation is *forbear–forbore–forborne*]}. A *forebear* is an ancestor {the house was built by Murray’s distant forebears}.

forego; forgo. To *forego* is to go before {the foregoing paragraph}. The word appears most commonly in the phrase *foregone conclusion*. To *forgo*, by contrast, is to do without or renounce {they decided to forgo that opportunity}.

foreword; preface. A *foreword* (not *forward*) is a book’s introduction that is written by someone other than the book’s author. An introduction written by the book’s author is called a *preface*.

fordo. See *forego*.

formally; formerly. What is done *formally* is done according to custom {formally attired} or by rule or law {formally sworn in}. What was done *formerly* was done previously or at an earlier time {formerly living in North Attleboro}.

former; latter. In the best usage, these words apply only to pairs. The *former* is the first of two, the *latter* the second of two.

fortuitous; fortunate. *Fortuitous* means “happening by chance,” usually (but not always) with a good result {the rotten tree could have fallen at any time; it was just fortuitous that the victims drove by when they did}. *Fortunate* means “lucky” {we were fortunate to win the raffle}. Today, unfortunately, *fortuitous* is poaching on the semantic turf of *fortunate*.

forward(s). See *toward*.

founder. See *flounder*.

free rein. So written—not *free reign*.

fulsome, adj. This word does not preferably mean “very full” but “too much, excessive to the point of being repulsive.” Traditionally, a “fulsome speech” is one that is so overpacked with thanks or hyperbole as to sound insincere. The word’s slipshod use arises most often in the cliché *fulsome praise*, which can suggest the opposite of what the writer probably intends.

fun. Use this word as a noun {that was good fun}. Except as a purposeful casualism, avoid using it as an adjective meaning “enjoyable” or “amusing” (as in *a fun time*)—and avoid *funner* and *funnest*.

further. See *farther*.

future, in the near. Use *soon* or *shortly* instead.
gauntlet; gantlet. Lexicographers and usage critics—especially American ones—have sought since the 19th century to make a distinction. Etymologically, the two words have different histories: throwing down the gauntlet (= glove) and running the gantlope (= ordeal). But gauntlet has taken over both meanings. The standard phrases have been run the gauntlet and throw down the gauntlet since about 1800—the former phrase by a 10-to-1 margin over the competing form run the gantlet. Efforts to separate the terms have run their grueling course.

1863 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 12:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 11:1

gentleman. This word is a vulgarism when used as a synonym for man. When used in reference to a cultured, refined man, it is susceptible to some of the same objections as those leveled against lady. Use it cautiously. Cf. lady.

get. Though shunned by many writers as too casual, get often sounds more natural than obtain or procure {get a divorce}. It can also substitute for a stuffy become {get hurt}. The verb is conjugated get–got–gotten in AmE and get–got–got in BrE.

Get is the only verb apart from be-verbs that, when coupled with a past participle, can create a passive-voice construction {get stolen} {get waylaid}. See § 162.

gibe; jibe; jive. A gibe is a biting insult or taunt: gibes are figuratively thrown at their target {the angry crowd hurled gibes at the miscreant}. To jibe is to be in accord or to agree {the verdict didn’t jibe with the judge’s own view of the facts}. Jive can be either a noun (referring to swing music or to misleading talk that is transparently untrue) or a verb (meaning “to dance to such music” or “to try to mislead with lies”).

gild. See guild.

go. This verb is conjugated go–went–gone. Went appears as a past participle only in dialect.
**gourmet; gourmand.** Both are aficionados of good food and drink. But a *gourmet* knows and appreciates the fine points of food and drink, whereas a *gourmand* tends toward gluttony.

**graduate, vb.** Whereas *graduate* means “to grant a diploma to or confer a degree on,” *graduate from* means “to receive a diploma or degree from (a school, university, or other institution).” A school can *graduate* a student or a student can *graduate from* a school, but a student does not *graduate* a school—at least not in good usage.

1900 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 1:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 29:1

**graffiti.** Borrowed as an Italian plural—the singular being *graffito*—*graffiti* is now regarded as a mass noun taking a singular verb {graffiti was all over the wall}. *Graffiti were* suggests preciosity in modern usage.

**grateful; gratified.** To be *grateful* is to be thankful or appreciative. To be *gratified* is to be pleased, satisfied, or indulged.

**grievous.** So spelled {a grievous misdeed}—not *grievious.*

**grisly; grizzly.** What is *grisly* is gruesome or horrible {grisly details}. What is *grizzly* is grayish {grizzly hair} or bearish {the North American grizzly bear}. 
guild, *n.;* gild, *vb.* A guild is an organization of persons with a common interest or profession {a guild of goldsmiths}. To gild is to put a thin layer of gold on something {gild a picture frame}, sometimes in a figurative sense {gilding the lily}.

**had better.** See better.

hail; hale. To *hail* is to salute or greet {hail, Caesar!}, to acclaim enthusiastically {hailed as the greatest novelist of her time}, or to shout as an attention-getter {hail a taxi}. To *hale* is to compel to go {haled into court}.

*Hail* is also a noun denoting ice-pellet precipitation, or something like it {a hail of insults}. *Hale* is also an adjective describing someone who is physically sound and free from infirmities.

**half (of).** Delete the *of* whenever possible {half the furniture}. When *half* is followed by a singular noun, the verb is singular {half the state is solidly Democratic}; when it is followed by a plural noun, the verb is plural {half the people are Republicans}.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

handful. If *handful* applies to a mass noun, use a singular verb {a handful of trouble is ahead}. But if *handful* applies to a plural count noun, use a plural verb {only a handful of walnut trees still line Main Street}.

hangar; hanger. One finds *hangars* (large buildings where aircraft are kept) at an airport {airplane hangars}. Everywhere else, one finds *hangers* {clothes hangers} {picture hangers}.

hanged; hung. *Hanged* is used as the past participle of *hang* only in its transitive form when referring to the killing (just or unjust) of a human being by suspending the person by the neck {criminals were hanged at Tyburn Hill}. But if death is not intended or likely, or if the person is suspended by a body part other than the neck, *hung* is correct {he was hung upside down as a cruel prank}. In most senses, of course, *hung* is the past form of *hang* {Abdul hung up his clothes}.
hanger. See hangar.

harass; embarrass. The first word has one -r-; the second has two. The pronunciation of harass also causes confusion. The dominant American pronunciation stresses the second syllable, while BrE stresses the first.

hardly; scarcely. These words are often treated as negatives. Beware that using them with negative constructions often typifies uneducated speech, as in *I can’t hardly listen to that!

harebrained. So spelled (after the timid, easily startled animal)—not *hairbrained.

hark back. So written—preferably not *harken back or *hearken back.

have; have got. In formal prose, prefer have {I have four nickels} and do not (or don’t) have {I don’t have any such books}. In informal contexts—especially in BrE—have got {I’ve got four pence} and have not (or haven’t) got {I haven’t got any such books} are common.

he. 1. For the use of he as a generic pronoun referring to either sex, see §§ 436, 442. 2. For a discussion of than he (vs. him), see § 68.

healthy; healthful. Traditionally, a living thing that is healthy enjoys good health; something that is healthful promotes health {a healthful diet will keep you healthy}. But gradually healthy is taking over both senses.

help (to). Omit the to when possible {talking will help resolve the problem}.

he or she. To avoid sexist language, many writers use this alternative phrasing (in place of the generic he). Use it sparingly—preferably after exhausting all other, less obtrusive methods of achieving gender-neutrality. In any event, he or she is much preferable to *he/she, *s/he, *(s)he, and the like. See §§ 436, 438–39.

her. For a discussion of than she (vs. her), see § 68.
hers. So written—not *her’s.

him. For a discussion of than he (vs. him), see § 68.

historic; historical. The shorter word refers to what is momentous in history {January 16, 1991, was a historic day in Kuwait}. Historical, meanwhile, refers simply to anything that pertains to or occurred in history {the historical record}.

On the question whether to use a or an before historic and historical, see a; an (p. 228).

hoard; horde. A hoard is a supply, usually secret and sometimes valuable. Hoard is also a verb meaning “to amass such a supply,” especially when there is no need to do so. A horde was originally a tribe of Asian nomads; today a horde is a large crowd, esp. one that moves in a noisy, uncontrolled way.

Hobson’s choice. Today this clichéd idiom is usually taken to mean “a choice between two bad options.” But the original sense referred to Thomas Hobson (1544–1631), a stable keeper in Cambridge, England, whose customers could take the horse closest to the door or nothing. Hobson’s choice, then, was no choice at all. Use of the new sense may irk some purists. It is a blunder to make the first word in this phrase Hobbesian, as if the reference were to the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679).

hoi polloi. This is a mildly disparaging phrase for “common people.” It does not refer to elites, though some writers and speakers misuse it in this way (perhaps from false association with hoity-toity). It is a plural. Although
hoi is Greek for “the,” the phrase is commonly rendered the hoi polloi and has been at least since it was used by John Dryden in 1668.

1940 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 1:1

holocaust. When capitalized, this word refers to the Nazi genocide of European Jews in World War II. When not capitalized, it refers (literally or figuratively) to extensive devastation caused by fire or to the systematic and malicious killings of human beings on a vast scale. Avoid any light or hyperbolic use of this word.

home in. This phrase is frequently misrendered *hone in. (Hone means “to sharpen.”) Home in refers to what homing pigeons and aerial bombs do; the meaning is “to come closer and closer to a target.”

homicide. See murder.

homogeneous. So written, in five syllables—preferably not *homogenous.

hopefully. The old meaning of the word (“in a hopeful manner”) seems unsustainable; the newer meaning (“I hope” or “it is to be hoped that”), as a sentence adverb (see §211), spread in the 1960s and 1970s and seems here to stay. But many careful writers still deplore the new meaning.

horde. See hoard.
however. 1. On using this word to start a sentence, see § 278. 2. On the problem of creating a comma splice with however, see § 469.

humanitarian. This word means “involving the promotion of human welfare” {humanitarian philanthropy}. Avoid using it in a phrase such as *the worst humanitarian disaster in decades, where it really means just “human.”

hung. See hanged.

I; me. When you need a first-person pronoun, use one. It’s not immodest to do so; it’s superstitious not to. But be sure you get the right one {Sally and I are planning to go} {give John or me a call} {keep this between you and me}. For more on the case of pronouns, see § 56. See between you and me.

idyllic. An idyll is a short pastoral poem, and by extension idyllic means charming or picturesque. It is not synonymous with ideal (perfect).

i.e.; e.g. The first is the abbreviation for id est ("that is"); the second is the abbreviation for exempli gratia ("for example"). The English equivalents are preferable in formal prose, though sometimes the compactness of these two-character abbreviations makes them desirable. Always put a comma after either one.

if; whether. While if is conditional, whether introduces an alternative, often in the context of an indirect question. Use whether in two circumstances: (1) to introduce a noun clause: *he asked whether his tie was straight* (the alternatives are yes and no), and (2) when using if produces ambiguity. In the sentence *he asked if his tie was straight*, the literal meaning is “whenever his tie was straight, he asked”; the popular meaning “he wanted someone to tell him whether his tie did or didn’t need straightening” may not be understood by all readers. More tellingly, *Call me to let me know if you can come* means that you should call only if you’re coming. *Call to let me know whether you can come* means that you should call regardless of whether the answer is yes or no. Avoid substituting if for whether unless your tone is intentionally informal or you are quoting someone. See determine whether & whether.

There is no such thing as the dictionary. There are many English dictionaries, and these differ widely in their accuracy and reliability as a record of English words and usages. Even among the good ones there are differences in the treatment of individual entries.

—Wallace L. Anderson and Norman C. Stageberg
Introductory Readings on Language
**ignoreamus.** Pl. *ignoramuses*—not *ignorami* (though some might argue that it’s fitting). The word is a verb in Latin meaning “we do not know”—not a first-declension noun.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 32:1

ilk. This noun commonly means “type” or “sort” in modern usage, and unobjectionably so today {of his ilk} {of that ilk}. The Scottish phrase *of that ilk* means “of the same name or place.”

illegal. See unlawful.

illegible; unreadable. Handwriting or printing that is *illegible* is not clear enough to be read {illegible scrawlings}. Writing that is *unreadable* is so poorly composed as to be either incomprehensible or intolerably dull.

illicit. See elicit & unlawful.

illude. See allude.

immigrate; emigrate. To *immigrate* is to enter a country to live permanently, leaving a past home. To *emigrate* is to leave one country to live in another one. The cognate forms also demand attention. Someone who moves from Ireland to the United States is an *immigrant* here and an *emigrant* there. An *émigré* is also an *emigrant*, but especially one in political exile.

imminent. See eminent.

impact. Resist using this word as a verb. Try *affect* or *influence* instead. Besides being hyperbolic, *impact* is still considered a solecism by traditionalists (though it is gaining ground). Cf. access.

impeachment. *Impeachment* is the legislative equivalent of an indictment, not a conviction. In the U.S. federal system, the House of Representatives votes on impeachment, and the Senate votes on removal from office.

impelled. See compelled.

implicit. See explicit.
**Troublesome Words and Phrases**

**imply; infer.** The writer or speaker implies (hints, suggests); the reader or listener infers (deduces). Writers and speakers often use infer as if it were synonymous with imply, but careful writers always distinguish between the two words. See inference.

**important; importantly.** In the phrase more important(ly)—usually at the outset of a sentence—traditionalists prefer the shorter form as an ellipsis of what is more important, normally with a comma following. But more importantly is now established as a sentence adverb—and it’s unobjectionable.

**impractical; impracticable.** The first is the more general adjective, meaning “not sensible” or “unrealistic” {impractical planning that doesn’t account for travel expenses}. The second means “impossible to carry out” {landing aircraft on that hole-ridden runway proved impracticable}.

**in actual fact.** See actual fact, in.

**inasmuch as.** Because or since is almost always a better choice. See because & since.

**in behalf of.** See behalf.

**incidence; incident; instance.** Be careful with the first of these words: it has to do with relative rates and ranges {the incidence of albinism within a given society}. Perhaps leave it to scientists and actuaries. An incident (= an event, occurrence, or happening) should be distinguished from an instance (= a case, example).

**include; comprise.** The basic difference between these near-synonyms is that include implies nonexclusivity {the collection includes 126 portraits [suggesting that there is much else in the collection]}, while comprise implies exclusivity {the collection comprises 126 silver spoons [suggesting that nothing else is part of the collection]}. Oddly, in patent law—and there alone—comprise carries a non-exclusive sense. See comprise.

**in connection with.** This is a vague, fuzzy phrase {she explained the financial consequences in connection with the transaction} {Ray liked everything in connection with golf} {Phipson was compensated in connection with its report}. Try replacing the phrase with of, related to, or associated with {she explained the financial consequences of the transaction}, about
{Ray liked everything about golf}, or for {Phipson was compensated for its report}.

**incredible; incredulous.** Incredible properly means “too strange to be believed; difficult to believe.” Colloquially, it is used to mean “astonishingly good” {it was an incredible trip}. Incredulous means “disbelieving, skeptical” {people are incredulous about the rising gas costs}.

**inculcate; indoctrinate.** One inculcates values into a child but indoctrinates the child with values. That is, inculcate always takes the preposition into and a value or values as its object {inculcate courage into soldiers}. Indoctrinate takes a person as its object {indoctrinate children with the habit of telling the truth}.

**indicate.** Often vague. When possible, use a more direct verb such as state, comment, show, suggest, or say.

**individual.** Use this word to distinguish a single person from a group. When possible, use a more specific term, such as person, adult, child, man, or woman.

**indoctrinate.** See inculcate.

**induce.** See adduce.

**in excess of.** Try replacing this verbose phrase with more than or over. See over.

**infected; infested.** Something that is infected is contaminated, specifically by disease or metaphorically by corruption. Something that is infested is overrun by something negative such as vermin, predatory animals, or crime.

**infectious.** See contagious.

**infer.** See imply.

**inference.** Use the verb draw, not make, with inference {they drew the wrong inferences}. Otherwise, readers may confuse inference with implication. See imply.

**infested.** See infected.

**inflammable.** See flammable.

**inflict; afflict.** Events, illnesses, punishments, etc. are inflicted on living things or entities {an abuser inflicts cruelty}. The sufferers are afflicted with or by disease, troubles, etc. {agricultural communities are afflicted with drought}.
ingenious; ingenuous. These words are similar in form but not in meaning. Ingenious describes what is intelligent, clever, and original {an ingenious invention}. Ingenuous describes a person who is candid, naive, and without dissimulation, or an action or statement with those qualities {a hurtful but ingenuous observation}.

innate; inherent. An innate characteristic is one that a living thing has from birth; it should be distinguished, then, from a talent or disposition that one acquires from training or experience. An inherent characteristic is also part of a thing’s nature, but life is not implied. A rock, for example, has an inherent hardness.

innervate. See enervate.

innocent; not guilty. If you are innocent, you are without blame. If you are not guilty, you have been exonerated by a jury. Newspapers avoid the not guilty phrase, though, because the consequences of accidentally leaving off the not could be serious. See pleaded.

innumerable. See enumerable.

in order to; in order for. Often these expressions can be reduced to to and for. When that is so, and rhythm and euphony are preserved or even heightened, use to or for.

in proximity. See *close proximity.

input. As a noun, this word—meaning “contributions and suggestions”—seems less and less jargonistic by the year {did you have any input into the design?}. When it’s used as a verb meaning “to put in,” the jargonistic odor attached to the word is stronger {did you input the data?}. The verb is preferably inflected input–input–input—not *inputted. Cf. output.

inquire. The normal spellings in AmE and BrE alike are inquire and inquiry. Enquire and enquiry are primarily BrE variants.

It is not surprising that most of us choose and use our words with no more thought than we give to respiration, fondly supposing that it is as easy and natural to speak the English language as it is to breathe the English air. But I, though I have no particular title nor aptitude for the affair and am in error as frequently as you, exhort you boldly in the nation’s name to worry about words, to have an affection and respect and a curiosity for words, to keep a dictionary in the home and ask yourself often: “Now, why do I say that?” I am not urging you to be always right: for few can hope for that. But we can all worry; and that is the beginning of virtue.

—A.P. Herbert
What a Word!
in regard to. This is the phrase, not the nonstandard *in regards to. But try a single-word substitute instead: about, regarding, concerning, etc.

1867 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 6,419:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 13:1

insidious; invidious. What is insidious spreads gradually to cause damage—at first without being noticed {an insidious conspiracy}; what is invidious involves moral offensiveness and serious unpleasantness {invidious discrimination}.

in spite of. See despite.

instance. See incidence.

insure. See ensure.

intense; intensive. Intense means (1) “having a strong effect” {intense pressures}, (2) “involving a great deal of effort during a very short time” {intense concentration}, or (3) “having unduly strong feelings or a demeanor of exaggerated seriousness” {he’s a bit too intense}. Intense is always preferred outside philosophical and scientific usages. But intensive should be retained in customary phrases such as labor-intensive and intensive care.

intently; intensely. An act done intently is done purposefully and with concentration and determination. One that is done intensely is done with great power, passion, or emotion, but not necessarily with deliberate intent.

inter; intern. Inter is a verb meaning “to bury (a dead person)”; the corresponding noun is interment. An intern is a student working temporarily to gain experience, esp. in a profession. Intern is also a verb with two senses. As an intransitive verb, it means “to work as an intern” {interning at the U.S. Senate}; the corresponding noun is internship. As a transitive verb, it means “to confine (a civilian) to a certain place or district without a criminal charge, esp. in wartime or for political reasons”; the corresponding noun is internment.
**internecine.** The accepted meaning of this word has shifted far from its origin, which described a war of slaughter, and from its more modern sense, regarding warfare that is mutually destructive. In American usage today, *internecine* also describes any internal controversy or power struggle. Some traditionalists object to that use as being too far removed from the word’s traditional senses.

**in the affirmative.** See *affirmative, in the.*

**in the event that.** See *event.*

**in the near future.** See *future, in the near.*

**in the negative.** See *affirmative, in the.*

**inveigh; inveigle.** To *inveigh* is to protest, usu. against something {picketers inveighed against annexation}. To *inveigle* is to cajole or ensnare, esp. by misleading {inveigling a friend to attend the party}.

**invidious.** See *insidious.*

**invoke.** See *evoke.*

*irregardless.* An error. Use *regardless* (or possibly *irrespective*).

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 572:1

**it is I; it is me.** Both are correct and acceptable. The first phrase, using the first-person predicate nominative, is strictly grammatical (and a little stuffy); the second is idiomatic (and relaxed), and it is often contracted to *it’s me.* In third-person constructions, however, a greater stringency holds sway in good English {this is he} {it isn’t she who has caused such misery}. See § 67.

**its; it’s.** *Its* is the possessive form of *it; it’s* is the contraction for *it is* {it’s a sad dog that scratches its fleas}.

**jealousy; envy.** *Jealousy* connotes feelings of resentment toward another, particularly in matters relating to an intimate relationship {sexual jealousy}. *Envy* refers to covetousness of another’s advantages, possessions, or abilities {his transparent envy of others’ successes}.

**jibe; jive.** See *gibe.*
judgment. So spelled in AmE. In BrE, the spelling -djem- is preferred (except in law).

karat. See carat.

kind. Use this kind of question or these kinds of questions—not *these kind of questions.

kudos. Preferably pronounced /k[y]oo-dos/ (not /-dohz/), this word means “praise and admiration.” It is singular, not plural. Hence avoid *kudo is or *kudos are.

lady. When used as a synonym for woman—indeed, when used anywhere but in the phrase ladies and gentlemen—this word will be considered objectionable by some readers who think that it refers to a patronizing stereotype. This is especially true when it is used for unprestigious jobs {cleaning lady} or as a condescending adjective {lady lawyer}. Some will insist on using it to describe a refined woman. If they’ve consulted this entry, they’ve been forewarned. Cf. gentleman. See § 441.

last; lasty. As with first, second, etc., prefer last when introducing a final point of discussion—or (of course) finally.

latter. See former.

laudable; laudatory. Laudable means “praiseworthy, even if not fully successful” {a laudable effort}. Laudatory means “expressing praise” {laudatory phone calls}.

lay; lie. Admittedly, the traditional conjugations are more blurred than ever. Mastering them has proved difficult for people. Nevertheless, here goes.

Lay is a transitive verb—that is, it demands a direct object {lay your pencils down}. It is inflected lay–laid–laid {I laid the book there yesterday} {these rumors have been laid to rest}. (The children’s prayer Now I lay me down to sleep is a good mnemonic device for the transitive lay.)

Lie is an intransitive verb—that is, it never takes a direct object {lie down and rest}. It is inflected lie–lay–lain {she lay down and rested}.

I’m tired of television announcers, hosts, newscasters, and commentators, nibbling away at the English language, making obvious and ignorant mistakes.
—George Carlin
Brain Droppings
{he hasn’t yet lain down in 23 hours}. In a doctor’s office, you should be asked to lie back or lie down.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 10:1

leach; leech. To leach is to percolate or to separate out solids in solution by percolation. A leech is a bloodsucker (whether literal or figurative). By extension of that noun, to leech is either to attach oneself to another as a leech does or to drain the resources of something.

lead. See led.

lean. This verb is inflected lean–leaned–leaned—not, preferably, *leant.

leap. This verb is inflected leap–leaped–leaped in AmE (that’s been so since the 18th century) and leap–leapt–leapt in BrE.

learn. The predominant inflection is learn–learned–learned, though learnt is an acceptable variant in BrE.

lease; let. Many Americans seem to think that let is colloquial and of modern origin. In fact, the word is 300 years older than lease and just as proper. One distinction between the two words is that either the owner or the tenant can be said to lease property, but only the owner can be said to let it.

led. This is the correct spelling of the past tense and past participle of the verb lead. It is often misspelled lead, maybe in part because of the pronunciation of the metal lead or the past tense and past participle read, which rhymes with led.

leech. See leach.

lend, vb.; loan, vb. & n. Lend is the correct term for letting someone use something with the understanding that it (or its equivalent) will be returned. The verb loan is standard esp. when money is the subject of the transaction—but even then, lend appears somewhat more frequently in

The teacher and the printing-press are the great supporters of linguistic tradition.
—Henry Alexander
The Story of Our Language
edited English. *Loan* is the noun corresponding to both *lend* and *loan, vb*. The past-tense and past-participial form of *lend* is *lent*.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

![Graph showing frequency of "lent money" and "loaned money" from 1820 to 2000.](image)

**less; fewer.** Reserve *less* for mass nouns or amounts {less salt} {less soil} {less water}. Reserve *fewer* for count nouns {fewer calories} {fewer people} {fewer suggestions}. One easy guideline is to use *less* with singular nouns and *fewer* with plural nouns.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 7:1

![Graph showing frequency of "fewer people" and "less people" from 1760 to 2000.](image)

**lest.** This is one of the few English words that invariably call for a verb in the subjunctive mood {he didn’t want to drive lest he take a wrong turn} {he has turned down the volume lest he disturb his roommates}. The conjunction is somewhat more common in BrE than in AmE.

**let.** See *lease*.

**libel.** See *defamation*.

**license, n. & vb.** So spelled in AmE and BrE alike—though in BrE *licence* is a variant spelling for the noun.

**lie.** See *lay*.

**life-and-death; *life-or-death.** The problem of logic aside (life and death being mutually exclusive), the first phrase is the standard idiom {a
life-and-death decision}. Note the spikes in frequency of use during World War I and World War II.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

light, vb. This verb can be inflected either light—lit—lit or light—lighted—lighted—and irreproachably so. The past-participial adjective tends to be lighted when not modified by an -ly adverb {a lighted building} {a well-lighted hall}, but lit if an -ly adverb precedes {brightly lit sconces} {a nicely lit walkway}.

lightning. So spelled {lightning strike}—unless the sense is “making or becoming lighter” {lightening your load}.

like; as. The use of like as a conjunction (as in the old jingle “tastes good like a cigarette should”) has long been a contentious issue. Traditionally speaking, like is a preposition, not a conjunction equivalent to as {you’re much like me [me is the object of the preposition like]} {do as I say [the conjunction as connects the imperative do with the independent clause I say]}. As a casualism, however, the conjunctive like has become especially common since the mid-20th century {nobody cares like I do} {it tastes good like a fine chocolate should}. In Standard Written English, a conjunctive like will still provoke frowns among some readers. But the objections are slowly dwindling. If you want your prose to be unimpeachable and heightened, stick to as and as if for conjunctive senses {as we’ve observed, man is a social animal} {it looks as if it might rain}.

like; such as. Is it permissible to say Universities like MIT and Stanford help set the government’s policies in technical fields? That is, should it be such as? Are the exemplars actually listed to be included in the genus denoted by the noun preceding like? Literalists say that only colleges similar to MIT and Stanford—but not those schools themselves—are included, so if MIT and Stanford are meant to be included, the reference should be to Universities such as MIT and Stanford. This hard-nosed literalism may be hard to shake, but it’s hardly impossible for writers like you and me.
likely. See apt.

literally. This word means “actually; without exaggeration.” It should not be used loosely in figurative senses, as in they were literally glued to their seats (unless glue had in fact been applied). Wherever guides have accepted this usage, they should be disregarded.

loan. See lend.

loathe, vb.; loath, adj. To loathe (/loth/) something is to detest it intensely or to regard it with disgust {I loathe tabloid television}. Someone who is loath (/loth/) is reluctant or unwilling {Tracy seems loath to admit mistakes}. The soft -th- sound in loathsome (/loth-sam/), meaning “abhorrent,” prompts many to misspell it *loathsome.

1842 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 102:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 7:1

lose; loose, vb.; loosen. To lose something is to be deprived of it. To loose something is to release it from fastenings or restraints. To loosen is to make less tight or to ease a restraint. Loose conveys the idea of complete release, whereas loosen refers to only a partial release.

lot. See a lot.

luxuriant; luxurious. The two terms are fairly often confused (an example of catachresis). What is luxuriant is lush and grows abundantly {a luxuriant head of hair}. What is luxurious is lavish, extravagant, and comfortable {a luxurious resort}.

mad; angry. Some people object to using mad to mean “angry” and would reserve it to mean “insane.” But the first sense dates back 700 years and isn’t likely to disappear. As common as it is in everyday use, though, it has been so stigmatized that most people avoid it in formal writing.

majority. This noun preferably denotes countable things {a majority of votes cast}, not uncountable ones {the majority of the time}. Use most whenever it fits.
When referring to a preponderance of votes cast, *majority* takes a singular verb {her majority was 7%}. But referring to a predominant group of people or things, it can take either a singular verb {the majority in the House was soon swept away} or a plural one {the majority of the voters were against the proposal}. Typically, if a genitive with a plural object follows *majority*, the verb should be plural {a majority of music teachers prefer using the metronome}.

**malevolent; maleficent.** *Malevolent* describes an evil mind that wishes to harm others {with malevolent intent}. *Maleficent* is similar but describes desire by the miscreant for accomplishing evil {maleficent bullying}.

**malodorous.** See *odious*.

**maltreatment.** See *mistreatment*.

**mankind.** Consider *humankind* instead.

**manslaughter.** See *murder*.

**mantle; mantel.** *A mantle* is a long, loose garment like a cloak—almost always today being used in a metaphorical sense {assuming the mantle of a martyr}. *A mantel* is a wood or stone structure around a fireplace {family pictures on the mantel}.

**many.** See *numerous*.

**marriage; wedding.** *Marriage* best refers to the legal status of two people united by vows or a marriage contract. Figuratively, it refers to the merger of two entities or the blending or juxtaposition of two things {a marriage of gospel and bluegrass}. *Wedding* refers to the ceremony or act of joining in marriage.

**masterful; masterly.** *Masterful* describes a person who is dominating and imperious. *Masterly* describes a person who has mastered a craft, trade, or profession; the word often means “authoritative” {a masterly analysis}. Because *masterly* does not readily make an adverb (*masterlily* being extremely awkward [see § 212]), try *in a masterly way*.

**may; can.** See *can*.

**may; might.** *May* expresses what is possible, is factual, or could be factual {I may have turned off the stove, but I can’t recall doing it}. *Might* suggests something that is uncertain, hypothetical, or contrary to fact {I might have won the marathon if I had entered}. See § 201.

**me.** See *I*.
medal; meddle; metal; mettle. A *medal* is an award for merit; a *metal* is a type of substance, usually hard and heavy. To *meddle* is to interfere. And *mettle* is a person’s character, courage, and determination to do something no matter how difficult.

media; mediums. In scientific contexts and in reference to mass communications, the plural of *medium* is predominantly *media* {some bacteria flourish in several types of media} {the media are reporting more medical news}. Although one frequently sees *media is*, the plural use is recommended instead. If *medium* refers to a spiritualist, the plural is *mediums* {several mediums have held séances here}.

memoranda; memorandums. Although both plural forms are correct, *memoranda* has predominated since the early 19th century. Don’t use *memoranda* as if it were singular—the word is *memorandum* {this memorandum is} {these memoranda are}.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 8:1

metal; mettle. See medal.

mete out. The phrase meaning “to distribute” or “to assign” is so spelled {mete out punishment}. *Meet out* is a common error, esp. in the erroneous past tense *meted out*.

meter. So spelled in both AmE and BrE in reference to an instrument that measures or records {water meter}. It is also so spelled in AmE in reference to the unit of length and to poetic rhythms—in which senses BrE prefers *metre*.

might. See may.

militate. See mitigate.

minuscule. Something that is minuscule is “very small.” Probably because of the spelling of the modern word *mini* (and the prefix of the same spelling, which is recorded only from 1936), it is often misspelled *miniscule*. In printing, *minuscules* are lowercase letters and *majuscules* are capital (uppercase) letters.
mischievous. This three-syllable word is so spelled—not *mischievious (a bit of misspelling mischief).

misspell, vb. So spelled. It’s inflected misspell–misspelled–misspelled, although misspelt often occurs in BrE.

mistreatment; maltreatment. *Mistreatment is the more general term.
*Maltreatment denotes a harsh form of mistreatment, involving abuse by rough or cruel handling.

mitigate; militate. To mitigate is to lessen or soften the effects of something unpleasant, harmful, or serious; mitigating circumstances lessen the seriousness of a crime. To militate, by contrast, is to have a marked effect on; the word is usually followed by against {his nearsightedness militated against his ambition to become a commercial pilot}. Avoid the mistaken phrase *mitigate against for the correct militate against.

moot; mute. Moot (/moot/) means (traditionally) “debatable” {a moot point worth our attention} or (by modern extension) “having no practical significance” {a moot question that is of no account}. Mute (/m[y]oot/) means “silent, speechless”—and is often considered offensive when used as a noun {deaf-mute}.

more important(ly). See important.
more than. See over.

much; very. *Much generally intensifies past-participial adjectives {much obliged} {much encouraged} and some comparatives {much more} {much worse} {much too soon}. *Very intensifies adverbs and most adjectives {very carefully} {very bad}, including past-participial adjectives that have more adjectival than verbal force {very bored}. See § 129.

murder; manslaughter; homicide. All three words denote the killing of one person by another. *Murder and manslaughter are both unlawful killings, but murder is done maliciously and intentionally. *Homicide includes
killings that are not unlawful, such as by a police officer acting properly in the line of duty. *Homicide* also refers to a person who kills another.

**mute.** See *moot.*

**mutual.** See *common.*

**myself.** Avoid using *myself* as a pronoun in place of *I* or *me*—a quirk that arises most often after an *and* or *or.* Instead, use it reflexively {I did myself a favor} or emphatically {I myself have tried to get through that book!}. See §§ 73–74.

**naturalist; naturist.** *Naturalist* most often denotes a person who studies natural history, esp. a field biologist or an amateur who observes and usually photographs, sketches, or writes about nature. *Naturist* denotes a nature-worshipper or a nudist.

**nauseous; nauseated.** Whatever is *nauseous,* traditionally speaking, induces a feeling of nausea—it makes us feel sick to our stomachs. To feel sick is to be *nauseated.* Although the use of *nauseous* to mean *nauseated* may be too common to be called an error anymore, strictly speaking it is poor usage. Because of the ambiguity in *nauseous,* the wisest course may be to stick to the participial adjectives *nauseated* and *nauseating.*

**necessary; necessitous.** *Necessary* means “required under the circumstances” {the necessary arrangements}. *Necessitous* means “impoverished” {living in necessitous circumstances}.

**neither.** Four points. First, like *either,* this word when functioning as subject of a clause takes a singular verb {neither of the subjects was given that medicine}. Second, a *neither–nor* construction should frame grammatically parallel expressions {neither the room’s being too cold nor the heater’s malfunction could justify his boorish reaction} (both noun elements). (See §§ 266, 332.) Third, a simple *neither–nor* construction should have only two elements {neither bricks nor stones}—though it’s perfectly permissible to multiply *nors* for emphasis {neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night}. Fourth, the word is acceptably pronounced either /nee-thәr/ or /ni-thәr/.
nerve-racking; *nerve-wracking. Use the former. See rack.

1920 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 14:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

nevertheless. One word.

no. See affirmative, in the.

noisome. This word has nothing to do with noise. It means noxious, offensive, or foul-smelling {a noisome landfill}.

none. This word may take either a singular or a plural verb. A guideline: if it is followed by a singular noun, treat it as a singular {none of the building was painted}; if by a plural noun, treat it as a plural {none of the guests were here when I arrived}. But for special emphasis, it is quite proper (though possibly stilted) to use a singular verb when a plural noun follows {none of my suggestions was accepted}.

nonetheless. One word.

nonplussed. Traditionally meaning “surprised and confused” {she was nonplussed when he took off the mask}, this word is now frequently misused to mean “unfazed”—almost the opposite of its literary sense. Avoid this newer usage, and avoid the variant spelling *nonplused. See faze.

normality. Prefer this word over *normalcy.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1
notable; noticeable; noteworthy. Notable (= readily noticed) applies both to physical things and to qualities {notable sense of humor}. Noticeable means “detectable with the physical senses” {a noticeable limp}. Noteworthy means “remarkable; deserving attention” {a noteworthy act of kindness}.

not guilty. See innocent.

not only–but also. For these correlative conjunctions, see §§ 266, 332.

notwithstanding. One word. Less formal alternatives include despite, although, and in spite of. The word notwithstanding may precede or follow a noun {notwithstanding her bad health, she decided to run for office} {her bad health notwithstanding, she decided to run for office}.

number. See amount.

numerous. This is typically a bloated word for many.

observance; observation. Observance means “obedience to a rule or custom” {the family’s observance of Passover}. Observation means either “the watching of something” or “a remark based on watching or studying something” {a keen observation about the defense strategy}. Each term is sometimes used when the other would be the better word.

obtain. See attain.

obtuse; abstruse. Obtuse describes a person who can’t understand; abstruse describes an idea that is hard to understand. A person who is obtuse is dull and, by extension, dull-witted. What is abstruse is incomprehensible or nearly so.

octopus. Pl. octopuses—not *octopi (which is false Latin).

1960 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 4:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

odious; odorous; odoriferous; malodorous. Odious means “hateful” or “extremely unpleasant” {odious Jim Crow laws}. It is not related to the other terms, but it is sometimes misused as if it were. Odorous means
“detectable by smell (for better or worse)” {odorous gases}. *Odoriferous*
means essentially the same thing: it has meant “fragrant” as often as it has meant “foul.” *Malodorous* means “smelling quite bad.” The mistaken form *odiferous* is often used as a jocular equivalent of *smelly*—but most dictionaries don’t record it.

**of.** Avoid using this word needlessly after all, off, inside, and outside. Also, prefer *June 2015* over *June of 2015*. To improve your style, try removing every *of*-phrase that you reasonably can.

**off.** Never put *of* after this word {we got off the bus}.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 42:1

**officious.** A person who is *officious* is aggressively nosy and meddlesome—and overeager to tell people what to do. The word has nothing to do with *officer* and should not be confused with *official*.

**oftentimes.** Prefer the shorter *often*.

**on; upon.** Prefer *on* to *upon* unless introducing an event or condition {put that on the shelf, please} {upon the job’s completion, you’ll get paid}. For more about *on*, see *onto*.

**on behalf of.** See *behalf*.

**one another.** See *each other*.

**one . . . his.** Prefer *one . . . one’s or you . . . your*.

**one of those who; one of those that.** These constructions require a plural verb in the *who*-clause because the antecedent of *who* is the plural
immediately preceding—not one {she’s one of those performers who are always in high demand}. See §§ 34, 86.

1900 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 17:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 9:1

oneself. One word—not *one’s self.

onto; on to; on. When is on a preposition, and when an adverb? The sense of the sentence should tell, but the distinction can be subtle. Onto implies a movement, so it has an adverbial flavor even though it is a preposition {the gymnast jumped onto the bars}. When on is part of the verb phrase, it is an adverb and to is the preposition {the gymnast held on to the bars}. One trick is to mentally say “up” before on: if the sentence still makes sense, then onto is probably the right choice (she leaped onto the capstone). Alone, on does not imply motion {the gymnast is good on the parallel bars}.

oppress; repress. Oppress, meaning “to persecute or tyrannize,” is more negative than repress, meaning “to restrain or subordinate.”

or. If this conjunction joins singular nouns functioning as subjects, the verb should be singular {cash or online payment is acceptable}.

oral. See verbal.

oration. See peroration.

ordinance; ordnance. An ordinance is a municipal regulation or an authoritative decree. Ordnance is military armament, especially artillery but also weapons and ammunition generally.

orient; orientate. To orient is to get one’s bearings (literally, “to find east”) {it took the new employee a few days to get oriented to the firm’s suite}. 
Unless used in the sense “to face or turn to the east,” *orientate* is a poor variation to be avoided.

*2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 21:1*

** ought; should.** Both express a sense of duty, but *ought* is stronger. Unlike *should*, *ought* requires a fully expressed infinitive, even in the negative {you ought not to see the movie}. Don’t omit the *to*—as many otherwise well-educated speakers and writers have begun doing in recent years. See §§ 203, 205.

**ours.** So spelled—not *our’s.*

**ourselves.** This is the word—not *ourself.*

**output.** This word is more commonly a noun than a verb, but when used as a verb it should be inflected *output–output–output.* Cf. *input.*

**outside.** In spatial references, no *of* is necessary—or desirable—as after this word. But *outside of* is acceptable as a colloquialism meaning “except for” or “aside from.”

**over.** As an equivalent of *more than*, this word is perfectly good idiomatic English. Cf. *in excess of.*

*overly.** Avoid this word, which is not considered the best usage. Try *over-* as a prefix {overprotective} or *unduly* {unduly protective}.

**pair.** This is a singular form, the plural being *pairs* {three pairs of shoes}. Yet *pair* may take either a singular verb {this pair of sunglasses was on the table} or a plural one {the pair were inseparable from the moment they met}.

**palette; palate; pallet.** An artist’s *palette* is either the board that an artist uses for mixing colors or (collectively) the colors used by a particular artist or available in a computer program. Your *palate* is the roof of your mouth specifically or your taste in food generally. A *pallet* is a low, usually wooden platform for storing and transporting goods in commerce, or a crude bed consisting of a bag filled with straw.
pandemic. See epidemic.

parameters. Though it may sound elegant or scientific, this word is usually just pretentious when it is used in nontechnical contexts. Stick to boundaries, limits, guidelines, grounds, elements, or some other word.

partake in; partake of. To partake in is to participate in {the new student refused to partake in class discussions}. To partake of is either to get a part of {partake of the banquet} or to have a quality, at least to some extent {this assault partakes of revenge}.

partly; partially. Both words convey the sense “to some extent; in part” {partly responsible}. Partly is preferred in that sense. But partially has the additional senses of “incomplete” {partially cooked} and “unfairly; in a way that shows bias toward one side” {he treats his friends partially}.

past; passed. Past can be an adjective {past events} (often postpositive {times past}), a noun {remember the past}, a preposition {go past the school}, or an adverb {time flew past}. Passed is the past tense and past participle of the verb pass {we passed the school} {as time passed}.

pastime. This word combines pass (not past) and time. It is spelled with a single s and a single t.

peaceable; peaceful. A peaceable person or nation is inclined to avoid strife {peaceable kingdom}. A peaceful person, place, or event is serene, tranquil, and calm {a peaceful day free from demands}.

peak; peek; pique. These three sometimes get switched through writerly blunders. A peak is an apex, a peek is a quick or illicit glance, and a fit of pique is an episode of peevishness and wounded vanity. To pique is to annoy or arouse: an article piques (not peaks) one’s interest.

pedal; peddle. Pedal is a noun, verb, or adjective relating to the pedal extremity, or foot. As a noun, it denotes a machine device that is operated by the foot and does some work, such as powering a bicycle or changing the sound of a piano. As a verb, it means to use such a device. As an adjective, it means “of or concerning such a device or its use.” Peddle is a verb meaning either “to try to sell goods to people by traveling from place to place” or “to sell questionable goods to people”—questionable because they may be illegal, harmful, or low-quality {peddling magazine subscriptions door to door}.
peek. See peak.

**pendant, n.; pendent, adj.** A pendant is an item of dangling jewelry, especially one worn around the neck. What is pendent is hanging or suspended from something.

**peninsula.** This is the noun denoting a piece of land almost entirely surrounded by water but joined to a large area of land {they sailed around the Florida Peninsula}. The adjective is peninsular {the peninsular arm of Florida}. The adjective is often misused for the noun.

**penultimate.** This adjective means “next to last” {the penultimate paragraph in the précis}. Many people have started misusing it as a fancy equivalent of ultimate. The word antepenultimate means “the next to the next-to-last.”

**people; persons.** The traditional view is that persons is used for smaller numbers {three persons}, and people with larger ones {millions of people}. But today most people use people even for small groups {only three people were there}. Note from the ngram that since 1980 people has actually become more common for small groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Frequency of \textit{five people}</th>
<th>Frequency of \textit{five persons}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>1:24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**period of time; time period.** Avoid these phrases. Try period or time instead.

**peroration; oration.** A peroration, strictly speaking, is the conclusion of an oration (speech). Careful writers avoid using peroration to refer to a long, rousing, or bombastic speech or piece of writing.

**perpetuate; perpetrate.** To perpetuate something is to sustain it or prolong it indefinitely {perpetuate the species}. To perpetrate is to commit or perform an act, esp. one that is illegal or morally wrong {perpetrate a crime}.

**personally.** Three points. First, use this word only when an actor does something that would normally be done through an agent {the president personally signed this invitation} or to limit other considerations...
{Jean was affected by the decision but was not personally involved in it}. Second, personally is redundant when combined with an activity that necessarily requires the actor’s presence {the senator personally shook hands with the constituents}. Third, personally shouldn’t appear with I when stating an opinion; it weakens the statement and doesn’t reduce the speaker’s liability for the opinion. The only exception arises if a person is required to advance someone else’s view but holds a different personal opinion {in the chamber I voted to lower taxes because of the constituencies I represented; but I personally believed that taxes should have been increased}.

persons. See people.

perspective, n. This is the word meaning “point of view” {from our perspective}—not prospective (an adjective meaning “expected to be something in the future”) {a prospective CEO}.

persuade; convince. Persuade is associated with actions {persuade him to buy a suit}. Convince is associated with beliefs or understandings {she convinced the auditor of her honesty}. The phrase persuade to (do) has traditionally been considered better than convince to (do)—the latter having become common in AmE in the 1950s. But either verb will take a that-clause {the committee was persuaded that an all-night session was necessary} {my three-year-old is convinced that Santa Claus exists}.

pertain; appertain. Pertain to, the more common term, means “to relate directly to” {the clause pertains to assignment of risk}. Appertain to means “to belong to or concern something as a matter of form or function” {the defendant’s rights appertain to the Fifth Amendment}.

phase. See faze.

phenomenon. This is the singular {the phenomenon of texting}, the plural being phenomena {cultural phenomena}.

pique. See peak.

pitiable; pitiful. To be pitiable is to be worthy of pity. To be pitiful is either to be very poor in quality or to be so sad or unfortunate as to make people feel sympathy.
pleaded; *pled. The first is the standard past-tense and past-participial form {he pleaded guilty} {they have pleaded with their families}. Avoid *pled.

1826 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 19:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

plethora. This noun denotes an excess, surfeit, or overabundance. Avoid it as a mere equivalent of “abundance.”

pompom. So written, as a reduplicative word, even though the French loan-word was pompon. The French spelling is now a variant form in English.

populace; populous. The populace is the population of a country as a whole. A populous place is densely populated.

pore. To pore over something written is to read it intently {they pored over every word in the report}. Some writers confuse this word with pour.

practicable; possible; practical. These terms differ in shading. What is practicable is capable of being done; it’s feasible. What is possible might be capable of happening or being done, but there is some doubt. What is practical is fit for actual use or in a particular situation.

precede; proceed. To precede is to happen before or to go before in some sequence, usually time. It also means “to outrank” or “to surpass” in some measure such as importance, but this sense is usually conveyed with the noun precedence {the board’s vote takes precedence over the staff’s recommendation}. The word is often misspelled *preceed. To proceed is to go on, whether beginning, continuing, or resuming.

precipitate, adj.; precipitous. What is precipitate occurs suddenly or rashly, without proper consideration; it describes demands, actions, or movements. What is precipitous is dangerously steep; it describes cliffs and inclines.

precondition. Try condition or prerequisite instead.

predominant, adj.; predominate, vb. Like dominant, predominant is an adjective {a predominant point of view}. Like dominate, predominate is
a verb {a point of view that predominates throughout the state}. Using *predominate* as an adjective is nonstandard.

**preface.** See *foreword*.

**prejudice,** *vb.* Although *prejudice* is a perfectly normal English noun to denote an all-too-common trait, the corresponding verb is a legalism. For a plain-English equivalent, use *harm* or *hurt*.

**preliminary to.** Make it *before, in preparing for*, or some other natural phrasing.

**prerogative.** A *prerogative* is a right or privilege afforded by one’s office or class. It is often misspelled and mispronounced as if the first syllable were *per*.

**prescribe.** See *proscribe*.

**presently.** This word is ambiguous. Write *now* or *soon*, whichever you really mean.

**presumption.** See *assumption*.

**preventive.** Although the corrupt form *preventative* is fairly common, the strictly correct form is *preventive*.

**previous to.** Make it *before*. 

*prevention.**
principle; principal. A principle is a natural, moral, or legal rule {the principle of free speech}. The corresponding adjective is principled {a principled decision}. A principal is a person of high authority or prominence {a school principal} or an initial deposit of money {principal and interest}. Principal is also an adjective meaning “most important.” Hence a principal role is a primary one.

*prior to. Make it before or until.

proceed. See precede.

process of, in the. You can almost always delete this phrase without affecting the meaning. Cf. current.

propaganda. This is a singular noun denoting information that, being false or misleading, is used by a government or political group to influence people {propaganda was everywhere}. The plural is propagandas.

prophesy; prophecy. Prophesy is the verb meaning “to say what will happen in the future, esp. by using supernatural or magical knowledge” {the doomsayers prophesied a market boom despite the bad news}. Prophecy is the noun denoting a prediction made esp. by someone claiming to have supernatural or magical powers {their prophecies did not materialize}. *Prophesize is an erroneous form sometimes encountered.

proscribe; prescribe. To proscribe something is to prohibit it {legislation that proscribes drinking while driving}. To prescribe is to say officially what must be done in a particular situation {Henry VIII prescribed the order of succession to include three of his children} or to specify a medical remedy {the doctor prescribed anti-inflammatory pills and certain exercises}.

prospective. See perspective.

prostrate; prostate. One prostrates oneself by lying facedown on the ground in submission or worship, or from weakness. The prostate is a gland in the reproductive systems of male mammals.

protuberance. So spelled. Perhaps because protrude means “to stick out,” writers want to spell protuberance (= something that bulges out) with an extra r (after the t). But the words are from different roots.
proved; proven. *Proved* is the preferred past participle for the verb *prove* {it was proved to be true}. Use *proven* only as an adjective {a proven success}.

1820 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 275:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

proximity. See *close proximity.*

purposely; purposefully. What is done *purposely* is done deliberately or intentionally, or “on purpose.” What is done *purposefully* is done with a certain goal or a clear aim in mind. An action may be done *purposely* without any particular interest in a specific result—that is, not *purposefully.*

question whether; question of whether; question as to whether. The first phrasing is traditionally considered best. The others are phraseologically inferior. See *as to.*

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books (two main forms): 1:1

quick(ly). *Quickly* is the general adverb. But *quick* is properly used as an adverb in the idiomatic phrases *get rich quick* and *come quick.* See § 215.

quote; quotation. Traditionally a verb, *quote* is often used as an equivalent of *quotation* in speech and informal writing. Also, there is a tendency for writers (especially journalists) to think of *quotes* as contemporary
remarks usable in their writing and of quotations as being wisdom of the ages expressed pithily.

rack; wrack. The spelling rack is complex: it accounts for nine different nouns and seven different verbs. As between rack and wrack, the former is standard in all familiar senses {racking his brains} {racked with guilt} {nerve-racking} {rack and ruin}. Wrack is the standard spelling only for the noun meaning “seaweed, kelp.” See nerve-racking.

raise; raze. To raise is to elevate, move upward, enhance, bring up, etc. {we raised some money}. To raze is to demolish, level to the ground, remove, etc. {they razed the building}.

reason. Two points. First, as to reason why, although some object to the supposed redundancy of this phrase, it is centuries old and perfectly acceptable English. Reason that is not always an adequate substitute {can you give reasons why that is preferable to which as a restrictive relative pronoun?}. Second, *reason . . . is because is not good usage—reason . . . is that being preferred {the reason we returned on July 2 is that we wanted to avoid hordes of tourists}.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 1.5:1

recur; reoccur. To recur is to happen again and again {his knee problems recurred throughout the rest of the year}, to return to in one’s attention or memory {she recurred to her war experiences throughout our visit}, or to come back to one’s attention or memory {the idea recurred to him throughout the night}. To reoccur is merely to happen again {the leak reoccurred during the second big rain}.

reek. See wreak.

reference; referral. A reference is a source of information, a person to provide information, an authority for some assertion, or a strong allusion to something. It’s also an attributive adjective {reference book}. It’s not universally accepted as a transitive verb. Referral is a narrower term denoting the practice or an instance of (1) directing someone to another
person who can help, esp. a professional or a specialist, or (2) relegating some matter to another body for a recommendation or resolution.

**refrain; restrain.** To *refrain* is to restrain yourself or to keep from doing something; it is typically an act of self-discipline. Other people *restrain* you by stopping you from doing something, especially by using physical force {if you don’t refrain from the disorderly conduct, the police will restrain you}. Yet it is possible to restrain oneself by controlling one’s own emotions or behavior—and doing so is known as *self-restraint*.

**refute**, *vb.* To *refute* is to prove that a statement or an idea is wrong—not merely to deny or rebut.

**regardless.** See *irregardless.*

**regrettable; regretful.** What is *regrettable* is unfortunate or unpleasant enough to make one wish that things were otherwise. A person who is *regretful* feels sorry or disappointed about something done or lost. The adverb *regrettably*, not *regretfully*, is the synonym of *unfortunately*.

**rein; reign.** A *rein* (usu. plural) controls a horse; it is the right word in idioms such as *take the reins*, *give free rein*, and, as a verb, *rein in*. A *reign* is a state of or term of dominion, esp. that of a monarch but by extension dominance in some field. This is the right word in idioms such as *reign of terror* and, as a verb, *reign supreme*.

**relegate; delegate.** To *relegate* is to assign a lesser position than before {the officer was relegated to desk duty pending an investigation}. To *delegate* is to authorize a subordinate to act in one’s behalf {Congress delegated environmental regulation to the EPA} or to choose someone to do a particular job or to represent an organization or group {she was delegated to find a suitable hotel for the event}.

**reluctant.** See *reticent*.

**renounce.** See *denounce*.

**reoccur.** See *recur*.

**repellent; repulsive.** *Repellent* and *repulsive* both denote the character of driving others away. But *repulsive* has strong connotations of being so disgusting as to make one feel sick.

**repetitive; repetitious.** Both mean “occurring over and over.” But whereas *repetitive* is fairly neutral in connotation, *repetitious* has taken on the nuance of tediousness that induces boredom.

**replace.** See *substitute*.

**repress.** See *oppress*.

**repulsive.** See *repellent*. 
restaurateur. So spelled—not *restauranteur.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 188:1

restive; restful. Restive means “so dissatisfied or bored with a situation as to be impatient for change.” Restful means “peaceful, quiet, and conducive to relaxation.”

restrain. See refrain.

reticent. Avoid using this word as a synonym for reluctant. It means “unwilling to talk about what one feels or knows; taciturn” {when asked about the incident, the congressional representative became uncharacteristically reticent}.

revenge. See avenge.

rob; steal. Both verbs mean “to wrongfully take (something from another person).” But rob also includes a threat or act of harming, usu. but not always to the person being robbed.

role; roll. A role is an acting part {the role of Hamlet} or the way in which someone or something is involved in an activity or situation, esp. in reference to influence {the role that money plays as an incentive}. Roll has many meanings, including a roster {guest roll}; something made or done by rolling {roll of the dice}; and something in the shape of a cylinder or sphere, whether literally {dinner roll} or figuratively {bankroll}. Roll can also be a verb meaning to rotate {roll over!}, to wrap [something] {roll up the leftovers}, or to move forward {the cart rolled down the hill}.

run the gauntlet. See gauntlet.

sacrilegious. This is the correct spelling. There is a tendency by some to switch the -i- and -e- on either side of the -l-, but in fact the word is related to sacrilege, not religion or religious.

scarcely. See hardly.

seasonal; seasonable. Seasonal means either “happening as expected or needed during a particular time of year” {snow-skiing is a seasonal
hobby) or “relating to the seasons or a season” {the seasonal aisle stays stocked most of the year, starting with Valentine’s Day gifts in January}. Seasonable means “timely” {seasonable motions for continuance} or “fitting the time of year” {it was unseasonably cold for July}.

**self-deprecating.** See deprecate.

**semi-**. See bi-.

**semiannual.** See biannual.

**sensor.** See censor.

**sensual; sensuous.** What is sensual involves indulgence of the physical senses—especially sexual gratification. What is sensuous usually applies to aesthetic enjoyment; it is primarily hack writers who imbue the word with salacious connotations.

**sewer; sewage; sewerage.** Sewer denotes a wastewater pipe or passage. Sewage denotes the waste carried through such a pipe or passage. Sewerage denotes the sewer system as a whole, including treatment plants and other facilities, and the function of the disposal of sewage and wastewater in general.

**shall.** This word is complicated. For the traditional will–shall paradigm that modern grammarians have long repudiated, see § 175. The reality is that shall is little used in everyday contexts outside BrE—not in North America but also not in Australia, Ireland, or Scotland. In legal contexts, it frequently appears in statutes, rules, and contracts, supposedly in a mandatory sense but actually quite ambiguously. It is perhaps the most widely litigated word in the law—with wildly varying results in its multifarious interpretations. Legal drafters are therefore often advised to avoid it altogether in favor of must, is, will, may, and other phrases among which shall’s various meanings can be allocated.3

**shear; sheer.** Shear is the noun or verb relating to (1) the cutting tool, or (2) a force affecting movement, such as a crosswind or the slipping of plates in an earthquake. Sheer is most often an adjective meaning (1) “semitransparent” {a sheer curtain}, (2) “nothing but” {sheer madness}, or (3) “almost vertical” {a sheer cliff}.

**sherbet.** So spelled—not the erroneous reduplicative form *sherbert.

---

shine. When this verb is intransitive, it means “to give or make light”; the past tense is *shone* {the stars shone dimly}. When it is transitive, it means “to cause to shine”; the past tense is *shined* {the caterer shined the silver}.

should. See *ought*.

sight; site. A *sight* may be something worth seeing {the sights of London} or a device to aid the eye {the sight of a gun}, among other things. A *site* is a place, whether physical {a mall will be built on this site} or electronic {website}. The figurative expression meaning “to focus on a goal” is *to set one’s sights*. Cf. *cite*.

simplistic. This word, meaning “oversimplified,” has derogatory connotations. Don’t confuse it with *simple*.

since. This word may relate either to time {since last winter} or to causation {since I’m a golfer, I know what “double bogey” means}. Some writers erroneously believe that the word relates exclusively to time. But the causal *since* was a part of the English language before Chaucer wrote in the fourteenth century, and it is useful as a slightly milder way of expressing causation than *because*. But if there is any possibility of confusion with the temporal sense, use *because*. See *because* & *inasmuch as*.

sink. Inflected *sink–sank–sunk*. Avoid using *sunk* as a simple past, as in *the ship sunk*.

site. See *cite*; *sight*.

skulduggery. Traditionally so spelled—not (through folk etymology) *skullduggery*. The Scottish derivation has nothing to do with skulls. But *skullduggery* has been the slightly predominant spelling in AmE since the mid-1990s.

slander. See *defamation*.

slew; slough; *slue*. As a noun, *slew* (/sloo/) is an informal word equivalent to *many* or *lots* {you have a slew of cattle}. It is sometimes misspelled *slough* (a legitimate noun meaning “a grimy swamp” [pronounced either /sloo/ or /slow/]). The phrase *slough of despond* (from Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* [1678]) means “a state of depression or sadness from which one cannot easily lift oneself.” This term is etymologically different from *slough* (/slɔːf/), meaning “to discard” {slough off dry skin}.

As a present-tense verb, to *slew* is to turn or slide violently or suddenly in a different direction—or to make a vehicle do so {the car keeps slewing sideways}. In AmE, a variant spelling of this verb is *slue*. As a
past-tense verb, *slew* corresponds to the present-tense *slay* {Cain slew Abel}.

*slew*. This word, like *slowly*, may be an adverb. Generally, prefer *slowly* {go slowly}. But when used after the verb in a pithy statement, especially an injunction, *slow* often appears in colloquial usage {go slow!} {take it slow}. See § 215.

*slue*. See *slew*.

*smell*. Inflected *smell–smelled–smelled*, although *smelt* is almost as frequent a past form in BrE. The same was true in AmE until about 1930, when the past form *smelled* acquired ascendency.

*sneak*. This verb is conjugated as a regular verb: *sneak–sneaked–sneaked*. Reserve *snuck* for dialect and tongue-in-cheek usages.

*sort*. Use *this sort of* or *these sorts of*—never *these sort of*.

*space*. As a figurative noun, this word has become a voguish equivalent of *area* {though not initially interested in journalism, he has decided to move into that space}. Although (or perhaps because) this usage is au courant, avoid it. Cf. *area*.

*spell*, *vb*. Inflected *spell–spelled–spelled*, although the variant past form *spelt* is common in BrE. The same was true in AmE until about 1870, when the past form *spelled* became the predominant spelling.

*spill*. Inflected *spill–spilled–spilled*—or *spilt* in the set phrase *spilt milk* and in many BrE contexts.
spit. If used to mean “to expectorate,” the verb is inflected spit–spat–spit {he spat a curse} {he has spit many a curse}. But if used to mean “to skewer,” it’s spit–spitted–spitted {the hens have been spitted for broiling}. 2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 2:1

spoil. Inflected spoil–spoiled–spoiled, although the variant past form spoilt is common in BrE.


stanch. See staunch.

stationary; stationery. Stationary describes a state of immobility or of staying in one place {if it’s stationary, paint it}. Stationery denotes writing materials, especially paper for writing letters, usually with matching envelopes {love letters written on perfumed stationery}. To remember the two, try associating the -er in stationery with the -er in paper; or remember that a stationer is someone who sells the stuff.

staunch; stanch. Staunch is an adjective meaning “ardent and faithful” {a staunch Red Sox supporter}. Stanch is the AmE verb meaning “to stop the flow”; it is almost always used in regard to bleeding, literally and metaphorically {after New Hampshire the campaign hemorrhaged; only a big win in South Carolina could stanch the bleeding}. In BrE, however, stanching the flow is the standard wording.

steal. See rob.

strait; straight. A strait (often pl.) is (1) literally, a narrow channel connecting two large bodies of water separated by two areas of land {Strait of Magellan}, or (2) figuratively, a difficult position {dire straits}. This is the word used in compound terms with the sense of constriction

Words sometimes change their proper historical meaning, and when the change is sanctioned by a general and established usage it must be accepted. On the other hand, we ought to resist any perversion of the meaning of a word as long as we can.

—Henry Bett

Some Secrets of Style
{straitlaced} {straitjacket}. *Straight is most often an adjective meaning unbent, steady, sober, candid, honest, or heterosexual.

2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

strata, n. This is the plural for stratum. Keep it plural {Fussell identified nine discrete strata in American society}. Avoid the double plural *stratas.

strategy; tactics. A strategy is a long-term plan for achieving a goal. A tactic is a shorter-term method for achieving an immediate but limited success. A strategy might involve several tactics. By the way, although strategy is so spelled, stratagem has an -a- in the middle syllable.

subject. See citizen.

subsequent. See consequent.

subsequently. Try later.

*subsequent to. Make it after.

substitute; replace. To substitute is to put someone or something in place of another {he substituted a replica for the original}. To replace is to insert something in the place of someone or something else {he replaced the original with a replica}. It’s sloppy usage to let substitute appear in the place of replace.

such. This word, when used to replace this or that—as in “such building was later condemned”—is symptomatic of legalese. *Such is actually no more precise than the, this, that, these, or those. It’s perfectly acceptable, however, to use such with a mass noun or plural noun when the meaning is “of that type” or “of this kind” {such impudence galled the rest of the family} {such vitriolic exchanges became commonplace in the following years}. For the misuse of as such, see as such.

such as. See like.

sufficient. See adequate.
supersede. The root of this word derives from sedeo, the Latin word for “to sit, to be established,” not cedo, meaning “to yield.” Hence the spelling varies from the root in words such as concede, recede, and secede.

1880 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 89:1
2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 12:1


sympathy. See empathy.

systematic; systemic. Systematic means “according to a plan or system, organized methodically, or arranged in a system.” Systemic, meaning “affecting the whole of something,” is limited in use to physiological systems {a systemic disease affecting several organs} or, by extension, other systems that may be likened to the body {systemic problems within the corporate hierarchy}.

tactics. See strategy.

take. See bring.

tantalizing; titillating. A tantalizing thing torments us because we want it badly, yet it is always just out of reach. A titillating thing tickles us pleasantly, literally or figuratively—and the word often carries sexual connotations.

text, vb. Inflected text–texted–texted, as a regular verb. Avoid using the uninflected text for the past-tense forms.
than. 1. For *different than* vs. *different from*, see *different*. 2. For a discussion of *than I* (vs. *me*), see § 68.

1980 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 3:1

thankfully. This word traditionally means “appreciatively; gratefully.” It is not in good use as a substitute for *thank goodness* or *fortunately*.

**that; which.** These are both relative pronouns (see §§ 80–91). In polished American prose, *that* is used restrictively to narrow a category or identify a particular item being talked about {any building that is taller must be outside the state}; *which* is used nonrestrictively—not to narrow a class or identify a particular item but to add something about an item already identified {alongside the officer trotted a toy poodle, which is hardly a typical police dog}. *Which* is best used restrictively only when it is preceded by a preposition {the situation in which we find ourselves}. Otherwise, it is almost always preceded by a comma, a parenthesis, or a dash. In BrE, writers and editors seldom observe the distinction between the two words.

Is it a useful distinction? Yes. At least one commentator has tried to dismiss it as the “daydream” of H. W. Fowler, the renowned usage expert who in 1926 wrote *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. But as I have shown elsewhere, the distinction long predates Fowler— and the language inarguably benefits from having a terminological as well as a punctuational means of telling a restrictive from a nonrestrictive relative pronoun, punctuation often being ill-heeded. Apologists for the restrictive *which*—again, the recommendation here is to make it nonrestrictive unless it follows a preposition—urge that *which* can sometimes be more euphonious than *that*. If that is ever so, it is an extreme rarity.

One final point. Is it acceptable to use *that* in reference to people? Is *friends that arrive early* an acceptable alternative to *friends who arrive early*? The answer is yes. Person *that* has long been considered good

---

idiomatic English. Even so, *person who* is nearly three times as common as *person that* in edited English.

**thaw.** This is the word meaning “to unfreeze.” Avoid *unthaw.*

**theirs.** So written {the book is theirs}—not *their’s.*

**themselves.** This is the standard reflexive pronoun—never *themself.*

**there; their; they’re.** *There* denotes a place or direction {stay there}. *Their* is the possessive pronoun {all their good wishes}. *They’re* is a contraction of *they are* {they’re calling now}.

**therefore; therefor.** The words have different senses. *Therefore*, the common word, means “as a result; for that reason” {the evidence of guilt was slight; therefore, the jury acquitted the defendant}. *Therefor*, a legalism, means “for it” or “for them” {he took the unworn shirt back to the store and received a refund therefor}.

**though.** See *although.*

**threshold; withhold.** The first word has one -h-, the second two. In fact, *threshold* does not derive from *hold* at all. *Withhold* does, of course, and retains the -h- in both parts of the compound.

**thus.** This is the adverb—not *thusly.* Use *thus* (it’s called a flat adverb—see § 215).

**till.** This is a perfectly good preposition and conjunction {open till 10 p.m.}. It is not a contraction of *until* and should not be written ’til. Some will argue that they want to contract *until* instead of using *till.* They might as well argue that they want to contract *unto* and write *I plan on giving a present ‘to you.*

**2008 Ratio of Frequency in Printed Books: 33:1**

**timbre; timber.** *Timbre* is a musical term meaning “tonal quality of the sound made by a particular musical instrument or voice.” *Timber* is the correct spelling in all other uses, which relate to trees or wood.

**time period.** See *period of time.*
titillating. See tantalizing.
tolerance; toleration. Tolerance is the habitual quality of being tolerant—that is, willing to allow people to say, believe, or do what they want without criticism or punishment. Toleration is a particular instance of being tolerant.
torpid. See turbid.
tortious; tortuous; torturous. What is tortious relates to torts (civil wrongs) or to acts that give rise to legal claims for torts {tortious interference with a contract}. What is tortuous is full of twists and turns and therefore makes travel difficult {a tortuous path through the woods}. What is torturous involves severe physical and mental suffering {a torturous exam}.
toward; towards. The preferred form in AmE is toward: this has been so since about 1900. In BrE, towards predominates. The same is true for other directional words, such as upward, downward, forward, and backward, as well as afterward. The use of afterwards and backwards as adverbs is neither rare nor incorrect (and is preferred in BrE). For the sake of consistency, many American editors prefer the shorter forms without the final -s.
transcript; transcription. A transcript is either a written record, as of a trial or a radio program, or an official record of a student’s classes and grades. Transcription is the act or process of creating a transcript.
transpire, vb. Although its traditional sense is “to come to be known” {it transpired that he had paid bribes}, transpire more commonly today means “happen” or “occur” {what transpired when I was away?}. In that newer sense, transpire still carries a vague odor of jargon and pretentiousness. But that is disappearing.
trillion. See billion.
triumphal; triumphant. Things are triumphal (done or made to celebrate a victory) {a triumphal arch}. But only people feel triumphant (displaying pleasure and pride as a result of a victory or success) {a triumphant Caesar returned to Rome}.
try and. Prefer try to.
turbid; turgid; torpid. Turbid water or liquid is thick and opaque from churned-up mud or detritus {a turbid pond}; by extension, turbid means “unclear, confused, or disturbed” {a turbid argument}. Turgid means “swollen,” and by extension “pompous and bombastic” {turgid prose}. Torpid means “idle, lazy, and sleepy” {a torpid economy}.
ultimate. See penultimate.

unexceptional; unexceptionable. The first means “not very good; no better than average.” The second means “not open to objection.”

uninterested. See disinterested.

unique. Reserve this word for the sense “one of a kind.” Avoid it in the sense “special, unusual.” Phrases such as *very unique, *more unique, *somewhat unique, and so on—in which a degree is attributed to unique—aren’t the best usage.

unlawful; illegal; illicit; criminal. This list is in ascending order of negative connotation. An unlawful act may even be morally innocent (for example, letting a parking meter expire). But an illegal act is something that society formally condemns, and an illicit act calls to mind moral degeneracy {illicit drug use}. Unlike criminal, the first three terms can apply to civil wrongs.

unorganized. See disorganized.

unreadable. See illegible.

upon. See on.

upward(s). See toward.

use; utilize. Use is usually the best choice for simplicity. Utilize is usually an overblown alternative of use, but it is occasionally the better choice when the distinct sense is “to use to best effect” {how to utilize our staff most effectively}.

utmost. This is the word {do your utmost!}, never *upmost.

venal; venial. A person who is venal is mercenary or open to bribery—willing to use power and influence dishonestly in return for money {a venal government official}; a thing that is venal is purchasable {venal livestock}. A venial fault or sin is trivial enough to be pardonable or excusable {a venial offense} {a venial error}.

verbal; oral. If something is put into words, it is verbal. Technically, verbal covers both written and spoken utterance. If you wish to specify that something was conveyed by word of mouth, use oral.

very. See much.

vocation. See avocation.

voluminous. See compendious.

waive; wave. To waive is to relinquish claim to or not to insist on enforcing. To wave is to move to and fro.

wangle. See wrangle.
wedding. See marriage.

whether. Generally, use whether alone—not with the words or not tacked on {they didn’t know whether to go}. The or not is necessary only when you mean to convey the idea “regardless of whether” {we’ll finish on time whether or not it rains}. On the distinction between whether and if, see if.

which. See that.

while. While may substitute for although or whereas, especially if a conversational tone is desired {while many readers may disagree, the scientific community has overwhelmingly adopted the conclusions here presented}. Yet because while can denote either time or contrast, the word is occasionally ambiguous; when a real ambiguity exists, although or whereas is the better choice.

who; whom. Here are the traditional rules: who is a nominative pronoun used as (1) the subject of a finite verb {it was Jim who bought the coffee today} or (2) a predicate nominative when it follows a linking verb {that’s who}. Whom is an objective pronoun that may appear as (1) the object of a verb {I learned nothing about the man whom I saw} or (2) the object of a preposition {the woman to whom I owe my life}. Today there are two countervailing trends: first, there’s a decided tendency to use who colloquially in most contexts; second, among those insecure about their grammar, there’s a tendency to overcorrect oneself and use whom when who would be correct. Writers and editors of formal prose often resist the first of these; everyone should resist the second. See § 91.

whoever; whomever. Avoid the second unless you are certain of your grammar {give this book to whoever wants it} {I cook for whomever I love}. If you are uncertain why these examples are correct, use anyone who or (as in the second example) anyone.

who’s; whose. The first is a contraction {who’s on first?}, the second a possessive {whose life is it, anyway?}. Unlike who and whom, whose may refer to things as well as people {the Commerce Department, whose bailiwick includes intellectual property}. See § 89.

whosoever; whoever’s. The first is correct (though increasingly rare) in formal writing {whosoever bag that is, it needs to be moved out of the way}; the second is acceptable in casual usage {whoever’s dog got into our garbage can, the owner should clean up the mess}.

withhold. See threshold.

workers’ compensation. This is the preferred name for workplace accident-insurance plans, not workmen’s compensation. Notice that workers is
always plural. When used as a phrasal adjective (see § 131), it is hyphenated {workers’-compensation system}.

**wrack.** See *rack*.

**wrangle; wangle.** To *wrangle* is to argue, esp. angrily over a long period {still wrangling over their parents’ estate}. To *wangle* is to get something or arrange for something to happen by cleverness, manipulation, or trickery {wangle a couple of last-minute tickets}.

**wreak; reek.** *Wreak* means (1) “to cause a great deal of harm or many problems” {to wreak havoc on the administration}, or (2) “to punish someone in revenge” {to wreak vengeance on his erstwhile friends}. The past tense is *wreaked*, not *wrought*. (The latter is an archaic form of the past tense and past participle of *work*.) *Reek* can be a verb meaning “to stink” or a noun meaning “stench.”

**wrong; wrongful.** These terms are not interchangeable. *Wrong* has two senses: (1) “immoral, unlawful” {it’s wrong to bully smaller children}, and (2) “improper, incorrect, unsatisfactory” {many of the math answers are wrong}. *Wrongful* likewise has two senses: (1) “unjust, unfair” {wrongful conduct}, and (2) “unsanctioned by law; having no legal right” {it was a wrongful demand on the estate}.

**yes.** See *affirmative*, in the.

**your; you’re.** *Your* is the possessive form of *you* {your class}. *You’re* is the contraction for *you are* {you’re welcome}.
Maintaining credibility. Discussions of bias-free language—language that is neither sexist nor suggestive of other conscious or subconscious prejudices—have a way of descending quickly into politics. But there is a way to avoid the political quagmire: if we focus solely on maintaining credibility with a wide readership, the argument for eliminating bias from your writing becomes much simpler. Biased language that is not central to the meaning of the work distracts readers, and in their eyes the work is less credible. Few texts warrant the deliberate display of linguistic biases. Nor is it ideal, however, to call attention to a supposed absence of linguistic biases, since this will also distract readers and weaken credibility.

Gender bias. Consider the issue of gender-neutral language. On the one hand, a great many reasonable readers find it unacceptable to use the generic masculine pronoun (*he in reference to no one in particular). On the other hand, it is unacceptable to a great many readers (often different readers) either to resort to nontraditional gimmicks to avoid the generic masculine (by using *he/she or *s/he, for example) or to use they as a kind of singular pronoun. Either approach sacrifices credibility with some readers.

Other biases. The same is true of other types of biases, such as slighting allusions or stereotypes based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender status, or birth or family status. Careful writers avoid language that reasonable readers might find offensive or distracting—unless the biased language is central to the meaning of the writing. See § 296.

Invisible gender-neutrality. What is wanted is a kind of invisible gender-neutrality. There are many ways to achieve this invisibly gender-neutral language, but it takes some thought and often some hard work.

Techniques for achieving gender-neutrality. Nine methods are suggested below because no single method will work for every writer or in every context. Choose the combination of methods that works best in the context you’ve created.
1. **Omit the pronoun.** Sometimes a personal pronoun is not really necessary. For instance, in *the programmer should update the records when data is transferred to her by the head office*, if there is only one programmer, the pronoun phrase *to her* can be omitted: *the programmer should update the records when data is transferred by the head office*. Note that the shorter sentence is tighter as well as gender-free.

2. **Repeat the noun.** If a noun and its pronoun are separated by many words, try repeating the noun. For instance, *a writer should be careful not to needlessly antagonize readers, because her credibility would otherwise suffer* becomes *a writer should be careful not to needlessly antagonize readers, because the writer's credibility would otherwise suffer*. Take care not to overuse this technique. Repeating a noun too frequently will irritate readers. If you have to repeat a noun more than twice in a sentence or repeat it too closely, you should probably rewrite the sentence.

3. **Use a plural antecedent.** By using a plural antecedent, you eliminate the need for a singular pronoun. For instance, *a contestant must conduct himself with dignity at all times* becomes *contestants must conduct themselves with dignity at all times*. The method may cause a slight change in connotation. In the example, a duty becomes a collective responsibility rather than an individual one.

4. **Use an article instead of a pronoun.** Try replacing the singular personal pronoun with a definite or indefinite article. Quite often you’ll find that the effect on the sentence’s meaning is negligible. For instance, *A student accused of cheating must actively waive his right to have his guidance counselor present* becomes *A student accused of cheating must actively waive the right to have a guidance counselor present*.

5. **Use the neutral singular pronoun one.** Try replacing the gender-specific personal pronoun with the gender-neutral singular pronoun *one*. For instance, *an actor in New York is likely to earn more than he is in Paducah* becomes *an actor in New York is likely to earn more than one in Paducah*.

6. **Use the relative pronoun who.** This technique works best when it replaces a personal pronoun that follows *if*. It also requires revising the sentence slightly. For instance, *employers presume that if an applicant can’t write well, he won’t be a good employee* becomes *employers presume that an applicant who can’t write well won’t be a good employee*.

7. **Use the imperative mood.** The imperative eliminates the need for an explicit pronoun. Although its usefulness is limited in some types of writing, you may find that it avoids prolixity and more forcefully addresses the target audience. For instance, *a lifeguard must keep a*
close watch over children while he is monitoring the pool becomes keep a close watch over children while monitoring the pool.

8. **In moderation, use he or she.** Although it is an easy fix, the phrase *he or she* should be used sparingly, preferably only when no other technique is satisfactory. For instance, *if a complainant is not satisfied with the board’s decision, then he can ask for a rehearing becomes if a complainant is not satisfied with the board’s decision, then he or she can ask for a rehearing*. If you find you need to repeat the pronouns in the same sentence, don’t. Revise the sentence instead.

9. **Revise the sentence.** If no other technique produces a sentence that reads well, rewrite the sentence so that personal pronouns aren’t needed. The amount of revision will vary. For instance, *if a boy or girl misbehaves, his or her privileges will be revoked becomes if someone misbehaves, that person’s privileges will be revoked*. And *a person who decides not to admit he lied will be considered honest until someone exposes his lie becomes a person who denies lying will be considered honest until the lie is exposed*.

440 **Necessary gender-specific language.** It isn’t always necessary or desirable to use gender-neutral terms and phrasings. If you’re writing about something that clearly concerns only one sex (e.g., *women’s studies; men’s golf championship*) or an inherently single-sex institution (e.g., a sorority; a Masonic lodge), trying to use gender-neutral language may lead to absurd prose {be solicitous of a pregnant friend’s comfort; he or she will need your support}.

441 **Sex-specific labels as adjectives.** It’s acceptable to use the noun *woman* as a modifier {woman judge}. In recent decades, *woman* has been rapidly replacing *lady* in such constructions. The adjective *female* is also used often but may be less acceptable to some readers who feel that it is somehow dismissive or derogatory (perhaps because it’s a biological term used for animals as well as humans). *Female* is also relatively common in some phrasings (e.g., *female police officer*).

But be careful to use such modifiers only when the subject’s gender is relevant. Referring to a “woman judge” when her sex isn’t germane to the discussion risks offending many readers by implying that there is something unusual or remarkable about a woman in that profession. As a rule, don’t use such a modifier—or a gendered suffix (see § 443)—unless you would also do so for a male in the same context.
Gender-neutral singular pronouns. The only gender-neutral singular pronoun in English is *it*, which doesn’t refer to humans (with very limited exceptions). Clumsy artifices such as *s/he* and *{(wo)man}* or artificial genderless pronouns have all been tried—for many years—with no success. They won’t succeed. And those who use them invite credibility problems. Indefinite pronouns such as *anybody* and *someone* don’t always satisfy the need for a gender-neutral alternative because they are traditionally regarded as singular antecedents that call for a third-person-singular pronoun. Many people substitute the plural *they*, *them*, and *their* for the singular *he*, *she*, *him*, *his*, or *her*. Although *they* and *their* have become common in informal usage, these are not considered fully acceptable in formal AmE—though BrE is much more accepting of them. Yet they are steadily gaining ground. For now, unless you are given guidelines to the contrary, be wary of using them in a singular sense.

Problematic suffixes. The trend in AmE is toward eliminating sex-specific suffixes. Words with feminine suffixes such as *-ess* and *-ette* are easily replaced with the suffix-free forms, which are increasingly accepted as applying to both men and women. For example, *author* and *testator* are preferable to *authoress* and *testatrix*. The suffix *-man* is more problematic. The word *person* rarely functions well as a suffix. It tends to make words such as *chairperson* and *anchorperson* sound more pompous or wooden than the simpler (and correct) *chair* or *anchor*. Also, an unfortunate tendency (or suspicion) is that the *-person* suffix is being used only for women. So unless a *-person* word is well established (such as *salesperson*, which dates from 1901), don’t automatically substitute *-person* for *-man*. English has many alternatives that

---

are not necessarily newly coined, including police officer (first recorded in 1797), firefighter (1903), and mail carrier (1788).

444 **Avoiding other biased language.** Comments that betray a writer’s conscious or unconscious biases or ignorance may cause readers to lose respect for the writer and interpret the words in unintended ways. Below are some things to watch for.

445 **Unnecessary focus on personal characteristics.** As a matter of style, it’s wise to avoid irrelevant references to personal characteristics such as sex, race, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, and social standing. Such pointless references may affect a reader’s perception of you or the person you are writing about or both. They may also invoke a reader’s biases and cloud your meaning. When it is important to mention a characteristic because doing so will help the reader develop a picture of the person you are writing about, use care. For instance, in the sentence *Shirley Chisholm was probably the finest black woman member of the House of Representatives that New York has ever had*, the phrase *black woman* might imply to some readers that (1) Chisholm was a great representative “for a woman” but may have been surpassed by many or even all men, (2) she stands out only among black women who have served in Congress, or (3) it is unusual for a woman or an African American to hold high office. But in *Shirley Chisholm was the first black woman to be elected to Congress and one of New York’s all-time best representatives*, the purpose of the phrase *black woman* is not likely to be misunderstood.

446 **Unnecessary emphasis on the trait, not the person.** A characteristic is best not made into a label. It should preferably be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Instead of referring to someone as, for instance, *a Catholic* or *a deaf-mute*, put the person first by writing *a Catholic man* or *he is Catholic*, and *a deaf-and-mute child* or *the child is deaf and mute*.

447 **Inappropriate labels.** People are sensitive to labels, especially those that describe them or the group they identify with. Labels change, sometimes rapidly, so that what is acceptable at one point in time is not at another. More than one acceptable label may be widely used at the same time. Or a particular label may be preferred in one geographic area but objectionable in another. Some labels may have subtle differences. And some are suitable for things but not people. Your best guide for choosing which term to use is the affected individual’s or group’s preference. Be aware of what’s current and appropriate.
Prepositional Idioms

Idiomatic uses. Among the most persistent word-choice issues are those concerning prepositions. Which prepositions go with which words? You fill A with B but instill B into A; you replace A with B but substitute B for A; you prefix A to B but preface B with A; you force A into B but enforce B on A; finally, A implies B, so you infer B from A. And that’s only the beginning of it.

Shifts in idiom. While prepositional idioms often give nonnative speakers of English nightmares, even native speakers of English often need to double-check them. Often the language undergoes some shifting. There may be a difference between traditional literary usage (oblivious of) and prevailing contemporary usage (oblivious to). Sometimes the writer may choose one or the other preposition for reasons of euphony. (Is it better, in a given context, to ruminate on, about, or over a specified problem?) Sometimes, too, the denotative and connotative differences can be striking: it’s one thing to be smitten with another and quite a different thing to be smitten by another.

Words and the prepositions construed with them. Words generally have certain prepositions associated with them, and these prepositions show the relationships with other words. It’s often a matter of idiom. The list below hardly exhausts the possible combinations, but it contains the pairings that most often give writers trouble. For any such words, Google’s ngrams can be invaluable.

aberration (n.): from, of
abhorrence (n.): of
abhorrent (adj.): to
abide (vb.): with [stay], by [obey]
abound (vb.): in, with
absolve (vb.): from [guilt], of
absolved (adj.): from, of, by
abstain (vb.): from
abut (vb.): on, against
accede (vb.): to
accommodate (vb.): by, for, in, with, to
accompanied (vb.): to, by, [not with]

accompany (vb.): to, by, with
accord (n.): with, between, over, about
accord (vb.): in, to, with
accordance (n.): with
account (n.): of, for, to, about, with
account (vb.): to [a person], for [a thing or a person]
accountable (adj.): to, for
accuse (vb.): of
acquainted (adj.): with
acquiesce (vb.): in, to [preferably not with]
acquit (vb.): of
act (vb.): on, for, to, against
adapt (vb.): to, from, for
addicted (adj.): to
adept (vb.): at, in
adequate (adj.): for, to
adhere (vb.): to
adherence (n.): to
adhesion (n.): of, to {the adhesion of one polymer to another}
adjacent (adj.): to
adjust (vb.): to, for
admit (vb.): to, into, of
adverse (adj.): to
advert (vb.): to
affiliate (vb.): with, to
afflict (vb.): with
agree (vb.): to, on, upon [terms], about [concur], with [a person], in [a specified manner, e.g., in general or in principle]
allow (vb.): to, for, of
alternate (vb.): between
analogous (adj.): to [preferably not with]
angry (adj.): at, about, with
answer (vb.): to, for
antagonism (n.): toward, to, between
antagonistic (adj.): toward, to
antipathy (n.): toward, to, against, for
anxious (adj.): about [preferably not to]
apply (vb.): for, to, toward
apprise (vb.): of
apropos (adj.): of
argue (vb.): with [a person], over, about [a situation or thing], for, against [a position]
ask (vb.): about, for, to, of, after
attend (vb.): to
attribute (vb.): to
averse (adj.): to
badge (n.): of
badger (vb.): into, about
balance (n.): of, between, against
ban (n.): on, from
ban (vb.): from
banish (vb.): from, to
bank (vb.): on [rely], off [carom], at, with [a financial institution]
bar (n.): to, of
bargain (vb.): for, on, with
barge (vb.): in, into
barter (vb.): for, with, between
base (n.): of, for
based (adj.): on [preferably not upon], in
because (conj.): of
beckon (vb.): to, at, for
becoming (adj.): on, of, to
beeline (n.): for, to, toward
beg (vb.): for, to, of
beguile (vb.): with, into
behalf (n.): of
behave (vb.): toward, for
beholden (adj.): to, for
belong (vb.): to, in
benefit (n.): of, from, to, for
benefit (vb.): from, by
bereft (adj.): of
beset (vb.): by, with
bestow (vb.): on [preferably not upon]
betray (vb.): to, by
betrayed (adj.): to, by
bias (n.): against, for, toward
biased (adj.): against, for, toward
bid (n. or vb.): on, for, to
bigoted (adj.): against
bigotry (n.): against
binding (adj.): on [preferably not upon]
blame (vb.): for, on
blaspheme (vb.): against
blasphemy (n.): against
bleed (vb.): from, for
blend (vb.): in, together, with, into, through, throughout
blossom (vb.): into
blunder (vb.): on, upon, into, out
| **bond (n.)** | of, with, between |
| **border (n.)** | of, between, with, at |
| **border (vb.)** | on [preferably not upon], against |
| **bored (adj.)** | by, with [preferably not of] |
| **born (adj.)** | to, of, in, into |
| **borne (vb.)** | by |
| **boycott (n.)** | of, on |
| **brace (vb.)** | for, against |
| **break (n.)** | in, for, from, with |
| **break (vb.)** | with, in, into, through, out |
| **bristle (vb.)** | at, with |
| **browse (vb.)** | around, through, for |
| **brush (vb.)** | by, past, against, in, out |
| **budget (vb.)** | for |
| **butt (vb.)** | into |
| **buy (vb.)** | from, into, for, out |
| **cahoots (n.)** | with |
| **cajoled (adj.)** | into |
| **capable (adj.)** | of |
| **capacity (n.)** | of, to, as, for |
| **capitalize (vb.)** | on, for |
| **capitulate (vb.)** | to |
| **care (n.)** | of |
| **care (vb.)** | for, about |
| **careful (adj.)** | about, with, of, in, to |
| **careless (adj.)** | about, with, of, in |
| **cause (n.)** | of, for |
| **caused (vb.)** | by, with, to |
| **caution (vb.)** | about, against |
| **cautious (adj.)** | about, of, in, with |
| **celebrated (adj.)** | for, as |
| **censure (vb.)** | for, over, as |
| **center (vb.)** | on, upon [not around] |
| **chafe (vb.)** | at, under |
| **chagrined (adj.)** | at |
| **chance (n.)** | of, at, for, against, to, on |
| **characteristic (n. & adj.)** | of |
| **characterize (vb.)** | as |
| **characterized (adj.)** | by |
| **charge (vb.)** | for, at, to, with, in, into, out |
| **chase (vb.)** | out, from, after |
| **cheat (vb.)** | at, on |
| **check (vb.)** | into, on, over, out, through, to |
| **chide (vb.)** | for |
| **chortle (vb.)** | about, over |
| **claim (n.)** | to, against, for, on, of, about, over |
| **clamor (n. & vb.)** | about, against, over, for |
| **cling (vb.)** | to |
| **cluster (vb.)** | around |
| **coalesce (vb.)** | into |
| **coax (vb.)** | into, out, over |
| **coequal (adj.)** | with |
| **coerce (vb.)** | into |
| **cognizant (adj.)** | of |
| **cohesion (n.)** | between, among |
| **coincide (vb.)** | with |
| **coincidental (adj.)** | with [at the same time], to |
| **collaborate (vb.)** | on, with |
| **collide (vb.)** | with |
| **collude (vb.)** | with |
| **collision (n.)** | between, among, over, to |
| **comfort (n.)** | to, for, in |
| **commensurate (adj.)** | with, to |
| **comment (n.)** | on [a thing], about [a person], to |
| **commiserate (vb.)** | with |
| **commit (vb.)** | to |
| **commune (vb.)** | with |
| **communion (n.)** | with |
| **compare (vb.)** | with [literal], to [metaphorical] |
| **compatible (adj.)** | with |
| **compete (vb.)** | in, against, with, for, to, over |
| **competitive (adj.)** | with, in |
| **complacent (adj.)** | about, toward, over |
| **complement (n.)** | of |
| **complementary (adj.)** | to |
compliment (n.): on
complimentary (adj.): of
comply (vb.): with [not to]
comport (vb.): with
composed (adj.): of
compress (vb.): into
compromise (n. & vb.): on, with
cconceive (vb.): of
concord (vb.): with
concur (vb.): in, with
concurrence (n.): in, with, of
condemn (vb.): to, for, as
conducive (adj.): to
confer (vb.): on, upon, with, about, over
conference (n.): about, between, among, on
confide (vb.): to, in
confidence (n.): in, to
conflict (n.): over, about, of, with
conflict (vb.): with
conform (vb.): to, with
conformance (n.): with
confuse (vb.): with
confusion (n.): over, about, between, among
congruence (n.): with
congruent (adj.): with
connected (adj.): with, by, at, for, through, to
conivance (n.): of, with
connive (vb.): at, to, with, in
consider (vb.): as {considered as a possible replacement}, for {considered for the job opening}
considerate (adj.): of, toward
consideration (n.): of, to, for
consist (vb.): of [components or ingredients] {a year consists of 12 months}, in [qualities] {efficient production consists in accurately predicting demand}
consistent (adj.): with
consonant (adj.): with
conspire (vb.): to, with, against
constrain (vb.): from
constraint (n.): on, upon, of, in
construe (vb.): as
construed (adj.): as, by
consult (vb.): with, on, about
consultant (n.): to, on, for, in
contaminate (vb.): with, by
contemporaneous (adj.): with
contemporary (adj.): with
contemporary (n.): of [people]
contempt (n.): for, of
contend (vb.): with, against, for
contiguous (adj.): to
contingent (adj.): on [preferably not upon]
contract (n.): to, for, with
contrary (adj.): to
contrast (n.): with, to, between, among
contrast (vb.): with, to
contribute (vb.): to, for
control (n.): of, over
convenient (adj.): for, to
cconversant (adj.): with, in
convict (vb.): of, for [not in]
convince (vb.): of
ccoordinate (vb.): with
coordination (n.): with, between, among
correlate (vb.): with, to
correlation (n.): to, between, among
crespond (vb.): with, about [communications], to [relationships]
correspondence (n.): with, about, between, among
count (vb.): on, against, for
couple (n.): of
couple (vb.): to, with
credit (n.): for, to, on
credit (vb.): to, with
crusade (n. & vb.): against, for
culminate (vb.): in
cure (n.): for
cure (vb.): of
dabble (vb.): in, at
dally (vb.): with, over, at
dawdle (vb.): over
deal (n. & vb.): with, in, for, over, about
debar (vb.): from
debate (n. & vb.): about, with
decide (vb.): on, between, among, against, for
deduce (vb.): from
deduct (vb.): from
deduction (n.): from, for
default (vb.): on
defer (vb.): to
deference (n.): to
deferential (adj.): to
defiant (adj.): toward
defrauded (vb.): of
degenerate (vb.): into, from
deliberate (adj.): in [cautious]
deliberate (vb.): about, over, on [discuss]
delight (n.): at, about, over
delight (vb.): in
delighted (adj.): about, with, by, over, at, for
delve (vb.): into
demonstrate (vb.): against, for
depend (vb.): on [preferably not upon]
dependent (adj.): on
depict (vb.): as
deprive (vb.): of
derive (vb.): from
derogue (vb.): from
derogatory (adj.): about, of, toward
described (vb.): as
designated (vb.): as
designation (n.): as
desist (vb.): from
despair (vb.): of
desperate (adj.): for, about
despondent (adj.): about, over, at
destitute (adj.): of
destructive (adj.): to, of
detract (vb.): from
detriment (n.): to, for, of
deviate (vb.): from
devoid (adj.): of
devolve (vb.): of
devote (adj.): to
devotee (n.): of
devotion (n.): to, of
dictate (vb.): to
die (vb.): of, from, by, with, for, in
differ (vb.): from [a thing or quality], with [a person], about, over, on [an aspect]
difference (n.): between, among, of, to
different (adj.): from [but when an independent clause follows different, the conjunction than is better {movies are different today than they were in the fifties}]
differentiate (vb.): from, between, among
differently (adv.): from, than
digress (vb.): from
digression (n.): from, on
disabuse (vb.): of
disbar (vb.): from
discourage (vb.): from
discouraged (adj.): about, over, by
discredit (n.): to, on
discriminate (vb.): against, between, among, from
disdain (n.): for, of
disdainful (adj.): of
disgruntled (adj.): over, about, at, with
disloyal (adj.): to
disloyalty (n.): to, toward
dispense (vb.): with
displaced (adj.): by
displeased (adj.): at, about, by, over [a thing], with [a person]
Word Usage

dispose (vb.): of
disposition (n.): to, toward
dispossessed (adj.): of, from
dispute (n.): over, about, with
disqualify (vb.): from, for
disregard (n.): for
dissent (n. & vb.): from, against [preferably not to or with]
dissimilar (adj.): to [not from]
dissociate (vb.): from
distaste (n.): for
distinguish (vb.): from, between, among
distinguished (adj.): for, by
distraught (adj.): over, about, at
distressed (adj.): about, by, at, over
diverge (vb.): from
diverted (vb.): from, to, for, by
divested (vb.): of
divide (vb.): between, among, into, by
divided (adj.): over, about, on
dominant (adj.): over, in
dominate (vb.): over
dominion (n.): over
doom (vb.): to
doomed (adj.): to, for
dote (vb.): on, upon
dovetail (vb.): into
drip (vb.): from, with
due (adj.): to, for
dun (vb.): for
ear (n.): for {an ear for music}, to
    {lend an ear to this music}
earmark (n.): of {all the earmarks of a great race}
earmark (vb.): for {funds earmarked for defense}
ecstatic (adj.): over, about, at
educate (vb.): to, for, about, against
education (n.): in, about
effective (adj.): for, against, in
elated (adj.): at, about, over
eligible (adj.): for
embrace (vb.): on, for
embody (vb.): in
emerge (vb.): from, as
emigrate (vb.): from, to
émigré (n.): from
empathize (vb.): with
emphatic (adj.): about, in
employ (vb.): as, in
enamored (adj.): of [not with]
encouraged (adj.): by, at, about, over
encroach (vb.): on, upon
encumbered (adj.): with, by
dot (vb.): with
dedicated (adj.): by, with
enforce (vb.): on, upon
enjoin (vb.): from, to, upon
enlarge (vb.): upon, on
ensure (vb.): against
enter (vb.): into
enthusiastic (adj.): about, over, at
entice (vb.): with, into
entitle (vb.): to
entrap (vb.): in, into
entrapment (n.): into
entrust (vb.): to, with
envious (adj.): of, toward
envision (vb.): as
equal (adj.): to, in
equate (vb.): with
equidistant (adj.): from [preferably not between]
equivalent (adj.): to, in [preferably not with]
equivalent (n.): of
equivocal (adj.): about
escalate (vb.): into
escape (vb.): from
estrange (vb.): from
estrangement (n.): from, between, over
etch (vb.): into
evolve (vb.): into, from
exasperated (adj.): by, at, about, over
excerpt (n.): from [not of]
exclusive (adj.): of
exile (n. & vb.): to, from
exonereate (vb.): from
expand (vb.): into, on
export (vb.): from, into
expropriate (vb.): from, for
expunge (vb.): from
extolled (adj.): as
extradite (vb.): from, to
facility (n.): for, with, at, in
famous (adj.): for, as
fascinated (adj.): by, with, at
fascination (n.): for, about
fashion (n.): into, from
fasten (vb.): to, onto, in, on
fault (vb.): for
favor (vb.): with
feud (n.): between, among, with, about, over, against
feud (vb.): with, about, over
fidget (vb.): with
filch (vb.): from
fill (vb.): with, in
find (vb.): for, against
finicky (adj.): about
fixation (n.): on
flair (n.): for
flee (vb.): from, to, for
flinch (vb.): at, from
flirt (vb.): with, at
fond (adj.): of
fondness (n.): for
forage (vb.): for
forbid (vb.): to [formal], from [informal]
force (n.): of, by, against, for, in
force (vb.): into, onto, from
foreclose (vb.): on
fortify (vb.): with, against
fortunate (adj.): in
fraternize (vb.): with
fraught (adj.): with
free (adj.): from, of
fret (vb.): over, about
frugal (adj.): with, of
fulminate (vb.): against
fume (vb.): over, about
furious (vb.): about, at, over
furnish (vb.): with
gamut (n.): from . . . to
gasp (n. & vb.): for, at
genial (adj.): toward, with
gentle (adj.): with, about
gibe (n.): at, about
give (vb.): at
given (adj.): to
glare (n.): of
glare (vb.): at
glisten (vb.): in, with, from, from, off
glitter (n.): of
glitter (vb.): in, with
gloat (vb.): over, about
graduate (n.): of, in
graduate (vb.): from
grapple (vb.): with, for, onto
grateful (adj.): for, to
gratified (adj.): by, with, at
gravitate (vb.): toward, to, around
grieve (vb.): over, for, after, with, at
gripe (n.): about
gripe (vb.): at, about
grounded (adj.): in, from
grudge (n.): against, over, about
guard (vb.): against, from
guarded (adj.): about, from, by
habit (n.): of
hack (vb.): down, through, at
haggle (vb.): over, about, at, with
haul (vb.): as, from
hale (vb.): into
hammer (vb.): on, into, at
handy (adj.): with, at
hanker (vb.): for, after
happen (vb.): upon, on, to
hardened (adj.): to
harp (vb.): on, about
hassle (n. & vb.): with, over, about
hedge (n.): against
heedful (adj.): of
heedless (adj.): of
hegemony (n.): over
hesitate (vb.): over
hesitation (n.): in, on, about, over
hinder (vb.): from, in
hindrance (n.): to
hinge (vb.): upon, on
hobnob (vb.): with
holdover (n.): from
hostile (adj.): toward, to, about, over
hostility (n.): against, toward, to, about, over
hover (vb.): around, over, near, between, above
huddle (vb.): in, with, around
hunger (vb.): for, after
hurtle (vb.): toward, through, past, down, at
identical (adj.): with, to
identify (vb.): to, as, by, with
idolize (vb.): as
ignorance (n.): of
ignorant (adj.): of [not to], in
imbued (adj.): with
immigrant (n.): from [not to]
immigrate (vb.): to, into [not from]
immune (adj.): to, from
immunize (vb.): against
impatience (n.): with [esp. people], at, about
impinge (vb.): on, upon
implicit (adj.): in
import (vb.): from, into
importune (vb.): for
impose (vb.): on, upon
impregnate (vb.): with
impress (vb.): upon [people], as, on, into, with
impressed (adj.): with, by
impression (n.): of, on [preferably not upon], in, as, with
impute (vb.): to
inaugurate (vb.): as, into
incidental (adj.): to
include (vb.): in, among
inclusive (adj.): of
incompatible (adj.): with
incompetence (n.): of, in, by, on [the part of], at, among
incongruent (adj.): with
incongruous (adj.): with
inconsistent (adj.): with
incorporate (vb.): into, with
inculcate (vb.): into, in
incumbent (adj.): on, upon
independence (n.): from
independent (adj.): of [not from]
different (adj.): to
indigenous (adj.): to
indignant (adj.): about, at, over, with, toward
induct (vb.): into
indulge (vb.): in
indulgent (n.): of, toward
infatuation (n.): with
infer (vb.): from
infiltreate (vb.): into
infiltration (n.): into, of, by
inflict (vb.): on
influence (n.): of, over, upon, for
influence (vb.): to, by, for
inform (vb.): on, about, of
informed (adj.): about
infringe (vb.): on, upon
infringement (n.): of, on
infuse (vb.): into
ingratiate (vb.): with
inhere (vb.): in [not within]
inherent (adj.): in, to
inimical (adj.): to
initiate (vb.): into
inject (vb.): into
innate (adj.): in
inoculate (vb.): against
input (n.): into
inquire (vb.): into [situations], of [people], after [people]
inquisitive (adj.): about
inroad (n.): into
inseparable (adj.): from
insight (n.): into
insist (vb.): on
instill (vb.): in, into [not with]
insulate (vb.): from, against
insure (vb.): against, for
intent (adj.): on, upon
intention (n.): of, to
intercede (vb.): in, with, for
interest (n.): in
interject (vb.): into
interlace (vb.): with
intrude (vb.): on, upon, into
inveigh (vb.): against
inveigle (vb.): into, from
jealous (adj.): of [not about or with]
jibe (vb.): with
join (vb.): in, into, with
jump (vb.): at, to, for, with, into, over, through
junior (adj.): to, in
jurisdiction (n.): over
justified (adj.): in
juxtaposed (adj.): with
kid (vb.): about
kindness (n.): toward, to, of
knack (n.): for, of, to
knowledgeable (adj.): about
known (adj.): for, to, by, as
kudos (n.): to, for
label (vb.): with, as
lacking (adj.): in
laden (vb.): with
lament (n.): for, of, to, on, over
lament (vb.): over
languish (vb.): in
lap (vb.): against
lapse (n.): in
lapse (vb.): in, into
lash (vb.): into, at, against
latch (vb.): onto
lavish (vb.): with, on
lax (adj.): in, about, on, toward
leaf (vb.): through
leer (vb.): at
leery (adj.): of
lenient (adj.): with, in, toward, on
level (vb.): to [raze], with [confide], against [accuse]
liable (adj.): for, to
liason (n.): between, with
liberate (vb.): from
liberties (n.): with
liken (vb.): to
likeness (n.): to, between
limited (adj.): to, in
linger (vb.): over
lock (vb.): on, onto
lull (n.): in [lapse]
lull (vb.): into [trick], to [sleep]
lure (vb.): into
lurk (vb.): in
mad (adj.): at, about
made (adj.): from, of, with, without, into
magnanimous (adj.): toward, of
malice (n.): toward, against
maneuver (vb.): toward, against
marred (adj.): by
marriage (n.): to, into, of
married (adj.): to
marry (vb.): into
martyr (n.): to
martyred (adj.): for
marvel (vb.): at
mastery (n.): of [a skill], over [people]
meant (vb.): as [intent], for [destination], by [action]
meddle (vb.): in, with
merge (vb.): with, into
mesh (vb.): with
meticulous (adj.): in, about
migrate (vb.): to, from, between
militate (vb.): against
mill (vb.): around, about
mindful (adj.): of
minister (vb.): to
mitigate (vb.): (none)
mulpct (vb.): of
muse (vb.): over, about, upon, on
mutiny (vb.): against
naive (adj.): of, of
necessary (adj.): for, to, in
necessity (n.): of, for
need (n.): of, for
neglectful (adj.): of
negligent (adj.): about, in, of
negotiate (vb.): with, for, over, about, from [a position of —]
nestle (vb.): into, against
newcomer (n.): to
niggardly (adj.): about, in, with, toward, to
niggle (vb.): about, over
nominate (vb.): for, as, to
notorious (adj.): for, as
object (n.): of
object (vb.): to, about
obligation (n.): to
obligatory (adj.): on, upon, for
oblivious (adj.): of [preferred], to
observance (n.): of
observant (adj.): of
observation (n.): about, of, for
obsessed (adj.): with, by
obession (n.): with, for
obstinate (adj.): about, in
obtrude (vb.): on, upon, into
odds (n.): against, of [possibility], with, over [conflict]
odious (adj.): to
off (prep. & adv.): none [not of]
offend (vb.): against
offended (adj.): by, about, at, with [a person]
offensive (adj.): to

offer (vb.): as
omen (n.): for, of
open (adj.): for, to
open (vb.): to, for, with, by, onto
operate (vb.): on, for, against
opposite (adj.): to
opposite (n.): of, to
opposition (n.): to
ordeal (n.): by
oscillate (vb.): between
oust (vb.): from
outlet (adj.): for, to
overcome (adj.): by, with
overgrown (adj.): with, by
owing (adj.): to
pale (vb.): in, beside, at
pall (n.): over
panacea (n.): for
pander (vb.): to
panic (vb.): at, over, about
parallel (adj.): to, with
parallel (n.): between, among, with
paramount (adj.): over
paranoid (adj.): about, over
parity (n.): between, among, of, in
parlay (vb.): into
parley (n. & vb.): with
part (vb.): from [a person], with
partake (vb.): of
partial (adj.): to
patterned (adj.): after, on, upon
peculiar (adj.): to
penchant (n.): for
perceive (vb.): as
perceptible (adj.): to
perceptive (adj.): of
peripheral (adj.): to
periphery (n.): of
permeate (vb.): through, into, with
permeated (adj.): by, with
permit (n.): for
permit (vb.): of
perpendicular (adj.): to
persecution (n.): for
persevere (vb.): in, at, against
persist (vb.): in [an action], against [obstacles]
persuade (vb.): by
persuaded (adj.): of, by
pertaining (adj.): to
pertinent (adj.): to
perturbed (adj.): at, by, about, over
pervaded (adj.): with
pilfer (vb.): from
pine (vb.): for, after
pied (adj.): by, at
plot (vb.): against
plow (vb.): into, through
plunge (vb.): to, into, from
ponder (vb.): over, about, on, upon
pore (vb.): over, through
posture (vb.): as
pox (n.): on
preach (vb.): to, about, against, at
precedence (n.): of, over
precedent (adj.): to
precedent (n.): for, of
precise (adj.): about
preclude (vb.): from
precursor (n.): to, of
predestined (adj.): to
predicate (vb.): on, upon
predilection (n.): for
predisposed (adj.): to
predominate (vb.): over
preeminent (adj.): in
preface (n.): to, of
preface (vb.): with
preferable (adj.): to [not than]
preference (n.): for, to
prefix (vb.): to
pregnant (adj.): with [the child], by [the father]
prejudice (n.): against, for, to
prejudice (vb.): by, against, for
prejudiced (adj.): by, against, for
prejudicial (adj.): to
preoccupied (adj.): with
preparatory (adj.): to
prepare (vb.): for
prerequisite (adj.): to, for, of
prerequisite (n.): for, to
present (adj.): at
present (vb.): to, with
pretext (n.): for
prevail (vb.): over, against, on, upon
prevent (vb.): from
proceeds (n.): from, of
proclivity (n.): for, to [not toward]
prod (vb.): into, to
prodigal (adj.): with
proficient (adj.): at, in
profit (vb.): by, from
prohibit (vb.): from, by
prohibition (n.): against, on
prologue (n.): of [a book], to [an event]
propensity (n.): for
propinquity (n.): to
propitious (adj.): for, to, of
protect (vb.): from, against
protective (adj.): of, toward, over, about
protest (n. & vb.): against, for
provide (vb.): with, for, against
provoke (vb.): into, to
punctilious (adj.): in, about, to [a fault]
punish (vb.): for
punishable (adj.): by
purge (n.): of
purge (vb.): from, of
puzzle (vb.): over
puzzling (adj.): to
quay (vb.): with
qualified (adj.): for, by, as
qualify (vb.): for, as
qualms (n.): about
quandary (n.): over, about
quarrel (n.): between, with, over, about
quarrel (vb.): over, about, with
quibble (vb.): over, about, with
quiver (vb.): with
radiant (adj.): with, in
rage (n.): against, at [anger], with
[fad]
rage (vb.): against, at
rail (vb.): against, at
railroad (vb.): through
raise (vb.): from, for, with, to
raised (adj.): for, in, from, to, with
rally (vb.): around, to, for
ram (vb.): into
rant (vb.): at, about
rate (vb.): as, among, with, for, in
rationalization (n.): for
rave (vb.): about, over
react (vb.): to, against
reason (n.): for, to, behind, against
reason (vb.): with, about, on
reasonable (adj.): about
recede (vb.): from
receptive (adj.): to
reciprocate (vb.): by, for, with
reciprocity (n.): between, with, to
reckon (vb.): on, with
recoil (n. & vb.): from, at
recompense (n. & vb.): for
reconcile (vb.): with [a person], to [a situation]
reconciliation (n.): with
recourse (n.): to
redeem (vb.): from, with, for, at
redolent (adj.): of, with
redound (vb.): to
refer (vb.): to, for
regale (vb.): with
regard (n.): for, to
regard (vb.): as, with
regardless (adj.): of
regret (n.): over, about, for
rejoice (vb.): in, over, at, with
relation (n.): to, between, among
relations (n.): with, between, among
relationship (n.): to, between, with, to
relegate (adj.): to
relieve (vb.): of
relieved (adj.): at, of
remarkable (adj.): for
remember (vb.): of, about, from, as
remembrance (n.): of
reminisce (vb.): about
reminiscent (n.): of
rend (vb.): into
renege (vb.): on
renowned (adj.): for, as, by, among
repent (vb.): of
repentance (n.): for
replace (vb.): with
replaced (adj.): by, with
replacement (n.): for
replete (adj.): with
representative (adj.): of
representative (n.): of, from, to, for
reprisal (n.): against, on, upon, for
reprove (vb.): for
repugnance (n.): between
[contradiction]
repugnant (adj.): to
request (n.): for, to, of
request (vb.): from, of
resemblance (n.): between, among, to, of
resentment (adj.): of, at, against, toward, about, over
reservations (n.): for [accommodations], about [reluctance]
resign (vb.): from [a position], to [a situation]
resolute (adj.): in
respect (n.): for, to, of, from, as
respite (n.): from
restrain (vb.): from
restraint (n.): of, in, by
result (n.): of, from
result (vb.): in, from
resulting (adj.): in, from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Prepositional Idioms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>settle</td>
<td>about, on, with, into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retrospective</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retrospect</td>
<td>from, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revelation</td>
<td>of, about, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revenge</td>
<td>on, upon, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revolve</td>
<td>around, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revulsion</td>
<td>at, toward, against, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reward</td>
<td>for, with, by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rifle</td>
<td>through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ripe</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ripen</td>
<td>into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roam</td>
<td>around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rob</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruminate</td>
<td>on, about, over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe</td>
<td>for, from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanction</td>
<td>for [punishment], of [approval], to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanction</td>
<td>by, for, against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanctuary</td>
<td>to, from, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satiate</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction</td>
<td>to, in, for, with, about, over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scared</td>
<td>by, at, about, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scavenge</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schism</td>
<td>by, at, about, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schooled</td>
<td>between, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scoff</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scourge</td>
<td>of, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scream</td>
<td>at, for, in, with, after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screen</td>
<td>between, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screen</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secede</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure</td>
<td>against, from, in, of, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure</td>
<td>against, from, by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>segregate</td>
<td>from, into, by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>about, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentimental</td>
<td>about, over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separate</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serve</td>
<td>on, for, with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settle</td>
<td>on, with, for, in, into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shame</td>
<td>on, to, about, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shame</td>
<td>into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share</td>
<td>with, in, among, between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shield</td>
<td>from, against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shiver</td>
<td>from [cold], at, with [fear]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shriek</td>
<td>in, with, at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrink</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrug</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shudder</td>
<td>at, from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuttle</td>
<td>between, among</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shy</td>
<td>about, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sift</td>
<td>through, from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significance</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significant</td>
<td>to, for, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similar</td>
<td>to [not as]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similarity</td>
<td>to, of, in, between, among</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simultaneous</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skeptical</td>
<td>of, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skillful</td>
<td>at, in [an activity], with [tools]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slanted</td>
<td>against, toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slave</td>
<td>of, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slave</td>
<td>over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>over, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>on, in, with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smell</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smell</td>
<td>like, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smile</td>
<td>at, about, on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smitten</td>
<td>with, by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snuggle</td>
<td>into, against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitous</td>
<td>of, toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitude</td>
<td>for, to, about, toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sore</td>
<td>from, over, about, at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorry</td>
<td>for, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sought</td>
<td>for, after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spat</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speculate</td>
<td>about, on, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speculator</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spy</td>
<td>on, upon, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squeeze</td>
<td>through, into, out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing</td>
<td>with, among, in, as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
started (adj.): by, at
stern (adj.): with, toward
stigma (n.): to, about, over, from
stigmatize (vb.): as
stint (n.): as, in
stir (n.): over, about, at, in, throughout, among, around
stir (vb.): into, in
stock (n.): of, in
stoical (adj.): about, toward
storm (vb.): into, through
stray (vb.): from, onto, into
streak (n.): of
streak (vb.): through, across, past, into, down, on, off, toward
streaked (adj.): with
stream (vb.): into, through, toward
strewn (adj.): with
stricken (adj.): with
strict (adj.): about, with
strife (n.): among, between, in, over, about, throughout
strike (vb.): against, for, over, at, as
strive (vb.): for, against
struggle (n. & vb.): for, against, with, over, through
study (vb.): for, at, under
stumble (vb.): upon, across, onto, on, into, over, around
submit (vb.): to
subordinate (n.): of
subordinate (vb. & adj.): to
subscribe (vb.): to [a periodical or an opinion], for [stock]
subsidiary (adj.): to
subsidiary (n.): of
subsidy (n.): to, for
subsist (vb.): on
substitute (n. & vb.): for
succeed (vb.): in [an endeavor], to [an estate], as [a position]
suffer (vb.): from, with
suitable (adj.): for
suited (adj.): for, to
summon (vb.): to, into, for, before
superstitious (adj.): about
supervision (n.): of, over
supplement (n.): to
supplement (vb.): with, by
supplementary (adj.): to
supply (n.): of, for
supply (vb.): with, for, to
susceptible (adj.): to [problem], of [meaning]
suspect (n.): in
suspect (vb.): of, in, as
suspicion (n.): of, about, on
suspicious (adj.): of, about, at, over
swing (n. & vb.): at [try to hit], to, toward, from [trend]
sympathetic (adj.): to, toward, with
sympathize (vb.): with, in
sympathy (n.): for, with, to
synchronize (vb.): with
synchronous (adj.): to
synonymous (adj.): to, with
taken (adj.): by, with
tally (vb.): up [compute], with [agree]
tantamount (adj.): to
tap (vb.): on, against, at, into, for
taste (n.): of, for, in
taunt (vb.): for, with, about, into
tear (vb.): off, into, at, after, from, to
tease (vb.): for, with, about, into
telem (vb.): with
tend (adj.): to, toward
tendency (n.): to, toward
tender (adj.): to, with, toward [gentle]
tender (n.): for [offer]
tender (vb.): to [give]
terms (n.): of [an agreement], with [a situation]
testify (vb.): about, against, for, to, at, in
thankful (adj.): for, to, about, in
thirst (n.): for
thirst (vb.): after, for
timid (adj.): about, around, with
tinge (n.): of
tinge (vb.): with, in
tinged (adj.): with, in
tinker (vb.): at, with
toast (n.): of [fame], to [salute]
tolerance (n.): for, toward, of, with
tough (adj.): on, with, about, for	tout (vb.): for, as
toy (vb.): with	trade (n.): with, among, between,
in, for
trade (vb.): for [swap], in [sell], with
[do business with], at [patronize],
on [buy and sell at]
traffic (n. & vb.): in
treat (vb.): for, with, like, to, as, of
tremble (vb.): in, with, from, at
trouble (n.): with, from, over, about
trouble (vb.): with, about
trust (n.): in [faith], for [beneficial trust]
trust (vb.): in, with, to
umbrage (n.): at, to
unbeatable (adj.): at, in, against
unbecoming (adj.): of, to, in
unbiased (adj.): toward, about
unburden (vb.): of
uncomfortable (adj.): with, about
uncooperative (adj.): toward, with, about
undaunted (adj.): in [a task], by [obstacles]
unequal (adj.): to [a challenge], in [attributes]
unfaithful (adj.): to, in
unfamiliar (adj.): with, to
unfeeling (adj.): toward, about
uniform (adj.): in, with, to
uniformity (n.): of, in
unify (vb.): with, into, around, against
unique (adj.): to, in, about
unjustified (adj.): in
unmindful (adj.): of
unpalatable (adj.): to
unpopular (adj.): with, for, among
unsparking (adj.): of
unstinting (adj.): in
unsuitable (adj.): for
unsuited (adj.): to
upbraid (vb.): for, over
upset (adj.): with, at, about, over
used (adj.): to [accustomed], for [applied]
vacillate (vb.): between, on, within
value (vb.): for, as, at, over, above,
below, beyond
vanish (vb.): from, into
variance (n.): with
variation (n.): in, from
variety (n.): of, to
vary (vb.): between, among, with, in, from
verge (vb.): on, upon
versatile (adj.): at, in, with, around
vest (vb.): in, with
vested (adj.): in, with
vexed (adj.): with [someone], about, at [something]
vie (vb.): for, in, with, against, over
visualize (vb.): as
void (adj.): of
wade (vb.): into, across, in, through
wage (vb.): against, over
wait (vb.): for, on, upon, by, at
waiver (n.): of
want (n.): of
want (vb.): for
wanted (adj.): by, for, in
wanting (adj.): in
war (vb.): against, with, over
watch (vb.): over, for
waver (vb.): between, over, about
weak (n.): in, at, from, with
weakened (adj.): by, from
Word Usage

weakness (n.): for, against, from, toward
wean (vb.): from
weep (vb.): for, over, about, at
weigh (vb.): against, on, upon
wince (vb.): at, in
wizard (n.): at, of
wonder (vb.): about, at
worm (vb.): into
worthy (adj.): of
wrangle (vb.): over, with, about
wrest (vb.): from
yearn (vb.): for, about
yield (vb.): to, against
zeal (n.): for
zealous (adj.): about, in, for
V. Punctuation

451 Introduction. Punctuation is an elaborate cuing system by which writers signal to their readers how to move smoothly through the prose. Used properly, punctuation helps writers achieve clarity and emphasis. Used improperly, it does just the opposite. Often, though, punctuation problems are a symptom of bad writing. As one authority observes, “Most errors of punctuation arise from ill-designed, badly shaped sentences, and from the attempt to make them work by means of violent tricks with commas and colons.”¹ So learning punctuation is closely allied with learning to write solid, sophisticated sentences. You can’t have one skill without the other. Hence the guidance that follows.

All the illustrative sentences below—the good ones, that is—appear in the work of the writers named. If you haven’t heard of the writers, don’t despair: if you’re curious, research them a little. See whether you might like to read their work. The short passages here excerpted give only the most minuscule sampling of their prose, which merits closer study. For now, though, focus on each point at hand as you study the examples. But relish the fact that the illustrations aren’t fabricated for purposes of this book: they are the work of some of the language’s most adept wordsmiths.

¹ Hugh Sykes Davies, Grammar Without Tears (New York: Day, 1951), 167.
The Comma

12 Uses, 11 Misuses

The comma (,) marks the slightest possible separation in ideas or grammatical construction—especially between words, phrases, and clauses.

Using Commas

452 Use a comma when you join two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction (such as “and,” “but,” “nor,” “or,” “so,” or “yet”).

- Two or three of the spectators were sniffling, and one was weeping loudly. (Stephen Crane)
- Dirk was going home to dinner, and I proposed to find a doctor. (W. Somerset Maugham)
- It was an unscheduled stop, and the platform of the small station was crowded with people. (Ayn Rand)
- It is true that the exact historical connections are often hard to establish, but a social context must always be presumed. (F. W. Bateson)

453 Use a comma after a transitional word or phrase (though not “and,” “but,” “for,” “so,” or “yet”), an introductory phrase (especially a long one), or a subordinate clause that precedes an independent clause.

- Nevertheless, the conditions behind the kitchen door were suitable for a pigsty. (George Orwell)
- Aside from that remark, all our conversation was about personalities. (Theodore H. White)
- Taking out the crumpled paper, I looked at the telephone number. (Ralph Ellison)
- For the most part, we come to works of art when the labels have already been pasted on. (Roger Shattuck)
454  Use a pair of commas to mark the beginning and end of a nonrestrictive phrase or clause—that is, either an appositive or a phrase or clause that gives incidental or descriptive information that isn’t essential to the meaning of the sentence.

- A sensitive person is one who, because he has corns himself, always treads on other people’s toes. (Oscar Wilde)
- He is, as we say, a creature of circumstance. (A. R. Orage)
- The indecencies and the double meanings of Sterne, if anything, intensify the solitude. (V. S. Pritchett)
- If, when he rose, the bench did not rise with him, the ale was understrength. (Frank Muir)

455  Use a comma to separate items in a series—including the next-to-last and last (but never before an ampersand).

- Archer was not such a simpleton as to be unaware that some women are vulgar, violent, and immodest according to Victorian conceptions of modesty. (George Bernard Shaw)
- I noticed that Wilde, Baudelaire, and Swinburne are stacked up beside Joyce as rivals in decadence and intellect. (Hart Crane)
- A steady stream of articles, letters, communications, documents, and committee reports flowed from his facile pen. (Henry Steele Commager)
- The air was foul with the stench of bilge, the reek of the untrimmed lamps, the exhalation of so many breaths, and the stale smell of warm bedding. (Frank Norris)

456  Use a comma to separate adjectives that each qualify a noun (or adverbs that each qualify an adjective) in parallel fashion—that is, when “and” could appear between the modifiers without changing the meaning of the sentence, or when you could reverse the modifiers’ order without affecting the meaning.

- The Brite brothers were ingenious, self-reliant men. (Erle Stanley Gardner)
- Every year I have stupid, lazy greenhorns to deal with. (Eugene O’Neill)
- No writer seems more hopelessly, inexpugnably preppy than Salinger. (Wilfrid Sheed)
- It was blindingly, glaringly hot. (Margaret Mitchell)
457 Use a comma to distinguish indirect from direct speech.
- And she said, “Please never look at me like that.” (Ernest Hemingway)
- “Tell me again,” she begged, moving over to one end of her boulder. (Dashiell Hammett)
- He took a breath and let it out and at last said, “No, I don’t mean that.” (Ray Bradbury)
- “There, sir,” said the butcher, “that’s how we do it in Leadenhall Market, asking your pardon.” (Patrick O’Brien)

458 Use commas to separate the parts of full dates and addresses, but (1) omit any comma before a zip code; (2) when writing just the month and the year, don’t separate them with a comma (July 2005); and (3) when writing the month, day, and year, omit the comma after the year if you’re using the date as an adjective (the November 20, 2006 meeting).
- Exactly fifty-two B-17s were available for service as late as May 1940. (David M. Kennedy)
- Lamon gained access to Pinkerton’s February 23, 1861 report, in which the detective recounted the name-leaking episode. (Michael J. Kline)
- The Wilsons managed to live and ride in comparative peace for about four years, until February 2, 1872, when the boys rode into Trinidad, and George Wilson began gambling at the Exchange Saloon. (J. Evetts Haley)

459 Use commas to separate thousands written numerically—but not strings of numbers that are not considered in thousands.
- Mostly out of laziness, I decide to start my low-wage life in the town nearest to where I actually live, Key West, Florida, which with a population of about 25,000 is elbowing its way up to the status of a genuine city. (Barbara Ehrenreich)
- The median net worth of black households in this country is $4,604, or just one-tenth the median net worth of white families—$44,408. The comparable figure for Hispanics is $5,345. (Carl T. Rowan)
- Here you’d find yourself on the wrong side—it’s they who stand for the individual and we just stand for Private 23987. (Graham Greene)
Punctuation

460 Use a comma to set off a name, word, or phrase used as a vocative.
- Mother, I have nothing particular to write about. (Walt Whitman to his mother)
- Look to your daughter, Archie. (Carl Sandburg to Archibald MacLeish)
- Are you well, dear Victoria? (Aldous Huxley to Victoria Ocampo)
- Listen, you contumacious rat, don’t throw your dreary tomes at me. (Alexander Woollcott to Ira Gershwin)

461 Use a comma before a direct question contained within another sentence.
- You begin to ask the question, Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that is two-thirds water? (Martin Luther King Jr.)
- As some of the children ask, we must ask, Why do people no longer suffice? (Sherry Turkle)
- We can pose the question, Where did these attitudes and behavior originate? (Cathy J. Cohen)
- The answer I like best to the query, What is ethology? is the charge given in Tinbergen’s questions: What is the function and history of each behavior pattern? How does it develop? What is the mechanism? (Peter H. Klopfer)

462 Use a comma before “etc.” and “et al.”—and equivalent phrases, such as “and so forth” and “and the like”—when they are the final items in a list, unless they follow only a single item.
- Foods rich in soluble fiber like oats, beans, barley, and many fruits and vegetables (apples, oranges, carrots, etc.) should make up one-quarter of your total fiber intake for the day. (Bonnie Taub-Dix)
- An analysis of the dramas of Ibsen, Shaw, Oscar Wilde, et al. wouldn’t necessarily lead one to suspect the fact. (William Morgan Hannon)
- The continent has been overrun by imposters of celebrities, writers, actors, and so forth. (Tennessee Williams)
- Jones et al. were of the opinion that the epidermal damage appeared more consistent with mechanical rather than chemical action. (Graham C. Kearn)
For informal letters, use a comma after the salutation.

- Dear Sir, … (Thomas Babington Macaulay to Henry S. Randall)
- Dear Noel, … (Alexander Woollcott to Noel Coward)
- Dear Ian, … (Raymond Chandler to Ian Fleming)

Preventing Misused Commas

Don’t use a comma between a subject and its verb, except to set off a nonrestrictive phrase or clause.

Not this: Everything else on the farm, was destroyed.
But this: Everything else on the farm was destroyed.

Not this: The bowers and arbors in these villa gardens, are among the loveliest we’ve seen.
But this: The bowers and arbors in these villa gardens are among the loveliest we’ve seen.

Okay: The Vespa, somehow, was far more stable than I had expected and wonderfully easy to ride.
Better: The Vespa was somehow far more stable than I had expected and wonderfully easy to ride.
Or this: Somehow, the Vespa was far more stable than I had expected and wonderfully easy to ride.

Don’t use a comma between a verb and its object, except to set off a nonrestrictive phrase or clause.

Not this: Not wanting to make a scene, she released, grudgingly, her hold on the necklace.
But this: Not wanting to make a scene, she grudgingly released her hold on the necklace.

Not this: Just before he hit, at full speed, the rough stone wall of the pool, the All-American freestyler tucked his chin, swung his legs over his head, and flipped over.
But this: Just before he hit the rough stone wall of the pool at full speed, the All-American freestyler tucked his chin, swung his legs over his head, and flipped over.
Not this: Nobody thought it possible to thread, so perfectly, the needle the way Stockton could.
But this: Nobody thought it possible to so perfectly thread the needle the way Stockton could.

466 Don’t use a comma to set off a quotation that blends into the rest of the sentence.

Not this: Later on I would learn that my wife referred to me in public as, “a king-sized botfly.”
But this: Later on I would learn that my wife referred to me in public as “a king-sized botfly.”

Not this: A good invention in Canada and the northern part of the States is, “the picnic area.”
But this: A good invention in Canada and the northern part of the States is “the picnic area.”

Not this: Waving her rolling pin angrily, the baker chased the young boys down the alley, screaming at them to, “get lost.”
But this: Waving her rolling pin angrily, the baker chased the young boys down the alley, screaming at them to “get lost.”

467 Don’t use commas to set off an adverb thought to need emphasis.

Not this: Meanwhile, he worked, entirely, by himself.
But this: Meanwhile, he worked entirely by himself.

Not this: There was nothing else to do but release, squirming and thrashing, the cat cradled in her arms.
But this: There was nothing else to do but release the squirming and thrashing cat cradled in her arms.

468 Don’t use a comma in the second part of a compound predicate—that is, when a second verb has the same subject as an earlier one.

Not this: He hated sitting in the armchairs, but felt much more at ease in the kitchen chairs.
But this: He hated sitting in the armchairs but felt much more at ease in the kitchen chairs.
Not this: Mrs. Phancey insisted that the motel was defenseless, and said that we should screw down everything that could be screwed down.

But this: Mrs. Phancey insisted that the motel was defenseless and said that we should screw down everything that could be screwed down.

Not this: Then I felt afraid again, and resumed paddling furiously.

But this: Then I felt afraid again and resumed paddling furiously.

Don’t use a comma as if it were a strong mark—a period, a semicolon, a colon, or an em-dash—to splice together independent clauses.

Not this: It all came about in the most ordinary way, one evening, after the customary men’s meeting, the old man came home with a sorrowful countenance.

But this: It all came about in the most ordinary way. One evening, after the customary men’s meeting, the old man came home with a sorrowful countenance.

Or this: It all came about in the most ordinary way: one evening, after the customary men’s meeting, the old man came home with a sorrowful countenance.

Not this: He was trumpeting away with euphoria, however, there was little cause for it.

But this: He was trumpeting away with euphoria; however, there was little cause for it.

Or this: He was trumpeting away with euphoria; but there was little cause for it.

Or this: He was trumpeting away with euphoria—but there was little cause for it.
Generally, don’t use a comma after a sentence-starting conjunction.

*Not this:* But, too often, the people who talk this way go on to churn out the ancient formulas we have been listening to for a whole lifetime.

*But this:* But too often, the people who talk this way go on to churn out the ancient formulas we have been listening to for a whole lifetime.

*Not this:* And, you mustn’t think that he was a cold and unemotional man.

*But this:* And you mustn’t think that he was a cold and unemotional man.

Don’t omit a second comma after a word or phrase set off from the rest of the sentence by a preceding comma (unless the word or phrase ends the sentence).

*Not this:* In the autumn of 1540, six months after Coronado left Compostela several fragments of his little army were widely scattered throughout the interior of North America.

*But this:* In the autumn of 1540, six months after Coronado left Compostela, several fragments of his little army were widely scattered throughout the interior of North America.

*Not this:* A university, in a burst of ecumenism appoints a voodoo priest-in-residence.

*But this:* A university, in a burst of ecumenism, appoints a voodoo priest-in-residence.

*Not this:* In many industries, large and small development of new products has been severely slowed.

*But this:* In many industries, large and small, development of new products has been severely slowed.

Misleading punctuation . . . introduces uncertainty as to an author’s meaning. And any oddities in punctuation divert the reader’s attention from the subject matter.

—Reginald O. Kapp
*The Presentation of Technical Information*
Don’t use commas to set off a restrictive phrase, clause, or appositive—one that is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

_Not this:_ Each of us agreed to give $50, to finance the first issue.
_But this:_ Each of us agreed to give $50 to finance the first issue.

_Not this:_ He briefly plunged into city affairs, with ardor and courage.
_But this:_ He briefly plunged into city affairs with ardor and courage.

_Not this:_ He told the truth in a powerful book, that was so true no publisher would take it.
_But this:_ He told the truth in a powerful book that was so true no publisher would take it.

_Not this:_ My daughter, Beulah, is more theatrical than her sisters.
_But this:_ My daughter Beulah is more theatrical than her sisters.

_Not this:_ To have characters tell their own story, on a stage, raises problems distinct from those involved in putting the story between the covers of a novel.
_But this:_ To have characters tell their own story on a stage raises problems distinct from those involved in putting the story between the covers of a novel.

_Not this:_ The words, that determine the subject matter of modern discussions of art, emerge fairly clearly in these statements.
_But this:_ The words that determine the subject matter of modern discussions of art emerge fairly clearly in these statements.

_Not this:_ The century, that gave us Shakespeare, witnessed some of the greatest epics in world history.
_But this:_ The century that gave us Shakespeare witnessed some of the greatest epics in world history.
Don’t use commas around suffixes following names, such as Jr., Sr., III, Inc., and Ltd.

Not this: Sammy Davis, Jr.
But this: Sammy Davis Jr.

Not this: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.
But this: Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

Not this: Davis Love, III
But this: Davis Love III

Not this: Penrose Books, Ltd.
But this: Penrose Books Ltd.

Not this: Forever 21, Inc.
But this: Forever 21 Inc.

Don’t use a comma to separate adjectives that are not coordinate—that is, when one or more of the adjectives form a unit with the noun they modify.

Not this: He wore a brown, fishing hat.
But this: He wore a brown fishing hat.

Not this: They lived in a brown, brick house.
But this: They lived in a brown brick house.

Not this: Hayden stayed in their upstairs, guest bedroom.
But this: Hayden stayed in their upstairs guest bedroom.
The Semicolon

3 Uses, 2 Misuses

The semicolon (;) marks a grammatical separation in the relations of a thought to a degree greater than that expressed by a comma. Between clauses, it especially shows coordination.

Using Semicolons

475 Use a semicolon to unite two closely connected sentences. This convention is proper even if the second or final independent clause begins with a conjunction.

- The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapors. (Thomas Hardy)
- The miasma spreads to dramatists and dramatic critics; the former drift into charlataney and the latter into a cowardly and disgusting dishonesty. (H. L. Mencken)
- He was determined now; it might just make the difference to him in the struggle for power, and besides, it contained the element of revenge. (Winston Churchill)
- Pride and brute tenacity are useful allies in war or any difficult time; but they have their weaknesses. (Sir Richard Livingstone)
- Sand-grouse and flocks of the blue bee-eater will scatter at your approach; a great eagle may rise and soar away; you will see herds of gazelle cantering across the plain. (V. Sackville-West)
- It was begun in February 1811 and finished soon after June 1813; that is to say, it took Jane Austen about twenty-eight months to complete a novel containing some 160 thousand words divided into forty-eight chapters. (Vladimir Nabokov)
Use a semicolon to separate items in a list or series when (1) any single element contains an internal comma, (2) the enumeration follows a colon, or (3) the items are broken into subparagraphs.

- The drawing-room began to look empty: the baccarat was discontinued for lack of a banker; more than one person said goodnight of his own accord, and was suffered to depart without expostulation; and in the meanwhile Mr. Morris redoubled in agreeable attentions to those who stayed behind. (Robert Louis Stevenson)

- A syllogism consists of three parts: major premise, minor premise, and conclusion, and for the rhetorician the three appeals are to pathos, ethos, and logos; the color wheel suggests that all colors come from the basic trio of red, yellow, and blue; matter divides into solid, liquid, and gas; that basic building block of matter, the atom, is made up of electron, neutron, and proton. (Brooks Landon)

- Appearing with General Recoil on “Town Meeting of the Upper Air” were to be Mrs. Florence Gill, president of the Women’s Auxiliary of the Sons of Original Matrons; Amory Buxton, head of the Economics and Withholding Council of the United Nations; and a young man named Tollip, representing one of the small, ineffectual groups that advocated world federation. (E. B. White)

- She would have given anything to have him tell her that it would be easier to measure the intentions of the wind or the patience of the waves on the shore than the intensity of his love; that there was no winter night cold enough to damp the ever burning fires of his passion; that he spent the days dreaming and nights awake, assailed by the madness of memories and counting, with the anguish of a condemned man, the hours until he would hold her again. (Isabel Allende)

In old-fashioned style, it is permissible to use a semicolon where one would normally use a dash today or perhaps a comma—to set off a dependent clause or a phrase by way of explanation or elaboration.

- Golf is a great game and a great art; like a kind of moving outdoor chess. (Patric Dickinson)

- Families live in rooms, one side of which is open; a bed, a table, a baby’s cot set on the floor above a precipice. (Dame Laura Knight)
• His tomb of Wilde could be called the first work of sculpture of our century; while the Rock Drill is more extraordinary still and foreshadows the appalling future to which a major part of the human race is binding itself with vows and catchwords. (Sacheverell Sitwell in reference to Jacob Epstein)

Preventing Misused Semicolons

478 Don’t use a semicolon where a colon is needed—especially after a salutation.

Not this: Dear Gordon; . . .
But this: Dear Gordon: . . .

Not this: Daddy and I worked late every afternoon of the war, picking vegetables from our Victory garden; carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, and squash.
But this: Daddy and I worked late every afternoon of the war, picking vegetables from our Victory garden: carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, and squash.

Not this: In fact his ruling was totally unnecessary; for the court found that the People had failed to take reasonable care to ascertain the facts. [A comma would be fine here in place of the semicolon.]
But this: In fact his ruling was totally unnecessary: the court found that the People had failed to take reasonable care to ascertain the facts.
Avoid the semicolon where a comma suffices—especially in a list with no internal commas.

*Not this:* The most exemplary of modern comedians; Charlie Chaplin; managed to incorporate a class struggle within his fragile figure.

*But this:* The most exemplary of modern comedians, Charlie Chaplin, managed to incorporate a class struggle within his fragile figure.

*Not this:* Some experts; even among American foreign policy’s sternest critics; accept that self-description.

*But this:* Some experts, even among American foreign policy’s sternest critics, accept that self-description.

*Not this:* Our panelists hail from San Francisco; Los Angeles; and Seattle.

*But this:* Our panelists hail from San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle.
Use a colon to link two separate clauses or phrases when you need to indicate a step forward from the first to the second—as when the second part explains the first part or provides an example.

- It was nothing, he said: only a little accident. (James Joyce)
- Whichever way she turned, an ironical implication confronted her: she had the exasperated sense of having walked into the trap of some stupid practical joke. (Edith Wharton)
- Einstein was utterly reticent about his personal life: a “puritanical reserve” was necessary, he said, to a scientist seeking truth. (C. P. Snow)
- Once you admit that you can change the object of a strongly felt affection, you undermine the whole structure of love and marriage, the whole philosophy of Shakespeare’s sonnet: this had been the approved, though unspoken, opinion of the rectory and its mental acres of upper air. (Muriel Spark)
- Every generation takes it for granted that development will continue in a straight line: the stupider the human being, the more does he take it for granted. (Hilaire Belloc)

Use a colon to introduce a list—especially one that is enumerated or broken down into subparagraphs. [The fourth bulleted item exemplifies legal style only.]

- The passage holds two of her stately passions: a sympathy for animals and a pleasure in history’s glacial movement, with its cumulative shifts of sensibility. (John Updike)
- It is all there: the pity, the pride, the just contempt, the righteous but controlled anger, the infinite compassion. (John Simon)
• Inevitably, liberalism tries to meet the challenge of communism by means of the approved procedures that follow from liberal principles: plenty of talk and free speech—negotiations, as talk between nations is called; the appeal to man’s better side, his rationality and supposed common interests in peace, disarmament, and a lift in the general standard of living; reduction of tensions; avoidance of risky confrontations; exchange and Truth programs to prove to the communists the goodness of our intentions; reform and economic improvement for everybody in the world; in short, peaceful coexistence phasing into appeasement and collaboration. (James Burnham)

• 4.1 Preparation for implementation of plain-writing requirements.
  (A) In general. No later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency must:
  (1) designate one or more senior officials within the agency to oversee the agency implementation of this Act;
  (2) communicate the requirements of this Act to the employees of the agency;
  (3) train employees of the agency in plain writing;
  (4) establish a process for overseeing the ongoing compliance of the agency with the requirements of this Act;
  (5) create and maintain a plain-writing section of the agency’s website as required under § 4.1(B) that is accessible from the homepage of the agency’s website; and
  (6) designate one or more agency points-of-contact to receive and respond to public input on:
       (a) agency implementation of this Act; and
       (b) the agency reports required under § 5.

482 Use a colon to introduce a wholly self-contained quotation, especially a long one. (A comma is often proper as well in this context. [See § 457.])
  • His wife said: “If the rumors I hear are true, enough Tlingits have filtered in to wipe us out.” (James Michener)
• An aged Halberdier, much decorated for long years of good conduct, said: “I’ll get Captain McKinney.” (Evelyn Waugh)

• At her own death, when the locked box she always kept on her bedside table was finally opened, all it contained was a letter from Rob with the notation in Elizabeth’s hand: “The last letter he ever wrote.” (Helene Hanff)

• Dr. Armstrong said warmly: “This speeding’s all wrong—all wrong! Young men like you are a danger to the community.” (Agatha Christie)

483 Use a colon to introduce a question. (Capitalization is optional after this colon.)

• That is quite true, and out of it arises another question: may the writer take the reader into his confidence about his characters? (E. M. Forster)

• The matter at issue is: What kind of people like Jane Austen? (Lionel Trilling) (A comma would be proper here as well. [See § 461.])

• Well, then let me ask you short and sweet: is Mrs. Linde getting a job in the bank? (Henrik Ibsen)

484 Use a colon after the salutation in formal correspondence. (A comma is acceptable in informal letters.)

• Dear Sir: . . . . (Samuel Johnson to James Boswell)

• Dear Mrs. Meloney: . . . . (Theodore Roosevelt to Mrs. William Brown Meloney)

• Dear Dr. Canby: . . . . (E. B. White to Henry Seidel Canby)

485 Use a colon to separate hours from minutes and certain parts of citations in which its use is traditional.

• At 5:10 a.m., the el train from the Morse stop in Chicago to the Davis stop in Evanston is surprisingly safe for young white women. (Tina Fey)

• The torments of hell are expressed sometimes by weeping and gnashing of teeth (as Matt. 8:12), sometimes by the worm of conscience (as Isa. 66:24, and Mark 9:44, 46, 48). (Thomas Hobbes)

• Century Magazine 32 (1886): 934. (James I. Robertson Jr.)
Use a lowercase letter after a colon (unless the first word is a proper noun) when the colon is used within a sentence, even if it introduces your own independent clause. Capitalize the first word after a colon when the colon introduces more than one sentence, a direct question, or speech in dialogue.

- My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. (Edgar Allan Poe)
- Justice Brennan added a further element to the test he laid down in the *Roth* case: that, to be bannable, material must be “utterly without redeeming social value.” (Anthony Lewis)
- This at least I know to be a mistake: an instance of the pathetic fallacy (angry cloud, proud mountain, presumptuous little Beaujolais) by which we ascribe animate qualities to inanimate phenomena. (Christopher Hitchens)
- The “nationalization of slavery” rested on an assumption shared with the abolitionists: the survival of the South’s slave-labor system required the active collaboration of the federal government. (Bruce Levine)

Preventing Misused Colons

Don’t use a colon to introduce a quotation or list that blends into the syntax of your sentence.

*Not this:* I recall quite clearly—she told him to: “bring the child straight home.”

*But this:* I recall quite clearly—she told him to “bring the child straight home.”

*Not this:* These boys possess what Jane calls: “a one-track mind.”

*But this:* These boys possess what Jane calls “a one-track mind.”

*Not this:* Overwhelmed and unprepared, local officials asked the federal government for: “all the help they could get.”

*But this:* Overwhelmed and unprepared, local officials asked the federal government for “all the help they could get.”
Parentheses

7 Uses, 1 Misuse

Parentheses [( )] are pairs of upright curves that indicate a word, phrase, or clause that has been interjected by way of explanation or qualification.

Using Parentheses

488 Use parentheses to set off an inserted phrase, clause, or sentence that you want to minimize.

- David Jones learned the Russian cuisine under a dour cook named Ivan (a name easily Welshified into Ifan), who had himself served on merchant ships plying the Baltic. (Anthony Burgess)
- A later type of rulers, explicitly and increasingly the servants of Whitehall, and serving only for a limited period (after which they returned to their native country, either to retirement or to some other activity) aimed rather to bring to India the benefits of Western civilization. (T. S. Eliot)
- Sometimes, in the morning, if her feet ached more than usual, Mrs. Harris felt a little low. (Nobody did anything about broken arches in those days, and the common endurance test of old age was to keep going after every step cost something.) She would hang up her towel with a sigh and go into the kitchen, feeling that it was hard to make a start. (Willa Cather)
- Though I have no belief in the power of education to turn public school boys into Newtons (it being quite obvious that, whatever opportunity may be offered, it is only those rare beings desirous of learning and possessing a certain amount of native ability who ever do learn anything), yet I must insist, in my own defense, that the system of mathematical instruction of which, at Eton, I was the unfortunate victim, was calculated not merely to turn my desire into stubborn passive resistance, but also to stifle whatever rudimentary aptitude in this direction I might have possessed. (Aldous Huxley)
489 Use parentheses for clarifying appositives or attributions.

- Outside we have a soprano (Gilda) and a baritone (Rigoletto); inside are a mezzo-soprano (Maddalena) and a tenor (the Duke). (Fred Plotkin)
- I was fortunate to hear the enormously successful novelist Chuck Hogan (The Standoff) talk about his novel Prince of Thieves, which was set in Charlestown, Massachusetts. (Andrew McAleer)

490 Use parentheses to introduce shorthand or familiar names.

- In the young people’s section the benches were placed close together, and when a child’s legs no longer comfortably fitted in the narrow space, it was an indication to the elders that that person could now move into the intermediate area (center church). (Maya Angelou)
- The Russians tracked the U-2 with their radar and made a number of attempts to knock it down with their surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), but the flight was a success. (Stephen Ambrose)
- The Assizes of London are held at the Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey). (Henry Cecil)
- Around 2002, Stone Yamashita was approached by Hewlett-Packard (HP). (Chip Heath and Dan Heath)

491 Use parentheses around numbers or letters when you’re listing complex items in text. (Note that they should come in pairs: preferably “(A),” not “A.”) [The Chicago Manual of Style recommends periods, not parentheses, for vertical lists—as in the third bulleted example.]

- The two motive forces can be represented for the present purpose by two almost axiomatic statements, thus: (1) “An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals,” and (2) “Officials make work for each other.” (C. Northcote Parkinson)
- Mill’s Principles carefully distinguished three cases of value determination: (1) with perpendicular supply curves, (2) with horizontal supply curves, and (3) with upward-sloping supply curves. (Thomas Sowell)
- Now for your questions.
  (1) Life for me is real as I believe it to be a spark of the Divine.
(2) Religion not in the conventional but in the broadest sense helps me to have a glimpse of the Divine essence. This glimpse is impossible without full development of the moral sense. Hence religion and morality are, for me, synonymous terms.

(3) Striving for full realization keeps me going.

(4) This striving is the source of whatever inspiration and energy I possess.

(5) My treasure lies in battling against darkness and all forces of evil.

(Mohandas K. Gandhi)

492 Use parentheses to denote subparts in a citation.

- The License and Agreement requires the publication of various programmes; for instance, Clause 15(2) orders the broadcast of “an impartial account day by day prepared by professional reporters of the proceedings in both Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament.” (Harry Street)

- The Government reads § 1089(e) simply to shore up § 1089(a)’s immunization of medical personnel against tort liability. (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg)

493 Place parentheses correctly in relation to other punctuation, so that terminal punctuation goes outside the closing parentheses unless (1) the entire sentence is parenthetical or (2) the parenthetical matter requires a question mark or an exclamation mark.

- Married couples split up with dismaying consequences (Truman Van Brunt abandons Christina, and their son Walker betrays and loses his Jessica). (Mark C. Carnes)

- Lying on the lawn beneath the tree in both pictures are three barely distinguishable figures. (They are thought to be Camille, Monet’s first wife, Sisley, and Sisley’s wife.) (John Berger)
• One great mistake made by many of the scholarly poets of the Renaissance was their thinking that the ancients were all alike and equally valuable, the mistake of not seeing that the ancient poets differed as individuals, and had different ideals, which they followed in different ways. (On the other hand, there are many examples of censure of the ancients, leading later to the dispute of ancients and moderns, where the upholders of the moderns held the ancients were not classical enough, and that the moderns could beat them at their own game.) (W. P. Ker)

• A speech can be similarly X-rayed or photographed and its structure revealed. If one examined such a speechgraph (what else could it be called?), there would be seen symbols such as squares, circles, and lines. (Louis Nizer)

494 Use parentheses to enclose a brief aside, even as short as a single exclamation mark or question mark.

• James E. Robinson, in a recent study, considers that the marriage (!) of Bottom and Titania translates the comprehension of the relation of nature and experience into comic myth. (Hallett Smith)

Preventing Misused Parentheses

495 Never use a comma before an opening parenthesis.

Not this: Some of the college players find match play, (which produced Travers, Jones, Little, Littler, Palmer, Nicklaus, et al., as national champions) intolerable.

But this: Some of the college players find match play (which produced Travers, Jones, Little, Littler, Palmer, Nicklaus, et al., as national champions) intolerable.

Not this: Macduff’s grief, (as Malcolm has urged) is converted to expedient anger.

But this: Macduff’s grief (as Malcolm has urged) is converted to expedient anger.
The Em-Dash (or Long Dash)

5 Uses, 2 Misuses

An em-dash (—) is a horizontal line that marks an emphatic insertion, an informal introduction, or a sharp break in thought. It is not so called because it runs the width of a capital M (a common misconception). Rather, it takes its name from a unit of typographic measurement: an em was the height of a traditional metal piece of type (about the width of a capital H). Copyeditors signal it by the mark [⁻].

Using Em-Dashes

496 Use a pair of em-dashes to set off an inserted phrase that, because of what it modifies, needs to go in the middle of a sentence.

- I think you behave—and write—nicely, nobly even, if you like to be told so. (Algernon Charles Swinburne)
- In America—as elsewhere—free speech is confined to the dead. (Mark Twain)
- A curious machinery of effort is the best—even the simplest—imitation of the laws of nature. (Garry Wills)
- It is doubtful that public support will be forthcoming unless the libraries—public and university both—do a better job of presenting their case to the public than has been done until now. (Norman Cousins)

497 Use an em-dash to set off a parenthetical phrase that you want to highlight.

- He was not exactly a mathematician, but he had the true architect’s love for the perfect figures of solid geometry—the cube, the sphere, the cylinder, the cone—and the things that happen when these figures intersect each other. (John Summerson in reference to Sir Edward Lutyens)
- We have lately been making difficulties about passports—not merely keeping foreigners out but even forbidding our own citizens to travel in foreign countries—very much in the Russian fashion. (Edmund Wilson)
- They say—the astrologers, I mean—that it will get better and better for me as I go on. (Henry Miller)
• I suppose we all—even nuns—dream of a life other than the one we actually live on this indifferent earth. (Larry McMurtry)

498 Use an em-dash to tack on an important afterthought.
• Livia was in the Box, too—a peculiar honor paid her as my father’s mother. (Robert Graves)
• He just liked the early morning to himself, quiet, no voices—especially not Marion’s voice. (Raymond Chandler)
• They might call him a watchman but he was a pimp—a dirty pimp, the lowest thing in the world. (John Steinbeck)
• It was June when we buried him—the summer solstice. (Susan Cheever)

499 Use an em-dash to introduce a specification or a list when more of a pause is suggested than a colon might convey.
• They sold everything here—fruit, vegetables, dairy, geese, fish. (Isaac Bashevis Singer)
• The great Russian writers are like men deprived by an earthquake or a railway accident not only of their clothes, but also of something subtler and more important—their manners, the idiosyncrasies of their characters. (Virginia Woolf)
• This rule fulfills three purposes—it expresses snobbish feeling, it measures competitive power, and it passes on to the degree-granting institution the task of judging intellectual and scholarly aptitudes. (Jacques Barzun)

500 Use an em-dash to show hesitation, faltering, or interruption.
• “I—I—don’t know, sir,” replied Oliver. (Charles Dickens)
• “Ralph, wow, I—I feel better already.” (Thomas Pynchon)
• “You are just what I—what I wanted,” he said. (Frances Hodgson Burnett)
• The thing that made Will laugh most was that the very fellow who did it got his trousers burnt trying to put out the fire, and he asked the—is it Faculty or President? (Louisa May Alcott)
• “After that”—his voice faltered—“that—machine, for duplicating the glass. Well, the machine did its work.” (William F. Buckley)
• **CARROLL.** Come, come! But she—?
  **STEPHEN.** She was fine. She insisted that we should fight it together. (J. M. Barrie)
• “No tricks now or—.” “Oh, you can trust me, you can trust me!” (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)

### Preventing Misused Em-Dashes

**501 Don’t use more than two em-dashes in a sentence.**

*Not this:* The circumstances of this death are completely distorted by the professor, a fateful follower of the gentlemen of the daily press who—perhaps for political reasons—had falsified the culprit’s motives and intentions without awaiting his trial—which unfortunately was not to take place in this world.

*But this:* The circumstances of this death are completely distorted by the professor, a fateful follower of the gentlemen of the daily press who—perhaps for political reasons—had falsified the culprit’s motives and intentions without awaiting his trial, which unfortunately was not to take place in this world.

*Not this:* It had added some editorial pages that dealt only with local problems—the hideous new lamp standards, infrequent buses on the Number 11 route, the theft of milk bottles—things that really interested only one group of people—housewives.

*But this:* It had added some editorial pages that dealt only with local problems—the hideous new lamp standards, infrequent buses on the Number 11 route, the theft of milk bottles—things that really interested only one group of people: housewives.

---

It’s not wise to violate the rules until you know how to observe them.
—T.S. Eliot quoted in *Good Advice on Writing*, William Safire and Leonard Safir, eds.
Don’t use a comma, colon, semicolon, or terminal period before an em-dash. A question mark or exclamation point is acceptable in that position.

Not this: They were waiting for her outside the warehouse; — Bill, hands in pockets, was leaning against the railing and watching as the hoodlums stalked around their smashed bikes, cursing and swearing.

But this: They were waiting for her outside the warehouse; Bill, hands in pockets, was leaning against the railing and watching as the hoodlums stalked around their smashed bikes, cursing and swearing.

Not this: She remembered the girl in the coffee shop who had been staring at David. There was something about her face: — girls always gave that certain move when they thought someone was cute.

But this: She remembered the girl in the coffee shop who had been staring at David. There was something about her face — girls always gave that certain move when they thought someone was cute.

Not this: Herbert flinched. — Violet turned away from him and walked back toward the shimmering curtain of air that he had come through.

But this: Herbert flinched. Violet turned away from him and walked back toward the shimmering curtain of air that he had come through.
The En-Dash (or Short Dash)

1 Use, 2 Misuses

An en-dash (–) is a horizontal line that marks a span, a tension, or a pairing of equals. As with the em-dash, the name refers not to the letter N but to the en, a typographical measurement equivalent to half an em. Copyeditors signal it by the mark [—].

Using En-Dashes

503 Use an en-dash as an equivalent of “to” (as when showing a span of pages), to express tension or difference, or to denote a pairing in which the elements carry equal weight.

- Victor Hugo (1802–1885) stands by himself, an exuberant, bold, florid, and sometimes rather tawdry mind, erupting plays, poems, novels, and political disquisitions. (H. G. Wells)
- The more extreme barbarities of the 1929–1953 period have been abolished and seem unlikely to return. (Dwight Macdonald)
- He hadn’t eaten on the Dallas–San Francisco flight and was hungry. (Margaret Truman)
- Evaluation on the good–bad dimension is an automatic operation of System 1, and you formed a crude impression of the ranking of the dolphin among the species that came to mind. (Daniel Kahneman)
- We took the tube, which is now £2 per person, or about $4–8 for two, probably not much less than a taxi. (Thomas B. Lemann)

Preventing Misused En-Dashes

504 Don’t use an en-dash in place of a hyphen or an em-dash.

Not this: Betting circulars cannot be sent to those under twenty-one years of age.

But this: Betting circulars cannot be sent to those under twenty-one years of age.
Punctuation

*Not this:* He held his breath until they hit the city-limits sign – then Jeremy exhaled.

*But this:* He held his breath until they hit the city-limits sign— then Jeremy exhaled.

*Not this:* It is lamentable that newspaper editors feel constrained – as many do – by fear of contempt proceedings from publishing articles on the subject.

*But this:* It is lamentable that newspaper editors feel constrained— as many do—by fear of contempt proceedings from publishing articles on the subject.

505 *Don’t use an en-dash in a “from–to” construction, the en-dash purporting to replace “to.” Instead, use both “from” and “to.”*

*Not this:* The meeting will run from 5:00–6:30 p.m.

*But this:* The meeting will run from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

*Not this:* We flew from Chicago–Glasgow last night.

*But this:* We flew from Chicago to Glasgow last night.
The Hyphen

8 Uses, 4 Misuses

The hyphen (−) is a short horizontal mark indicating the joining of word-elements (as there), the division of syllabic elements at the end of a line, or elongation in the sounding of a spoken word.

Using Hyphens

Use a hyphen to connect the parts of a phrasal adjective—that is, a phrase whose words function together to modify a noun.

- A chaise drew up in front of the parsonage, the horse pricking his ears at the bell-drum-fife noise. (Carl Sandburg)
- The whole piece was kind of a go-figure story. (David Foster Wallace)
- Fox Renick suddenly became engaged in a sort of coddle-and-feed operation, with Rory Cade as the target. (Sheila Bosworth)
- A half-grown boy wearing a wagon-wheel-size hat crouched awkwardly on the posts. (Annie Proulx)
- Being competitive, risk-taking, status-conscious, dedicated, single-minded, persevering—it can make all the difference to success. (Helena Cronin)
- It may even be that I unconsciously assume the famous it’s-a-nice-place-to-visit-but-I’d-hate-to-live-here look. (Joseph Wood Krutch)

However frenzied or disarrayed or complicated your thoughts might be, punctuation tempers them and sends signals to your reader about how to take them in. We rarely give these symbols a second glance: they’re like invisible servants in fairy tales—the ones who bring glasses of water and pillows, not storms of weather or love. . . . Their presence is more felt than seen. It’s the words that will capture your eyes, enticing them to dally and glisten. One quick blink and you’ve caught the comma’s or slash’s or hyphen’s message, huddled in a parenthetical clasp. The accomplishments are no less astonishing for occurring in a flash.

—Karen Elizabeth Gordon
The New Well-Tempered Sentence
507 Use a suspensive hyphen to indicate the idea that the final word of a second phrasal adjective goes also with the elliptically stated first phrasal adjective, or that a suffix could be joined with another (especially an earlier) affix.

- Interval training, in which you alternate from low- to high-impact aerobic activity, has also been shown to be quite effective. (Sanjay Jain)
- These are short, two- or three-minute searches. (Natalie Goldberg)
- In Minnesota, you’ll find an awful lot of Toms and Marys and pages on pages of Johnsons, Andersens, and other -sons and -sens. (David Haynes)

508 Use a hyphen in certain compound nouns and noun phrases when the words are particularly closely associated (check a good current dictionary, though nonce phrases won’t be listed). [The first three bulleted examples are admittedly old-fashioned.]

- He always liked to get visitors alone in the billiard-room and tell them stories about a mysterious lady, a foreign royalty, with whom he had driven about in London. (C. S. Lewis)
- Her pantomime of his action suggests a man pursuing something on the ground before him and striking at it ever and again with his walking-stick. (H. G. Wells)
- There was not a sound in the room, except the ticking of a floor-clock in a corner. (Ellery Queen)
- “They all cheered,” said my great-grandfather. (Norman Mailer)
- In his Innocents Abroad, he struck an attitude—let’s-have-no-more-of-this-European-nonsense—and though inwardly he must have grown out of it, he did his best to maintain it. (J. B. Priestley)

509 Use a hyphen when writing out fractions and two-word numbers under 100.

- To scout out new mining properties, they hired a man named John Hays Hammond for $250,000 a year plus a one-fourth share in all new mines he discovered—and he proved to be a bargain at the price. (Joseph Epstein)
- Ninety-eight percent of Agassi Prep’s students are minority. (Bill Clinton)
- Nine and three-quarters. (J. K. Rowling)
510 Use a hyphen to show hesitation within a word, stammering, stuttering, lengthening of a sound, or accentuating syllables.

- “I’m sorry, Ezra. I didn’t mean—I-I’m nervous tonight.” (Eugene O’Neill)
- “I wonder if I love him” became a song the way she said it, and she would sing over and over to herself: “I won-der, I won-der.” (John O’Hara)
- “If we had the g-guts! I could go outside to-today, if I had the guts. My m-m-mother is a good friend of M-Miss Ratched, and I could get an AMA signed this afternoon, if I had the guts!” (Ken Kesey)
- He strikes a great-man pose and yells at no one in particular, “Isn’t it fun to be the cho-re-o-gra-pheur?” (Terry Teachout)

511 Use a hyphen in proper names when appropriate.

- Al-Farabi’s doctrine of emanation became generally accepted by the Faylasufs. (Karen Armstrong)
- The Home Guards were making their first attack from the police- headquarters building on Schneidermühlen-Gasse. (Günter Grass)
- An outfit out of Denver called Holloway Brothers has offered to buy Koker-Hanks. (John Grisham)

512 Use a hyphen to separate groups of numbers that are not ranges (such as telephone numbers and social-security numbers) or when spelling out a word letter by letter.

Not this: #3517–6 (en-dash)
But this: #3517-6 (hyphen)

Not this: SSN 315—37—1982 (em-dashes)
But this: SSN 315-37-1982 (hyphens)


513 Use a hyphen with the suffixes “-less” and “-like” when the root word ends with “-ll.”

Not this: callless
But this: call-less

Not this: thrillless
But this: thrill-less
Preventing Misused Hyphens

514 Generally, don’t use a hyphen after a prefix unless (1) the solid form might be confusing (e.g., “anti-intellectual”), (2) the primary word is capitalized (e.g., “non-European citizen”), (3) the prefix is part of a noun phrase (e.g., “non-contract-law doctrine”), or (4) the unhyphenated form has a different meaning (e.g., “prejudicial” vs. “pre-judicial”).

Not this: The sound of his old Chevy lurching down the road was as un-mistakable as smoker’s cough.
Not this: Having chest hair was considered a pre-condition for making it on the Varsity.
Not this: Public Health officials urged college students to wash their hands frequently with anti-bacterial soap.

But this: The sound of his old Chevy lurching down the road was unmistakable as smoker’s cough.
But this: Having chest hair was considered a precondition for making it on the Varsity.
But this: Public Health officials urged college students to wash their hands frequently with antibacterial soap.

515 Don’t use a hyphen (or even a pair of hyphens) in place of an em-dash.
Not this: In the summer it was too hot to sit outside scheming—all plans had to be made inside.
Not this: Her grandmother would have been pleased—she being a stringently upright woman—but she had died four years earlier.

But this: In the summer it was too hot to sit outside scheming—all plans had to be made inside.
But this: Her grandmother would have been pleased—she being a stringently upright woman—but she had died four years earlier.
**516**  Don’t use a hyphen in a two-word adjective phrase formed with an “-ly” adverb and a participial adjective.

*Not this:* federally-recognized tribe  
*But this:* federally recognized tribe  

*Not this:* publicly-traded company  
*But this:* publicly traded company  

*Not this:* widely-held view  
*But this:* widely held view  

*Not this:* mildly-disconcerting errors  
*But this:* mildly disconcerting errors  

*But:* not-so-widely-held view

**517**  Don’t use a hyphen in a phrasal verb.

*Not this:* Please set-up the tables.  
*But this:* Please set up the tables.  

*Not this:* We should back-off.  
*But this:* We should back off.
The Apostrophe

3 Uses, 2 Misuses

The apostrophe (’) is an above-the-line symbol that marks the omission of a letter or syllable—or (rarely) that removes a visual ambiguity that might otherwise appear in a plural.

Using Apostrophes

518 Use an apostrophe to indicate the possessive case.

- By a miracle, my grandmother’s silver mirror was never touched. (Isabel Allende)
- He sat down and ate the boiled oats with cinnamon bark and goat’s milk. (Paul Bowles)
- If the fathers ate sour grapes, are the children’s teeth set on edge? (F. L. Lucas)
- The Dickenses’ house is the one nearest the railing. (Susan M. Rossi-Wilcox)
- Julian Mack, a lover of fine food, once commented that when you went to the Brandeises’ for dinner you had to eat beforehand and then again afterward. (Nelson L. Dawson)

519 Use an apostrophe to mark the omission of one or more letters from a word, especially in a contraction or to signal dialectal speech.

- I’d always assumed that this preemptive “you’re welcome” required a much busier—and ruder—setting than the sleepy Maple Syrup state [Vermont]. (Philip Galanes)
- But even if you win the rat race, you’re still a rat. (Donald McCullough)
- Spenser wasn’t much into subtlety. (John Bemelmans Marciano)
- There was a pause, and then one of those creamy West Country voices drawled, “Aw, don’ee worry. Us’n’ll beat they!” (Sir William Slim)
Use an apostrophe to form the plural of lowercase letters, capital letters when necessary to avoid a miscue, symbols, single-digit numerals, lowercase abbreviations, and capitalized abbreviations with periods.

- Amazingly, the printing we all learned in school—known also as manuscript writing, and often called ball and stick from the way the b’s, d’s, and other letters are formed—has been around for less than a hundred years. (Kitty Burns Florey)
- The half-filled bookshelf is also half empty, of course, with books leaning left and right to form M’s, N’s, V’s, and W’s to fill the voids between clusters of vertical and not-so-vertical I’s. (Henry Petroski)
- The 75s spoke with piercing shriek over the fields as the French entered the territory that had once been theirs. (Barbara W. Tuchman)

Preventing Misused Apostrophes

Generally, don’t use an apostrophe to form a plural (but dot your i’s and cross your t’s).

Not this: I think he was born in the early 1980’s.¹
But this: I think he was born in the early 1980s.

Not this: *The Stevenson’s weren’t home.
But this: The Stevensons weren’t home.

Not this: *The Weatherly’s have gone on vacation.
But this: The Weatherlys have gone on vacation.

Not this: *The Hughes’ are invited over.
But this: The Hugheses are invited over.

Don’t drop obligatory apostrophes.

Not this: He gave *two weeks notice.
But this: He gave two weeks’ notice.

Not this: It was one *oclock when the women went to bed.
But this: It was one o’clock when the women went to bed.

¹ Formerly common, this form is now avoided in preference to a decade reference with no apostrophe.
Quotation Marks

7 Uses, 2 Misuses

Quotation marks are paired notations (“ ” on first occurrence in AmE, ‘ ’ in BrE) placed at the beginning and end of a quoted word or passage, of a word or phrase referred to as such, or of a definition. A quotation within a quotation normally has single instead of double marks (or, in BrE, double instead of single). It was formerly common to place an initial quotation mark at the beginning of each line quoted, but today the usual practice is to repeat it only at the beginning of each new paragraph.

Using Quotation Marks

523 Use quotation marks when you’re quoting a word, phrase, or any passage of 50 or fewer words. (Set off a longer quotation by indenting it on both sides.)

- She told him that she “adored” vaudeville. (Sinclair Lewis)
- The twentieth century, as we know, has frequently been called “the century of the child.” (Havelock Ellis)
- “Good morning, Linda,” Mother said. “You’ve torn your sleeve.” (William Faulkner)
- “Three feet, sir,” replied Johnson, screwing up his eyes against the glare of the newly risen sun. (Richard Woodman)
- Darwin concluded that all domestic breeds of horses stem from a single wild species “of a dun color and more or less striped,” to which modern descendants “occasionally revert.” (J. Frank Dobie)

524 Use quotation marks when (1) referring to a word as a word or a phrase as a phrase (although italics are better if you do this frequently); or (2) providing a definition.

- To call Randolph “the American Burke” is no great exaggeration. (Russell Kirk)
- “Poor little” and “poor old,” I must explain, were among his favorite epithets. (Peter Quennell)
- “To devour a book” has long been a fashionable cliché but nothing more. (Harry C. Bauer)
• “Junk science,” which has become a fashionable pejorative in recent years, does not always mean what a reasonable person would expect it to mean. (Susan Jacoby)

525 **Use quotation marks when you mean “so-called” or “self-styled,” or even “so-called-but-not-really.”**

- Adams called himself “a constructive anarchist.” (Michael Kammen)
- In 1967, the “normality” of the Barrow gang and their individual aspirations toward respectability are the craziest things about them. (Pauline Kael)
- We got glimpses of women in politics and in such “men’s sports” as boxing, football, and hockey. (Vermout Royster)
- U.S. military authorities are avoiding anything in the nature of a “body count” for Operation Desert Storm. (Christopher Hitchens)
- The most valuable real estate in the Hill Country was in its leading “city,” Fredericksburg. (Robert A. Caro)
- We are as silly as the people in Garrison Keillor’s fictional heartland, where *all* the children are claimed to be “above average.” (William A. Henry III)
- The “positive evaluation” of *passio* in the mystical ecstasy of love must also be considered with caution. (Erich Auerbach)

526 **Quotation marks are traditionally used for titles of short-format works, such as songs, short stories, poems, articles, and essays, and for those of constituent elements of larger works, such as book chapters and television episodes. But styles vary. Be consistent in using a house style or a standard style manual.**

- He’s the definition of a line I used in “Vertigo”: *A feeling is much stronger than a thought.* (Bono, referring to Daniel Lanois)
- He took over the starring part in every family gathering, warbling such favorites as “Rose Marie” or “Three Little Words” while his sister Olive accompanied him on the piano. (T. Harry Williams)
Punctuation

527 Use single quotation marks for quoted words within a quotation. (The convention in BrE is to begin with single quotation marks and to use double marks for quoted words within a quotation.)

- “That ended amicably, with her singing, by request, ‘Don’t Stand There on the Coconut Mat.’” (James Thurber)
- Another undertaking has been Edward Allen's tax exams: “After the CFA, I said I was never going to do any exams ever again,” but duty intervened: “It’s always valuable to have a different approach. We sat down and thought, ‘How can we better serve and get closer to our clients?’ And as tax is important to clients it’s important for me as an adviser.” (Giulia Cambieri and Alex Matchett)

528 Use quotation marks to signal a word or phrase used idiomatically—in a way that might otherwise be misread.

- Publicity for the American writer is of the “personality” kind: a photograph in Harper’s Bazaar, bland television appearances . . . the writer as minor movie star, and as unheeded. (Gore Vidal)
- “Just plain” Republicans are the second most critical of the media, but they are never, or hardly ever, uniformly antimedia. (Barry Sussman)

529 Place quotation marks correctly in relation to other punctuation: (1) commas and periods go inside (in AmE); (2) colons and semicolons go outside; and (3) question marks and exclamation marks go either inside or outside, depending on whether they’re part of the quoted matter.

- To counter what she called a “crisis of meaning,” she called for what would amount to a new politics of kindness. (Bob Woodward)
- “This obviously is not a tax-reform bill,” summarized Ways and Means Chairman Al Ullman. “It is an economic tax package.” (Robert L. Bartley)
- His spouse, charmingly attired in frilly negligee, poised behind him with a silver coffee pot, inquired, “More coffee, dear?” (Jerome Beatty Jr.)
- Humphrey cocks his head and gazes up the tall recruit’s nostrils. “Your hygiene is unsatisfactory. Did you shave? No discipline. NO DISCIPLINE!” (Thomas E. Ricks)
- “If wisdom be in suffering,” he argues, why should not soldiers “let the foes quietly cut their throats”? (Donald A. Stauffer)
Preventing Misused Quotation Marks

530 Don’t use quotation marks for a phrasal adjective.

Not this: We now have a plethora of “long distance” services.
But this: We now have a plethora of long-distance services.

Not this: The “so-so” scholar might have secured tenure by courtesy in his first or second post.
But this: The so-so scholar might have secured tenure by courtesy in his first or second post.

531 Don’t use quotation marks merely to emphasize a word or to acknowledge its informality, because doing so looks amateurish and can easily be misunderstood as marking sarcasm.

Not this: His remarks seemed “snarky.”
But this: His remarks seemed snarky.

Not this: I don’t know what can be “done” about it.
But this: I don’t know what can be done about it.

Not this: We offer all types of “hors d’oeuvres.”
But this: We offer all types of hors d’oeuvres.

Not this: On these terms, a person’s daily “earthly” activities are stripped of ethical and social values.
But this: On these terms, a person’s daily earthly activities are stripped of ethical and social values. (Consider deleting earthly.)
The Question Mark

1 Use, 1 Misuse

A question mark (?) appears at the end of an interrogative sentence, usually to signal that it is seeking a response.

Using Question Marks

Use a question mark after a direct question.

- “What do you seek here, Stephen?” said she. (Nathaniel Hawthorne)
- But what, then, was the usual height of the upper stage? (C. Walter Hodges)
- Is a service to the public or one’s country worth one’s life if it becomes necessary to give it, to accomplish the end sought? (Margaret Truman)
- Could Leonardo have been content with such a commonplace pose? (Kenneth Clark)

Preventing Misused Question Marks

Don’t use a question mark after an indirect question.

Not this: He wondered whether he could make it?
But this: He wondered whether he could make it.

Not this: I asked why that was so?
But this: I asked why that was so.

Not this: He reflected on why it was he couldn’t win in actual competition?
But this: He reflected on why it was he couldn’t win in actual competition.
The Exclamation Mark

1 Use, 1 Misuse

An exclamation mark (or exclamation point) (!) appears at the end of an interjection or exclamation to signal its character.

Using Exclamation Marks

Use an exclamation mark after an exclamatory word, phrase, or sentence—especially when quoting someone else.

- How earnestly did she then wish that her former opinions had been more reasonable, her expressions more moderate! (Jane Austen)
- Hot dog! Go, Mama! (Lorraine Hansberry)
- Oh, thank God, the synagogue is still here! (Paddy Chayefsky)
- “Wretch!” cried the widow. (Ambrose Bierce)
- Some readers are saying right now as they read these lines: “Oh, phooey! Flattery! Bear oil! I’ve tried that stuff.” (Dale Carnegie)

Preventing Misused Exclamation Marks

Generally, don’t use an exclamation mark to express your own surprise or amazement.

Not this: During his testimony, the expert witness for the defense claimed the dumping was having a negligible impact on the wetlands. Outrageous!

But this: During his testimony, the expert witness for the defense had the audacity to claim that the dumping was having a negligible impact on the wetlands.

Not this: Without warning, the dogcatcher walked straight up to the constable and smacked him!

But this: Without warning, the dogcatcher walked straight up to the constable and smacked him.
The Period

4 Uses, 1 Misuse

A period (.) is a dot placed after every complete declarative sentence and after most abbreviations. It is identical to the decimal marker.

Using Periods

536 Use a period to end a sentence that is neither a question nor an exclamation.

- Wendell began to cry. (Eudora Welty)
- Alix was indeed an enigma. (Louis Auchincloss)
- The examiner showed a row of unusually mutilated teeth. (Saul Bellow)
- Against my cheek I felt the patter of sand driving from nowhere to nowhere across the wastes. (J.M. Coetzee)

537 Use a period to indicate an abbreviated name or title. [The salutary trend, though, is to omit periods with acronyms and initialisms—hence BBC would be usual today in the final bulleted example.]

- I never recovered from the shock of that moment when I was pulled out of the security of Mr. Holmes’s stern classroom. (Azar Nafisi)
- The central character, Mrs. Alving, is not simply a *raisonneuse*, mouthing the author’s opinions, but also a tragic protagonist whose suffering demonstrates the hollowness of even the most emancipated opinions when not backed with radical acts. (Robert Brustein)
- I had seen my sisters’ scapulars and knew that the bit of cloth at the end had a picture of the Virgin or St. Joseph on it. (Rudolfo Anaya)
- The B.B.C. is not an institution whose function is to annoy. (Harold Nicolson)
538  **Put the period outside parentheses or brackets that enclose only part of a sentence, but inside parentheses or brackets that enclose a sentence.**

- Rumsfeld is here employing the old con known as *ignoratio elenchi* (“ignorance of the issue,” perhaps better translated in this case as “ignoring the issue”). (Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein)
- Next day he talked to the inventor of a spaceship who was planning a voyage to the moon (this was the 1920s). (J. B. McGeachy)
- If the problem was successfully solved, then the solver got the reward. (The money was the incentive.) (Jonah Lehrer)
- He has bid us “quit ourselves like men.” (On his lips quotations from the Bible, from *The Times*, seem equally magnificent.) (Virginia Woolf)

539  **Use a period to show a decimal place in a numeral.**

- The statistics as of 1989 are extremely reassuring: 1,700 births—1.5 percent cesareans; 4.8 percent transported to the hospital; .5 percent forceps. (Jessica Mitford)
- The researchers placed a 3.3-foot-high foam obstacle in the middle of the room and handed each couple a large pillow. (Richard Wiseman)
- Average estimated lost productivity per person per day due to interruptions, based on a 40-hour workweek: 2.1 hours. (Dave Crenshaw)

**Preventing Misused Periods**

540  **If a sentence ends with an abbreviation, don’t put an additional period after the abbreviation.**

*Not this:* Other positive effects bear upon cooperation, higher pay, etc..

*But this:* Other positive effects bear upon cooperation, higher pay, etc.
Brackets

3 Uses, 1 Misuse

Brackets ([ ]) are pairs of squared marks that enclose any part of a text to be separated or distinguished from the rest. They are also used in place of parentheses that would appear in a passage already placed within parentheses.

Using Brackets

541 Use a pair of brackets in a quotation to enclose an editorial comment, correction, explanation, interpolation, substitution, or translation that was not in the original text.

- In another essay he wrote: “What Mr. [D. H.] Lawrence’s art stands most desperately in need of is a shower bath of vital ideas.” (Evelyn Waugh referring to an essay by his father, Arthur Waugh)
- As she could never write him an entirely agreeable letter, she had to finish with: “You are old [he was forty-nine], you have no children, you are unhealthy.” (Nancy Mitford)
- Why didn’t it [Conquistador] ring your bell? (Archibald MacLeish in a letter to H. Phelps Putnam [with editor’s interpolation])
- Rather than a sovereign entity, the conscious mind is a partially sighted servant of a dominant, child-obsessed will-to-life: “[The intellect] does not penetrate into the secret workshop of the will’s decisions.” (Alain de Botton, quoting Arthur Schopenhauer)

542 Use a pair of brackets for parenthetical material that appears within material already within parentheses.

- Proust had a debilitating assessment of his own qualities (“I certainly think less of myself than Antoine [his butler] does of himself”). (Alain de Botton)
Use a pair of brackets (if desired) to insert the citation of a source, as in a footnote.

- For the details of this affair, see principally the Legislative Documents, 22d Congress, 2d session, no. 30. [Senate, “Presidential Message with Proclamations, Proceedings, and Documents, on Measures of South Carolina and General Government on Nullification,” 22d Cong., 2d sess., 1832–33, Sen. Doc., serial 230.] (Alexis de Tocqueville [editors’ footnoted citation])

Preventing Misused Brackets

Don’t use brackets in place of ellipsis dots when one or more words have been deleted without any replacement language.

Not this: All [ ] have to contribute to this mighty work.
But this: All . . . have to contribute to this mighty work.

Not this: The first form of religion had been infra-intellectual, [ ] the second was supra-intellectual.
But this: The first form of religion had been infra-intellectual, . . . the second was supra-intellectual.
The Slash (Virgule)

5 Uses, 1 Misuse

A slash (/), also known as a virgule or solidus, divides alternatives, fractions, months and days, and similar elements.

Using Slashes

545 Use a slash to separate alternatives (but remember to avoid “and/or”!).

- The fourth line might look as if it has the antithesis that we are used to (“shoot”/“be shot,” and so on). (Christopher Ricks)
- And as she bends to shake each one’s hand, I glance down at her pad on the coffee table and read the notes she has jotted: Trauma/dictatorship/family bonds strong/mother devoted. (Julia Alvarez)
- You may have been the recipient of a comment in the vein of “I think I just saw/read/heard/ate something that you created/wrote/composed/cooked.” (Henry Alford)
- My metaphors, speaking gear versus writing gear or uttering versus constructing, imply a binary, either/or choice. (Peter Elbow) [An en-dash is also permissible here: either–or choice.]

546 Use a slash to separate the numerator from the denominator in a fraction.

- If the elasticity of demand is, say, 1/4, it means that a 1 percent reduction in output will bring a 4 percent increase in price. (Mancur Olson)
- 3/4 cup walnuts, toasted and finely chopped. (Irma S. Rombauer)
- Never mind all that: like the old Ivory Soap ads, 99 and 44/100 percent pure—it floats! (Barbara Herrnstein Smith)

547 In informal writing, use a slash to separate the elements in a date.

- This was just after 9/11, when the cynicism and shallowness that had been beaten through the lifeblood of the city was interpreted as unnecessary cruelty, and it was all at once tacky to wish for anything other than world peace. (Candace Bushnell)
In informal writing, use a slash as a shorthand signal for “per.”

- Your travel allowance will be $75/day.
- The industry is now losing workers at the rate of 1,000/week.
- We have a minimum of $20/bet.

Use a slash to indicate separate lines of poetry or of a song.

- To be excessively controlled by sexual reinforcement is to be “infatuated,” and the etymology of the word was memorialized by Kipling in two famous lines: “A fool there was and he made his prayer . . . / To a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair.” (B. F. Skinner)
- Say, did you ever hear that old song of Kurt Weill’s from *Knickerbocker Holiday*: “When lovely Venus lies beside / Her lord and master Mars / They mutually profit / By their scars”? (Kurth Sprague)
- One of the most arresting places in the entire passage, for the sensitive reader, has this kind of mixed diction for its chief distinction: *we have done but greenly, / In hugger-mugger to inter him*. (John Crowe Ransom)

Preventing Misused Slashes

Don’t use a slash when a hyphen or en-dash would suffice.

*Not this:* On July 4/5, 1968, celebrations in the nation’s capital were hot, violent affairs.

*But this:* On July 4–5, 1968, celebrations in the nation’s capital were hot, violent affairs.

*Not this:* The historic evening of December 31, 1999/January 1, 2000, will be remembered forever as monumentally uneventful.

*But this:* The historic evening of December 31, 1999–January 1, 2000, will be remembered forever as monumentally uneventful.
Bullets

1 Use

A bullet (•) is a ball-like mark that demarcates text, especially each of a series of listed items.

551 Use bullets to mark a series of listed items that are of a more or less equal ranking, especially to draw the reader's attention and make reading easier by breaking out items into discrete chunks.

Every community needs to ask these questions:

• Does it have first-rate people on its school board, and are they broadly representative of the community?

• Does the board have open lines of communication to the school administration, to the teachers and to the entire community?

• Is it getting the information it needs to make responsible decisions, both short- and long-range?

• Does it have effective liaison with allied community programs: with the departments of health and welfare, with housing, private industry, transportation, and total city planning?

• Is it doing what a board should do—setting the policy for a strong administrator responsible to it—or is it wasting its time by dabbling in administrative details?

(John Gardner)

In airplane travel, small infringements can affect the well-being of many. Helpful behavior includes:

• Organizing one's hand baggage before boarding in such a way as to make it possible to slip into one's seat with it and then distribute it overhead and underfoot, rather than standing in the aisle to do so while several hundred people pile behind you.

• Taking no more than one's share of the amenities—pillows, blankets—and of storage space, and less of that, if possible.

• Cooperating in exchanging seats with people who want to sit together.
• Spending as little time in the bathrooms as possible, for which Miss Manners will give special dispensation to do moderated grooming at one’s seat.
• Staying out of the aisles and out of the way of moving service carts.
• Not begrudging moving to let those in one’s row out when they deem it necessary for whatever reason.
• Controlling one’s children so that they refrain from such voluntary actions as kicking the backs of the seats in front of them and endowing them with strong constitutions so that they do not indulge in involuntary unpleasant actions, as referred to above.

(Judith Martin)

You may feel your presence at home, in the office, or at a party will be less than well received, given the amount of garlic you have just consumed at a particular meal. Any one of the following actions might help you deal with the problem, to everyone’s relief:

• Chew and swallow some fresh parsley.
• Rub a piece of lemon over your tongue and the insides of your mouth.
• Chew a few coffee beans.
• Take some antacid.
• Use some mints.

(Letitia Baldridge)
Ellipsis Dots

5 Uses, 2 Misuses

Ellipsis dots (…), typographically identical with periods, are sets of three marks indicating an omission or suppression of words. When a fourth dot appears, it is inevitably a period—and best thought of that way instead of as a fourth ellipsis dot.

Using Ellipsis Dots

552 Use three ellipsis dots to show that an unfinished sentence trails off.

• They, they themselves, have created their own lives, not in that half-conscious, underground, interior way that we all do, but manifestly, out there in their own land: they are alive; they breathe the breath of their own houses . . . (Christopher Alexander, at chapter’s end)
• But—oh, Rosalind! Rosalind! . . . (F. Scott Fitzgerald, at paragraph’s end)
• Not at all, your excellency; on the contrary . . . I . . . (Ivan Turgenev, at the end of an uncompleted statement)

553 Use three ellipsis dots to signal rumination, musing, or hesitant continuation of a thought.

• He could close his eyes and try to believe that all that mattered was that he knew his work was great . . . and that other artists respected it . . . and that history would surely record his achievements . . . but deep down he knew he was lying to himself. (Tom Wolfe)
• I had never in my life done anything like it; I had made something, no matter how bad it was; and it was mine . . . Now, to whom could I show it? (Richard Wright)
• After all my lectures . . . after the infamous green binge-drinking chart . . . after expelling the dinosaur from our home . . . here I was queuing up like a hardened beer bonger! (Chris Volkmann and Toren Volkmann)
• And yet . . . and yet. There was something wrong. (Elizabeth Ironside)
Ellipsis Dots

554  **Use three ellipsis dots to signal that you’ve omitted one or more words within a sentence that you’re quoting.**

- It would help, too, to remember the words of Hobbes: “For words are wise men’s counters, they do but reckon with them; but they are the money of fools that value them . . . by authority.” (Richard Mitchell)
- Othello’s foil of course is Iago, about whose imagery and speech there hangs, as recent commentators have pointed out, a constructed air, essentially suited to one who, as W. H. Clemen has said, “seeks to poison . . . others with his images.” (Maynard Mack)
- In the *Phaedrus* Plato speaks of the two halves as a team of two horses driven by a charioteer: “The right-hand horse is upright and cleanly made and has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose: his color is white . . . he is a lover of honesty and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory.” (Stephen Potter)

555  **Use four dots—three ellipsis dots plus a period—when you’ve omitted one or more words at the end of a sentence. (A space goes before the first ellipsis dot.)**

- I stepped to the edge of the stage in the school auditorium and began, in a carefully rehearsed singsong, “I *saw* the *spires* of Oxford / As I *was* passing by . . . .” (Brendan Gill)
- Having enumerated the principal classes of missing documents, [Geoffrey Scott] wrote: “That the existing elements now exist is improbable . . . . Further discoveries . . . even in this realm of miracles, even in this realm of miracles, can hardly be looked for.” (Richard D. Altick)

556  **Use four dots—a period plus three ellipsis dots—when you’ve omitted material following a sentence but the quotation continues. (No space goes before the first dot [the period].)**

- The reasons for Sainte-Beuve’s failings as a critic are not difficult to discover. “We judge a work of art,” said Lawrence, “by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion and nothing else . . . . A critic must be able to *feel* the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and all its force.” (Martin Turnell, quoting D. H. Lawrence)
Lear weaves Gloucester into his brilliant synthesis of the world and of the play: “Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light. You see how the world goes. . . . A man may see how the world goes with no eyes.” (Robert B. Heilman, quoting Shakespeare)

“There was a time when I really did love books,” [Orwell] wrote, “loved the sight and smell and feel of them, I mean, at least if they were fifty or more years old. Nothing pleased me quite so much as to buy a job lot of them for a shilling at a country auction. . . . But as soon as I went to work in the bookshop I stopped buying books.” (Anne Fadiman, quoting George Orwell)

Preventing Misused Ellipsis Dots

Don’t use ellipsis dots without the equivalent of a letter space between each pair, and don’t allow the string of dots to be split between consecutive lines.

Not this: Tomé has explained that this overreliance on technology “is regressive; it . . . makes us evolve in a direction that would ultimately see us morph into sensationless semimachines.”

But this: Tomé has explained that this overreliance on technology “is regressive; it . . . makes us evolve in a direction that would ultimately see us morph into sensationless semimachines.”

Not this: As Basbanes once lamented quite eloquently: “The ‘cases’ in which books are bound are produced nowadays by machine, and the human binder merely needs to know . . . before he starts just how many are needed.”

But this: As Basbanes once lamented quite eloquently: “The ‘cases’ in which books are bound are produced nowadays by machine, and the human binder merely needs to know . . . before he starts just how many are needed.”
Don’t begin a quotation with ellipsis dots.

Not this: Tate attests to this fact in his preface to his Selected Poems: “... that, as a poet, I have never had any original experience, and that, as a poet, my concern is the experience that I hope the reader will have in reading the poem.”

But this: Tate attests to this fact in his preface to his Selected Poems: “As a poet, I have never had any original experience, and... as a poet, my concern is the experience that I hope the reader will have in reading the poem.”
abbreviation, n. A shortened form of a word or phrase, such as *pl.* for plural or *sc.* for *scilicet*.

ablaut, n. The change of a vowel in cognate words, esp. as a result of inflection {stink–stank–stunk} {slink–slunk–slunk} {strike–struck–struck–stricken}.

absolute construction. A phrase that is grammatically independent of the rest of the sentence {the race having ended, many spectators rushed onto the field}. It typically consists of a noun or pronoun followed by a nonfinite verb or an adjective phrase {his arm in a sling, he kept bumping his neighbor}. When the phrase begins with a pronoun in the nominative case, an absolute construction is often called a nominative absolute {she having finally arrived, we were all relieved} {the horse having been broken, we rode it}.

abstract noun. See noun.

accent. 1. The emphasis or stress given to a syllable or word when it is spoken. 2. An identifiable way of pronouncing a given language within a specific region or social class. 3. Same as diacritical mark.

acceptability. The extent to which an expression or grammatical construction is considered unobjectionable by the speakers of a language, esp. by standard speakers.—acceptable, adj.

accidence. 1. The part of grammar dealing with how words vary to express differences in case (e.g., *I gave a book; give me a book*), number (e.g., *one person called; two people called*), voice (e.g., *the car hit a tree; the tree was hit by a car*), etc.; specif., a subset of etymology treating the inflections of words. 2. The specific inflections, esp. suffixes and prefixes, used to distinguish grammatical categories and relationships. For example, the suffix -ed often shows that a verb is in the past tense (as in *jog–jogged*), and the prefix *uni-* indicates that there is only one of something (as in *unicycle*).—Also termed inflectional morphology. 3. A usu. small book explaining the rudiments of the aspect of grammar dealing with differences in case.

accusative case. See objective case under case.

acronym /ak-ra-nim/. A word formed from initial letters (e.g., NASA, POTUS) or syllables (e.g., defcon, radar) of words in a phrase and pronounced as a single word. An acronym is traditionally distinguished from an initialism (e.g., HIV, CIA), in which the individual letters are given in sequence. See § 425. Cf. initialism.—acronymic, adj.

action verb. See verb.
**active voice.** The voice formed either by the simple inflected forms of a transitive verb with auxiliaries other than be or by adding the present participle to a be-verb {Billy chased Johnny} {the dog can't find the bone} {some people resent that epithet}. See voice. Cf. passive voice.

**additive coordinating conjunction.** See copulative conjunction under conjunction.

**adfix.** Rare. A prefix or suffix. This term is distinguished from affix because it does not include infixes.

**adjectival /aj-ek-ti-val/, adj.** Of, relating to, or consisting of an adjective or of a phrase or clause functioning as an adjective.

**adjective /aj-ek-tiv/, n.** A type of word or phrase whose main function is to describe or limit a noun element, usu. by expressing an attribute or quality or by describing a property or state. Many adjectives have a distinguishing suffix such as -able {connectable}, -al {traditional}, -ary {hereditary}, -en {leaden}, -ful {useful}, -ible {reducible}, -ic {pedantic}, -ish {childish}, -ive {reflective}, -less {meaningless}, -like {crustlike}, -ous {pretentious}, -some {winsome}, and -y {foggy}. When a phrase functions as an adjective, it is called a phrasal adjective or compound modifier. See § 131.

- **appositive adjective.** A postpositive adjective or adjective phrase that is set off by commas or dashes {the process, long and arduous, was hardly worth the time it took} {the travelers—exhausted, hungry, and haggard—finally saw their ordeal end}. Poetry aside, appositive adjectives most commonly appear in pairs or triads. Although they may resemble predicate adjectives, appositive adjectives differ in this respect: they could be transplanted before the noun element they modify with essentially the same sense.

- **attribute adjective.** See predicate adjective.

- **attributive adjective.** An adjective that, like almost all others, precedes the noun that it modifies {a popular book} —as contrasted with a predicate adjective or an appositive adjective.—Also termed prepositive adjective.

- **central adjective.** An adjective that (like most) can serve as either an attributive adjective {a tall boy} or a predicate adjective {the boy is tall}. Cf. peripheral adjective.

- **common adjective.** A generic adjective, usu. one not derived from a proper noun, customarily spelled in lowercase. Even an adjective that derives from a proper noun may become common {a stygian demeanor—stygian deriving from the mythical River Styx}.

- **comparative adjective.** An adjective in the intermediate degree of comparison {worse} {better}.
compound adjective. An adjective made up of two or more words—whether as a single word {cutthroat} {dryasdust} {straitlaced} {upbeat} or hyphenated as a phrasal adjective {an after-dinner talk} {a not-for-profit company} {a down-in-the-mouth expression} {a back-of-the-envelope calculation}.

coordinate adjective. One of a series of adjectives of equal rank and allied sense modifying the same noun {her goal was an ethical, corruption-free administration}.

definitive adjective. See limiting adjective.

demonstrative adjective. An adjective that points to things, persons, or ideas in a general way {this bookend belongs at the end of that row} {those enrollees haven’t paid for this course}. Cf. demonstrative pronoun under pronoun.

descriptive adjective. An adjective that identifies some quality of the noun element it modifies {the prickly needles startled the weary explorer when he backed into them}.—Also termed qualifying adjective.

gradable adjective. An adjective capable of taking both the comparative and superlative inflections {small–smaller–smallest}.

indefinite adjective. An adjective that limits the meaning of the noun element without indicating a definite number or quantity—the most frequent examples being all, any, each, either, few, less, many, much, neither, several, and some {some faculty members support the measure} {all the issues have been addressed}. Although all might not seem indefinite, it is called an indefinite adjective because two, two thousand, or two million (etc.) might be involved.

interrogative adjective. An adjective that introduces a direct or indirect question while modifying a noun element in the question {which team won?} {Paul asked what steps we should take}.

limiting adjective. An adjective that defines or restricts the meaning of its noun element, including articles {the bank}, pronominal adjectives {her book}, and numeric adjectives {five books}.—Also termed definitive adjective.

numeric adjective. An adjective that indicates number or rank {three finalists are contending for first prize}.—Also termed numerical adjective; numeral adjective.

participial adjective. An adjective made from an inflected verb; specif., a present participle or past participle functioning as an adjective {boiling water} {the wrecked car}.—Also termed verbal adjective.

peripheral adjective. An adjective that can function attributively or predicatively but not in both ways {utter stupidity} {outright bigotry} {she is asleep} {I’m loath to agree}. Cf. central adjective.
personal adjective. A personal pronoun in the possessive case used to modify a noun element {our true friends are our champions} {your mailbox is full}.

phrasal adjective. A phrase preceding a noun element and functioning adjectivally as a unit, and therefore usu. taking one or more internal hyphens in modifying a noun. Unless the phrasal adjective is a proper noun or a foreign phrase, it is hyphenated {a seat-of-the-pants approach}.—Also termed (less precisely) compound modifier.

positive adjective. An adjective in the simple uncompared degree {bad} {good}.

possessive adjective. A possessive-case form of a noun or pronoun that indicates source, possession, ownership, or the like {I saw your marginal comments in my book} {his arguments about your position seemed fair}.

postpositive adjective. An adjective that immediately follows the noun it modifies; specif., an adjective that flouts normal English word order by following the noun it modifies, usu. because the phrase in which it appears is of Romance origin {attorney general} {battle royal} {femme fatale} {postmaster general}.—Also termed postpositive modifier.

correction

predicate adjective. An adjective or adjective phrase functioning either as a subjective complement {the handbook is thorough} or as an objective complement {he painted the walls red}. A predicate adjective is one type of subjective complement. Either way, the predicate adjective completes the sense of the predicate. A few adjectives can be only predicate adjectives, never attributive adjectives (e.g., he is asleep).—Also termed predicate adjectival; predicate attribute; subjective adjective; attribute adjective.

prepositive adjective. See attributive adjective.

pronominal adjective. 1. A possessive pronoun functioning adjectivally {all test-takers must sign their affidavits} {the glory is yours}. 2. Any pronoun that functions as an adjective {any candy} {each person} {which kind of pet?}.—Also termed adjective pronoun.

proper adjective. An adjective derived from a proper noun and, not having become generic, is capitalized {American folkways} {Euclidean geometry} {Greek philosophy}.

qualifying adjective. See descriptive adjective.

relative adjective. An adjective that relates one clause to another, as by introducing a subordinate adjective or noun clause or by modifying a noun element in the clause it introduces {she is someone whose opinion carries great weight} {order whatever materials you need}.
Simple Adjective. An adjective that isn’t a compound {big} {small} {tall} {short}.

Subjective Adjective. See predicate adjective.

Superlative Adjective. An adjective in the extreme degree of comparison {worst} {best}.

Verbal Adjective. See participial adjective.

Adjective Clause. See clause.

Adjective Cluster. A single-word adjective and its adverbial modifiers {a thoroughly familiar proposition} {an utterly incompetent mechanic}.

Adjective–Noun Agreement. See agreement.

Adjective Phrase. See phrase.

Adjective Pronoun. See pronominal adjective under adjective.

Adjunct /aj-әnkt/. 1. A word or phrase—typically an adjective, adverb, or complement—added to define, limit, qualify, or modify other words. An adjunct normally adds information about the time, place, manner, purpose, result, or other characteristic of a state or event {he played golf with rented clubs} {she slowed down, which was smart}. 2. A subordinate or optional element whose removal from a sentence does not affect the grammatical structure—as with the vocative Joan in the statement Joan, you’re right.

Adnoun. 1. Obs. An adjective. 2. An adjective that is used as a noun {the poor and the meek}.

Adverb /ad-әvәrb/. A word that modifies or describes a word or phrase other than a noun or pronoun, or sometimes an entire clause, usu. to say when, where, or how something happens. An adverb may appear with a verb (e.g., in we fly frequently, the word frequently modifies the verb fly), an adjective (e.g., in the painting looks quite old, the word quite modifies the adjective old), another adverb (e.g., in she patted the dog very gingerly, the word very modifies the adverb gingerly), a preposition (e.g., in I went home just before the rain, the word just modifies the preposition before), or a conjunction (e.g., in he disappeared precisely when he was needed, the word precisely modifies the conjunction when). An adverb may also qualify a clause or a sentence (e.g., in frankly, your excuse is unbelievable, the word frankly modifies the entire clause). Many adverbs (but hardly all) have an -ly suffix. But not all words with an -ly suffix are adverbs—some are adjectives (e.g., kingly). See § 212.

Adverb of Manner. See manner adverb.

Compound Adverb. An adverb formed from two or more words combined {nowhere} {somewhere} {whenever} {wherever}.
conjunctive adverb. An adverb that indicates a logical relationship between two clauses (e.g., however, moreover, nevertheless, therefore, whenever). Unlike a conjunction, a conjunctive adverb has considerable freedom of movement or position in the second of the conjoined elements.—Also termed adverbial conjunction; connective adverb; half conjunction; illative conjunction; introductory adverb; transitional adverb.

connective adverb. See conjunctive adverb.

degree adverb. An adverb that describes the degree to which a principal verb's action is performed {barely} {thoroughly} {entirely} {relatively}.

exclamatory adverb. An adverb that introduces an exclamation {how kind of you to invite me!}.

flat adverb. An adverb without the adverbial suffix -ly {he doubtless malingered} {therefore, we stayed behind} {they played fast and loose with the facts}.—Also termed adverbial.

independent adverb. See sentence adverb.

intensifying adverb. See intensifier.

interrogative adverb. An adverb that introduces a direct or indirect question {how should I approach the subject?} {she asked where the rare-book room is}.

introductory adverb. See conjunctive adverb.

manner adverb. An adverb that describes how or in what manner something is done {slowly} {lazily} {posthaste}.—Also termed adverb of manner.

phrasal adverb. See adverbial phrase under phrase.

relative adverb. An adverb that joins (that is, “relates”) a dependent clause to an independent clause {he stopped at a place where few people had been before} {work stops when the 5:30 bell rings} {we know why the imprints differ}.

sentence adverb. An adverb that modifies an entire clause or sentence, not just one word or phrase in the sentence {undoubtedly you’ll still need some cash}.—Also termed sentence modifier; independent adverb; transitional adverb.

simple adverb. Any adverb that isn’t a compound adverb {now} {then} {this} {where}.

transitional adverb. 1. See conjunctive adverb. 2. See sentence adverb.

adverb clause. See adverbial clause under clause.

adverbial, adj. Of, relating to, or consisting of an adverb or a phrase or clause functioning as an adverb.
adverbial, n. 1. A word, phrase, or clause that functions as an adverb, often as a means of expressing time (when; after the meal), manner (how; with a worried expression), or place (there; where they first met in Portland). 2. See flat adverb under adverb.

adverbial clause. See clause.

adverbial conjunction. See conjunctive adverb under adverb.

adverbial noun. See adverbial objective.

adverbial objective. A noun element that functions as an adverb or adverbial phrase {he was sent home} {he discovered his error the hard way}.—Also termed adverbial noun.

adverbial phrase. See phrase.

adverb of manner. See manner adverb under adverb.

adverb phrase. See adverbial phrase under phrase.

adversative clause. See clause.

adversative conjunction. See conjunction.

affix /af-iks/. A prefix, suffix, or infix; specif., a bound morpheme that can be added to a word’s base or stem. Most affixes in English are either prefixes (e.g., non-, pre-, sub-) or suffixes (e.g., -er, -ment, -ness).—affixation, n.

derivational affix. An affix that changes a word from one part of speech to another. Examples are -al {coincidental}, be- {befriend}, -ful {hopeful}, -ion {subject}, -ness {goodness}, and -ous {hazardous}.

inflectional affix. A grammatical affix that attaches to a word to mark it as a particular part of speech—examples being the plural -s added to pluralize a noun, the past-tense -ed added to a verb, and the prefix en- to make a verb {enlarge}.

agent. The doer that performs the action in a clause.

agentless passive. See short passive voice under passive voice.

agent noun. See noun.

agglutination /ә-gloot-ә-nay-shәn/. The combination of simple words or root words into compounds, without change of form or meaning.—agglutinative, n.

germination. Grammatical and logical relationship between one word in a phrase, clause, or sentence and another word, dictating gender, number, person, or any other grammatical property. The three kinds of agreement are (1) subject–verb, (2) pronoun–antecedent, and (3) adjective–noun. —Also termed concord.

adjective–noun agreement. The singular–plural agreement between a demonstrative adjective and its noun {this book} {these books} {that paper} {those papers}. 

agent. The doer that performs the action in a clause.
pronom–antecedent agreement. Grammatical agreement in person, number, and gender between an antecedent and its pronoun {Derrick must call his mother} {Ayoka must call her mother} {Ayoka and Derrick must call their mothers}.

subject–verb agreement. The singular–plural agreement between a subject and its verb {a scout with a clipboard was in the stands} {a mother and her son paid their respects}.

alliteration /ә-li-tә-ray-shәn/. The use of words that begin with or contain the same sound, esp. produced by the same letter or letters {Phil fretted through his fateful finals}.—alliterative, adj.

alphabetism. See initialism.

alternative question. See question.

ambiguity, n. Uncertainty or inexactness of linguistic meaning, esp. as a result of a polysemous word or phrase, or else unclear modification of a syntactic construction.—ambiguous, adj.

ambisyllabic, adj. Of, relating to, or involving a consonant that may belong to either the preceding or the following syllable (as with the -t- in falter or waiter).

ambitransitive verb. See ergative verb under verb.

amelioration. A word’s usu. gradual acquisition of positive connotations or associations.—Also termed appreciation.

Americanism. An expression that either had its origins in North America or is felt to be typical mostly of AmE.

analytic comparative. See periphrastic comparative under comparative.

analytic language /an-ә-lit-ik/. A language that expresses the modification of word meanings by syntax, with particles and auxiliaries, and not much by inflection. Cf. synthetic language.

anaphora /ә-nafә-ra/, n. 1. Grammar. The use of a word that refers to or replaces a word used earlier in a sentence {I want to and so do they} (do is anaphoric for want). 2. Rhetoric. The repetition of a word or phrase at the outset of successive clauses {I came; I saw; I conquered}.—anaphoric, adj.—anaphor, n.

anaphoric pronoun. See pronoun.

anaptyxis. See epenthesis.

Anglo-Saxon. See Old English.
animate noun. See noun.

anomalous verb. See irregular verb under verb.

antecedent /an-ti-seed-ant/. A noun element to which a personal or relative pronoun refers {when Mother got home, she gave us cookies} {she was instructed what to do, and she should have known all about it}.

anticipatory reference. See cataphora.

anticipatory subject. See subject.

antonym /an-ta-nim/. A word whose meaning is opposite that of another (e.g., hot is an antonym of cold; short is an antonym of tall).—antonymous, adj.—antonymy /an-ton-ə-mee/, n.

binary antonyms. A pair of antonyms that are incompatible and that, between them, exhaust all the possibilities {true–false} {dead–alive}.

gradable antonyms. A pair of antonyms that admit a range of possibilities between the concepts denoted by them {hot–cold} {good–bad}.

aphaeresis /ә-fer-ә-sәs/. The dropping of one or more syllables or sounds at the beginning of a word (e.g., raccoon→coon, telephone→phone, opossum→possum, esquire→squire, advantage→vantage).—aphaeretic, adj.

aphesis /af-ә-sәs/. The gradual dropping of a word’s initial unstressed vowel (as in acute→cute and especial→special). This is a species of aphaeresis.—aphetic, adj.

apocope /ә-pok-ә-pee/. The dropping of one or more of a word’s last letters, syllables, or sounds. For instance, ad derives from advertisement, cinema from cinematograph, drunk from drunken, and oft from often. In speech, jus’ for just is an instance of apocope.—Also termed apocopation.

apodosis /ә-pod-ә-sәs/. The main clause in a conditional sentence. In the sentence If he doesn’t pass this exam, he’ll have to repeat the course, the apodosis is he’ll have to repeat the course.—Also termed consequent. Cf. conditional clause under clause.

apposition. The relation between two or more nouns or noun elements denoting the same person or thing when (1) all are in the same subject or predicate {my daughter Alexandra likes writing} or (2) one is in attributive or complementary relation {this is another fine mess}.

appositional compound. See compound (1).

appositional phrase. See appositive.

appositive /ә-po-zә-tiv/. A word, phrase, or clause that identifies with greater particularity the noun element that immediately precedes it; esp., a noun element that refers to a person or thing by a different name, usu. an explanatory word or phrase that narrows a more general phrase or proper name {my adviser,
Dr. Moreland, advised against this subject for my junior research paper}. An appositive is usually a restated noun element—though not always. See §§ 40, 311, 359, 489.—Also termed (when it’s a phrase) *appositional phrase*.

- **nonrestrictive appositive.** An appositive that merely elaborates or explains, so that it might be omitted from the sentence without seriously detracting from its meaning {my history teacher, Ms. Bergerac, asked us to read parts of Barzun’s *From Dawn to Decadence*}. A nonrestrictive appositive is normally set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation.—Also termed *loose appositive; nonessential appositive*.

- **restrictive appositive.** An appositive that is needed to identify or limit the words preceding it {David Foster Wallace’s book *Consider the Lobster* is among his finest work}.—Also termed *close appositive; essential appositive*.

**appositive adjective.** See adjective.

**appositive clause.** See clause.

**appositive phrase.** See phrase.

**appreciation.** See amelioration.

**archaism /ahr-kay-iz-am/.** An antiquated word, phrase, or style that has fallen out of ordinary usage.—archaic, adj.

**argot /ahr-gәt or ahr-goh/.** The slang or jargon of a particular class or group.

**article.** A limiting adjective that idiomatically introduces most of the nouns or noun phrases in the language (*a*, *an*, *the*).

- **definite article.** The word *the*, which introduces both singular and plural nouns and often (but not always) indicates a specific person, place, thing, or idea. It is more specific in meaning than the two indefinite articles.

- **indefinite article.** The word *a* or *an*, which introduces singular nouns and noun phrases only and does not indicate any specific person, place, thing, or idea. The article *a* precedes a word that begins with a consonant sound {*a* violin} {*a* euphonium}; the article *an* precedes a word that begins with a vowel sound {*an oboe} {*an FBI agent*}.

- **zero article.** An instance in which a noun is not preceded by an article {*diet soda might be bad for people*}.

**aspect.** A grammatical form or category of a verb relating the time of an action to the status of an event, rather than denoting only the time of the event (past, present, or future). Aspect correlates with features such as inception, duration, repetition, and completion.

- **continuous aspect.** See *progressive aspect*. 
imperfect aspect. The aspect denoting that an action is incomplete at a given point in time {you can’t still be hunting for your glasses}.—Also termed progressive aspect.

perfect aspect. The aspect denoting that an action is complete; a past participle shows that the action is over {Marjorie has collected seven witness statements}.

progressive aspect. 1. The aspect denoting that an action is ongoing {Noor is swimming laps}. 2. See imperfect aspect. See progressive tense under tense.—Also termed continuous aspect.

asserting verb. See linking verb under verb.

assertive. See declarative.

assimilation /ə-sim-ə-lay-shən/. The change of a speech sound because of another sound next to it (as when grandpa, with its three medial consonants, is pronounced /gram-pə/). Cf. dissimilation.—assimilative, adj.

assonance /ə-sә-nәntʃəs/. A rhyme or near-rhyme; esp., the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds, often including imperfect rhymes {the rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain} {full fathom five thy father lies}. Cf. consonance.

asterisk. A star-shaped typographical symbol (*) used for various purposes in different disciplines. Common uses include indicating footnotes and censoring profanity. In this book, the asterisk (when used at the front of a word or phrase) indicates a deviation from well-edited English.

asyndetic coordination. See coordination.

asyndeton /ə-sәn-da-tən/. The omission of conjunctions between coordinate words or clauses, esp. for brevity or style (as when and is omitted between the last two items in a list of three or more).—Also termed parataxis. Cf. syndeton & polysyndeton.—asyndetic, adj.

attribute adjective. See predicate adjective under adjective.

attribute complement. See subjective complement under complement.

attribute noun. 1. See predicate noun (1) under noun. 2. See predicate nominative.

attribute pronoun. 1. See pronoun. 2. See predicate nominative.

attributive, adj. 1. (Of an adjective) directly preceding a noun {remarkable performance}. 2. (Of a noun) being used in an adjectival sense directly before another noun {nurse practitioner}.

attributive adjective. See adjective.

attributive noun. See noun.

auxiliary verb /ə-wg-zyə-ree/. A special kind of verb that is used with another (principal) verb to form a verb phrase that indicates mood, tense, voice, aspect,
negation, or interrogativeness {must you study for the exam?} {I will go to the store} {the show was interrupted}. The most commonly used auxiliaries are be, can, do, have, may, must, ought, shall, and will.—Also termed helping verb; helper.—Often shortened to auxiliary. See principal verb under verb.

- **dummy auxiliary verb.** The auxiliary verb *do*, which merely stands in as an auxiliary without specific meaning because the construction requires an auxiliary but all others would be inappropriate {I don’t know} {Bill does} {did Sheila go?}.—Also termed pro-verb; empty auxiliary verb.

- **modal auxiliary verb.** An auxiliary verb used to indicate such things as ability, necessity, obligation, permission, possibility, probability, or willingness. Among the modal auxiliaries—so called because they express the mood of the verb—are can, could, dare, may, might, must, need, ought, shall, should, will, and would.—Also shortened to modal verb; modal auxiliary; modal. See mood & double modal.

- **semi-auxiliary verb.** A verb phrase (or part of one) that functions much like an auxiliary verb—examples being *be able to* {see whether you’re able to write something for us}, *be about to* {I’m about to go}, *be supposed to* {we’re supposed to be there}, and *have to* {we have to go!}.

**back-formation.** A word formed by subtracting part of a longer word with which it is thought to be cognate—as with *peddle* from *peddler* (back-formed in the 16th century), *administrate* from *administration* (administer is the age-old, preferred verb), or *conversate* from *conversation* (converse is the age-old, preferred verb).

**backshifting.** The changing of a verb’s tense to match the tense of indirect or reported speech, as in “Emily said she couldn’t wait to get going” when in fact she said, “I can’t wait to get going.”—backshift, vb.

**bad grammar.** See grammar.

**bare infinitive.** See infinitive.

**base.** See stem.

**being verb.** See linking verb under verb.

**be-verb.** See verb.

**binary antonyms.** See antonym.

**blend.** See portmanteau word under word.

**borrowing, n.** 1. The practice or an instance of making a word phrase by imitating a word or phrase from another language, or else by importing it wholesale. 2. An expression so derived.

**bounded noun.** See noun.

**bound morpheme.** See morpheme.
branching diagram. See tree diagram.

Briticism. An expression that is peculiar to or most strongly associated with BrE.—Also termed Britishism.

broad reference. A construction in which a pronoun is thought to refer to an entire idea instead of to some identifiable antecedent {he was perpetually overconfident; this in the end caused the disillusionment of friends who saw he couldn’t measure up}.—Also termed broad construction.

calque. See loan translation.

cardinal number. See number.

case. One of a set of suffixes and word forms by which a language differentiates the roles of the participants in a sentence. In Modern English, inflectional forms affect nouns and pronouns. In Old English, they affect nouns, pronouns, articles, and adjectives. Modern English nouns now have two case forms (dog [nominative/objective], dog’s [possessive]) and English pronouns three (she [nominative], her [objective/possessive], hers [absolute possessive]).

- accusative case. See objective case.
- common case. The form of an English noun listed in the dictionary and used in all constructions not requiring the possessive case {man} {woman} {dog} {cat}.
- genitive case. See possessive case.
- nominative case. The case of a pronoun that is the subject of a finite verb {I am happy} {we are the champions}.—Also termed subjective case; subject case.
- objective case. The case of a pronoun that is the object of either a finite verb {the bodyguards threw him to the ground} or a preposition {please keep this between you and me}.—Also termed accusative case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOMINATIVE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who</td>
<td>whom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- oblique case. Any case other than the nominative—in other words, for nouns generally the possessive case; for personal pronouns and the relative/interrogative pronoun who, the possessive or objective case.
- possessive case. The case of a noun or pronoun denoting possession, origin, or the like. A noun in the possessive case is formed by adding -’s to a singular
or to an irregular plural {Bill’s} {women’s}, and only an apostrophe to a regular plural {the Joneses’ house}. See genitive.—Also termed genitive case.

- **subjective case.** See nominative case.

**catachresis** /kat-ә-kree-sәs/. The incorrect use of a word for a similar-looking or -sounding word (e.g., cachet for cache; corollary for correlation; tantamount for paramount). Cf. solecism; vulgarism.—catachrestic, adj.

**cataphora.** A forward reference in a text, as when a pronoun precedes the noun for which it is a substitute {if he needs help, Neal will surely call us}.—Also termed anticipatory reference.—cataphoric, adj.

**central adjective.** See adjective.

**clang association.** The misuse of a word as a result of either idiosyncratic or widespread confusion by speakers and writers as a result of a similar-sounding word with which it is erroneously connected in their minds—sometimes resulting, finally, in semantic shift. See semantic contamination. Cf. overgeneralization.

**class dialect.** See dialect.

**clausal, adj.** Of, relating to, or involving a clause.

**clause.** A grammatical unit that contains a subject, a finite verb, and any complements that the verb requires. A clause has many or all of the basic ingredients of a complete sentence.—Also termed predication. Cf. sentence; phrase.

- **adjective clause.** A dependent clause that functions adjectivally by modifying a noun element in an independent clause {the game that everyone watched was disappointing}.

- **adverbial clause.** A dependent proposition in a complex sentence; specif., a dependent clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb in an independent clause {she wrapped the dustjacket in a protective cover when she got home} {I will call you when I arrive}.—Also termed adverb clause.

- **adversative clause.** A clause expressing an idea that contrasts with another clause in the sentence {while I admire his chutzpah, it sometimes gets him into trouble}.

- **appositive clause.** A clause used in apposition {the question whether he will attend is an interesting one} {the idea that bad guys always get their just deserts runs throughout the entire television series}.

- **comment clause.** A clause by which a speaker or writer expresses his or her attitude about what is being said or how it is being said {I think} {to be sure} {we can only hope} {as you may know}. Comment clauses may be adverbial clauses {at the risk of repeating myself, . . .}, relative clauses {what is even stranger, . . .},
infinitive clauses {to put it another way, . . .}, present-participial clauses {generally speaking, . . .}, or past-participial clauses {stated otherwise, . . .}.

- **comparative clause.** A clause that expresses a comparison with respect to some standard {my three-pointer was longer than Al’s [was]}.

- **complement clause.** A subordinate clause that functions as either (1) the direct object of a verb such as believe, know, say, tell, think, or understand {I think that it will work}, or (2) the complement of a noun or adjective {the staffers were troubled by the gossip that the board might replace the CEO} {we were happy that the Thanksgiving holiday brought everyone together}.

- **concessive clause.** An adverbial clause that opposes the idea of the main clause {although he is a good actor, he is hardly great}.

- **conditional clause.** An adverbial clause stating a condition, typically introduced by if, should, or unless {if you call me, I will come} {unless you call, I won’t be going}.—Also termed protasis. Cf. apodosis.

- **confirmation clause.** See tag question under question.

- **contact clause.** A clause that opens with an implied relative pronoun (such as a whiz-deletion) —that is, a relative clause without a relative pronoun {all the people I asked said they would help}.

- **coordinate clause.** An independent clause in a compound sentence.

- **dependent clause.** A clause that functions as a single part of speech so that it cannot stand as a well-formed sentence. A dependent clause may function as subject {that you say so worries me}, object {ask whoever needs some help to come see me}, complement {the scores are what I had hoped for}, or an adverbial clause {call me when you’re next in town}. A dependent clause may also function as only part of a clause element, as when it is the object of a preposition {so much depends on where you live}.—Also termed subordinate clause.

- **elliptical clause.** A clause in which a grammatically necessary part has been omitted but is supplied by the listener or reader and is therefore fully understood; a clause that is grammatically incomplete in the literal sense but is clear in meaning because the implicit words are supplied by the reader or listener {I’m not as gung-ho as she [is]} {while [you are] packing your things, don’t forget to include your vitamins} {why [should we] not try again tomorrow?} {if [it is] possible, we should try again tomorrow}. Omission of the bracketed words in these examples makes the clauses elliptical. See ellipsis (1).

- **embedded clause.** A clause that has been subordinated to another clause {the team that I want to join isn’t listed}.

- **essential clause.** See restrictive clause.
finite clause. A clause whose principal verb is finite.

independent clause. A clause that can stand by itself as a well-formed sentence (and sometimes does) because it contains both a subject and a predicate and does not, taken as a whole, function only as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb {the dog barked} {the air-conditioning stopped as soon as the temperature topped 100° F} {the police arrived, and all was well}.—Also termed main clause; principal clause.

limiting clause. See restrictive clause.

main clause. See independent clause.

matrix clause. A clause into which another clause has been embedded. In the sentence The fact that you took two hours longer will affect your grade, the matrix clause is The fact will affect your grade; the embedded clause is that you took two hours longer.

nominal clause. See noun clause.

nonrestrictive clause. An adjective clause that is informative but is not essential to the meaning of a statement {the editor, who liked your manuscript, will send a letter} {the house, which has been fully refurbished, is now admired as a marvel of architecture}.—Also termed nonessential clause; nonlimiting clause.

noun clause. A dependent clause that functions as a noun element.—Also termed substantive clause; nominal clause.

passive clause. A clause in which the recipient of the action of the main verb is expressed as the subject {Jack was kicked} {nobody expected that Jack would be kicked}. See passive voice.

principal clause. See independent clause.

relative clause. A subordinate clause that modifies a noun element; specif., a clause occurring in a complex sentence, being introduced by a relative pronoun (that, which, who), having a subject and predicate of its own, and referring to, describing, or limiting an antecedent {the man who greeted us wasn’t Bill’s uncle}.

restrictive clause. A clause that is an essential modifier that defines or identifies by limiting the meaning of a noun element {we offer loans to people who have good credit} {the building that I mentioned last week has been completed}.—Also termed essential clause; limiting clause.

sentential relative clause. A relative clause that, through broad reference, is attached not to an identifiable antecedent but to the entire idea of the main clause {Gardea was early for the tree-trimming, which meant that the yard workers would be able to work uninterrupted}. 
subject clause. A noun clause functioning as the subject of a sentence {that you called so often cheered me up}.

subordinate clause. See dependent clause.

substantive clause. See noun clause.

that-clause. A noun clause that is introduced by the subordinate conjunction that and includes a tensed verb or a modal verb {that we managed to swim ashore is incredible} {I understand that he couldn’t get there on time}.

cleft sentence. See sentence.

climped form. A word formed by shortening a longer expression (as with fax from facsimile, fridge from refrigerator, lab from laboratory, or tux from tuxedo).

clipping, n. 1. The forming of a word or name by abbreviating an existing word or name (e.g., fan [= a devotee] from fanatic, bus from omnibus, or lab from laboratory). 2. The practice or an instance of speaking in a precise, rapid, staccato manner.

clitic. See bound morpheme under morpheme.

close appositive. See restrictive appositive under appositive.

closed syllable. See syllable.

closed word class. See word class.

cognate, adj. (Of words) deriving from a common source.

cognate /kog-nayt/, n. A word or phrase that is connected to another by common derivation from the same source—that is, their etymologies are related.

cognate object. See object.

cohesion, n. A unified effect within a discourse, achieved by a combination of relevance of topics covered, orderly movement from one to the next, and the deft use of transitional words.—cohesive, adj.

collective noun. See noun.

collocation /kol-ә-kay-shәn/. A characteristic or traditional combination of words, as in idioms or in prepositions commonly paired with verbs.—collocate, vb.

command. See directive.

comma splice. The erroneous joining of two independent clauses with a comma, as opposed to a comma plus a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon. One of the most frequent comma splices occurs when however (a conjunctive adverb) is used as if it were a full-fledged conjunction—e.g., *I didn’t want to go, however, Jack persuaded me to, in which however should be either replaced by but or preceded by a semicolon. —Also termed run-on sentence; run-together sentence.

comment clause. See clause.
common adjective. See adjective.
common case. See case.
common gender. See gender.
common noun. See noun.

comparative /kəm-pə-raj-tiv/, adj. & n. An adjective or adverb whose form has been changed to indicate a greater or lesser degree {bolder} {swifter}. See comparison (1) & degree. Cf. positive & superlative.

» analytic comparative. See periphrastic comparative.

» double comparative. A grammatical fault in which the comparative degree is indicated twice—redundantly {this detergent is *more better than that one}.

» periphrastic comparative /per-i-fras-tik/. A comparative formed by using an auxiliary word or words (esp. more) to serve the function of inflection. For example, in the phrase more difficult, the adverb more serves the same function as the -er suffix in harder. See §§ 126, 131.—Also termed analytic comparative.

» synthetic comparative. An inflected comparative formed by adding -er to the positive form of the adjective or adverb {faster} {lamer}.

comparative adjective. See adjective.
comparative clause. See clause.

comparison. 1. In grammar, the inflection of adjectives or adverbs to indicate differences of degree in quality. The three degrees of comparison are the positive {good} {smooth}, the comparative {better} {smoother}, and the superlative {best} {smoothest}. With most words affected by comparison, the comparative and superlative are most commonly expressed by adding -er or -est to the positive form, or (especially with words of more than two syllables) by preceding the positive form by more, most, less, or least. See positive, comparative & superlative. 2. In rhetoric, the setting forth of points of similarity or contrast between one thing and another.

complement. A word or phrase (other than the principal verb or verb phrase and any adverb that modifies it) by which a predicate is completed (e.g., the point in the sentence they couldn’t resolve the point; or of no use in it was of no use). Complements may include direct objects, indirect objects, subjective complements, and objective complements.—Also termed completer.

» attribute complement. See subjective complement.

» inner complement. The first of two complements after a transitive verb—either an indirect object {you gave me permission} or a direct object {we considered the event a success}, depending on the sentence pattern.
null
exocentric compound. A metaphorical compound such as *mouthpiece* (= lawyer) or *redeye* (an overnight flight), which does not literally denote what it seems to describe. Another example is *loudmouth*, which denotes a person, not a mouth. Cf. endocentric compound.

neoclassical compound. A compound whose parts derive from Latin or Greek {Anglophile} {homophobia} {xenophobe}.

2. Less commonly, a short sequence of words that function more or less like a unit {below-the-belt} {blue-green} {bus stop} {hand-washing} {tractor-trailer}.

compound adjective. See adjective.

compound adverb. See adverb.

compound-complex sentence. See sentence.

compound conjunction. See conjunction.

compounding, *n.* The act, the practice, or an instance of forming a word by combining at least two elements that otherwise occur as independent words {Chinese-American} {headhunter} {motorcycle} {tugboat}. Compounding is not the same as affixation, which involves morphemes that do not have the status of individual words.

compound modifier. See *phrasal adjective* under adjective.

compound noun. See noun.

compound objects. See object.

compound personal pronoun. See *personal pronoun* under pronoun.

compound predicate. See predicate.

compound preposition. See preposition.

compound pronoun. See pronoun.

compound sentence. See sentence.

compound subject. See subject.

compound tense. See tense.

compound word. See compound.

concessive clause. See clause.

concord. See agreement.

concord of proximity. See false attraction.

concrete noun. See noun.

conditional clause. See clause.

conditional sentence. See sentence.
confirmation clause. See tag question under question.

congjugation /kon-ja-gay-shon/. 1. A change in the form of a verb to indicate tense, voice, mood, number, or person. 2. A list of verb inflections, such as like–likes–liked–liked; hang–hangs–hung–hung. 3. The classification of verbs according to these types of inflections as being either weak (like) or strong (hang). See regular verb & irregular verb under verb.—conjugational, adj.

conjunction /kon-jәn-kәn-shәn/. A word that connects words {scarlet or blue}, clauses {the first plate remained intact, but the second one broke}, or sentences {They accomplished their objectives. And they did rejoice.}.—conjunctive, adj.

- additive coordinating conjunction. See copulative conjunction.
- adverbial conjunction. See conjunctive adverb under adverb.
- adversative conjunction. A conjunction that denotes a contrast or comparison; the second clause (also called the adversative clause) usu. qualifies the first clause {it was 104 degrees in the shade at the time of the wedding, yet the bride looked cool and calm} {I’ll attend the meeting on Tuesday, but my partner is unavailable until Thursday morning}.—Also termed contrasting coordinating conjunction.
- compound conjunction. An adverb formed from two or more words combined {although} {because} {notwithstanding}.
- contrasting coordinating conjunction. See adversative conjunction.
- coordinating conjunction. A conjunction that unites equal items (e.g., and, but, or, nor, for).—Also termed coordinator.
- copulative conjunction. A conjunction that denotes addition; the second clause adds a related fact to the first clause {the last flight out for the night was canceled, and all the hotel rooms were booked}.—Also termed additive coordinating conjunction.
- correlative conjunctions. A pair of corresponding conjunctions that commonly frame syntactically matching parts as coordinate structures {both–and} {either–or} {neither–nor} {not only–but also}.—Also termed correlative conjunctions.—Often shortened to correlatives. See correlative, n.
- disjunctive conjunction. A conjunction that denotes separation or alternatives {you can go to the zoo or the park tomorrow} {please wear the new raincoat; otherwise, the water will soak through your dress}.—Also termed separative coordinating conjunction.
- final conjunction. A conjunction that denotes inferences or consequences {his son threw 12 strikeouts; as a result, the team won the playoff game} {I
paid the extra fee so that we’ll have covered parking}.—Also termed illative coordinating conjunction.

- **half conjunction.** See conjunctive adverb under adverb.
- **illative conjunction.** See conjunctive adverb under adverb.
- **illative coordinating conjunction.** See final conjunction.
- **phrasal conjunction.** A combination of two or more words serving as a conjunction \{he stood on a chair so that he could reach the top shelf\}. Among the most common examples are *as if, as though, inasmuch as, insofar as, provided that, and so that*.
- **separative coordinating conjunction.** See disjunctive conjunction.
- **simple conjunction.** A one-word conjunction, such as *and, but, if, nor, or, so, yet*.
- **subordinating conjunction.** A conjunction that creates a dependent clause to be attached to an independent clause (e.g., *after, although, as if, as though, because, if, since, when, where, while*) \{we’ll see you when we get back\} \{if you need help, call tech support\}.—Also termed subordinator.

**conjunctive adverb.** See adverb.

**connecting verb.** See linking verb under verb.

**connective.** A word or group of words that joins or shows the relationship between words, phrases, or clauses \{college students and other protesters sat on the lawn outside Batts Auditorium\}. Connectives include conjunctions, prepositions, relative pronouns, conjunctive adverbs, relative adjectives, and relative adverbs.

**connective adverb.** See conjunctive adverb under adverb.

**connotation.** The feeling or idea that a word carries in addition to its literal or principal meaning. For instance, the adjective *notorious* means “well known,” but it has negative connotations \{a notorious thief\}. Cf. denotation.—connotate, vb.

**consequent.** See apodosis.

**consonance.** The correspondence between nearby consonant sounds, esp. the pleasant repetition of like sounds as in rhyming. Cf. assonance.

**consonant /kon[t]-sә-nәnt/.** 1. A speech sound that is articulated by partial or complete obstruction of the vocal tract. 2. A letter that represents such a sound. Cf. vowel.—consonantal, adj.

**constituent, n.** A word or group of words constituting part of a larger grammatical construction \{students who study are smart\}.

- **immediate constituent.** A constituent of a constituent \{students who study are smart\}. The immediate constituents of the complete subject *students who*
study are students, the simple subject, and who study, an adjective clause modifying students. The immediate constituents of that relative clause (who study) are the relative pronoun who (the subject) and the verb study. The predicate are smart consists of the immediate constituents are (a linking verb) and smart (a predicate adjective). To be immediate constituents, words must form a definite grammatical unit—hence not students who or study are.

**constructio ad sensum.** See synesis.

**construction.** 1. A group of words having grammatical significance; esp., a syntactic arrangement of two or more constituents {faulty construction}. 2. Interpretation {statutory construction}.

**contact clause.** See clause.

**content word.** See word.

**continuous aspect.** See progressive aspect under aspect.

**continuous tense.** See progressive tense under tense.

**contraction.** A word formed by shortening and compounding two or more words and eliding some elements {I’m} {we’ve} {you’ll} {he’s} {she’d}. Goodbye is a contraction of God be with ye.

**contrasting coordinating conjunction.** See adversative conjunction under conjunction.

**conversion.** The use of a word in a different part of speech from its usual one, without a change of form {don’t father-in-law me!} {take a listen}.—Also termed functional shift; zero derivation.

**coordinate, adj.** (Of a word, phrase, or clause) being one of two that are equal in rank and fulfill identical functions; (of a grammatical element) having equal syntactic standing {coordinate adjectives}.

**coordinate, n.** One of two or more words, phrases, or clauses that are equal in rank and fulfill identical functions; one of two or more grammatical elements of equal syntactic standing.

**coordinate adjective.** See adjective.

**coordinate clause.** See clause.

**coordinate objects.** See compound objects under object.

**coordinate subjects.** See compound subject under subject.

**coordinate verbs.** See verb.

**coordinating conjunction.** See conjunction.

**coordination.** The grammatical or syntactic linking of parallel elements in a sentence, usu. by a conjunction, thereby giving them the same status in the sentence.
For example, the coordination in *are you driving or flying?* is shown by the *or* that links the participles *driving* and *flying*. Cf. subordination.

- **asynthetic coordination.** Coordination that involves no use of a coordinating conjunction {we went to Melbourne, Sydney, Perth}. See asyndeton.

- **correlative coordination.** Coordination that involves the use of such strings as *both–and*, *not only–but also*, *either–or*, or *neither–nor*.

- **polysyndetic coordination.** Coordination that involves the use of a repeated coordinating conjunction {we went to Melbourne and Sydney and Perth}. See polysyndeton.

- **syndetic coordination.** Coordination that involves the use of a coordinating conjunction (*and* or *or*) {we went to Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth}. See syndeton.

**coordinator.** See coordinating conjunction under conjunction.

copula /kop-ə-lə/. See linking verb under verb.

copular, adj. Of, relating to, or involving a linking verb (copula).

copulative verb. See linking verb under verb.

copulative conjunction. See conjunction.

copulative verb. See linking verb under verb.

correlating conjunctions. See correlative conjunctions under conjunction.

correlative /kə-re-lə-tiv/, adj. (Of a pair of words or phrases) having reciprocal or corresponding functions and typically being used together (but not side by side) in a sentence. Conjunctions are often correlative. Common examples are *both–and*, *either–or*, and *not only–but also*. See § 266.

correlative, n. One of a pair of conjunctions, adverbs, or conjunction–adverb combinations that join coordinate elements in a sentence to achieve balance. Among the most frequently used correlatives are these:

- *as–as*
- *both–and*
- *either–or*
- *neither–nor*
- *not only–but also*
- *whether–or*

—Also termed *correlative conjunction*; *correlating conjunction*.

correlative conjunctions. See conjunction.

correlative coordination. See coordination.

count noun. See noun.

dangler. A participle, participial phrase, or infinitive phrase that is not syntactically connected to the noun that, logically, it should modify {pawing the ground, the matador anticipated the bull’s charge}. In that example, the action
of the introductory phrase pawing the ground wants to attach to the closest noun (matador rather than bull)—and bull doesn’t even appear in the sentence except in the possessive form. Less commonly than participial phrases, infinitive phrases can also dangle {to enroll in these seminars, an extra fee will be necessary [a fee cannot enroll]}. See §§ 121, 150, 159–60.—Also termed dangling modifier.

declarative /di-kla-reatest/, adj. Of, relating to, or involving a sentence in which the speaker makes a statement {our company had a profitable quarter}, as opposed to asking a question or giving an order. Most sentences are declarative.—Also termed assertive.—declarative.
declaration, n.
declarative sentence. See sentence.
declarative yes–no question. See question.
declension /da-klen-shan/. 1. The change in the form of a noun or pronoun to show case, number, or gender. 2. A catalogue of inflections in a noun, pronoun, or adjective (as in woman–woman’s–women–women’s or he–him–his). 3. The classification according to such inflections, as in girl regular, woman irregular.—decline, vb.
deep structure. See structure.
defective /di-feektiv/, adj. Lacking one or more of the inflected forms that are normal for a class of words. Most modal verbs, for example, do not have present- or past-participial forms (e.g., beware). Some lack infinitive forms (e.g., may).
defective verb. See verb.
defered preposition. See stranded preposition under preposition.
defered subject. See delayed subject under subject.
definite article. See article.
definiteness. A distinction in specificity or particularity marked by an article (definite or indefinite) so as to convey whether a noun is known to the listener or reader already {the painting was soon sold} or is being introduced for the first time {a painting was soon sold}. See article.
definite noun. See noun.
definitive adjective. See limiting adjective under adjective.
degree. A step on the scale of comparison for gradable adjectives and adverbs. There are three degrees of comparison, in ascending order: positive (early), comparative (earlier), and superlative (earliest). See positive, comparative & superlative.
derg adverb. See adverb.
deixis /dɪk-sɪs/. The function that pointing words such as the or demonstrative pronouns have in specifying what is being referred to in a given discourse.—deictic, adj.
delayed subject. See subject.
demonstrative /dɪ-mən-strə-tɪv/, adj. (Of a word) pointing at the person or thing speaking, addressed, or referred to, esp. by way of indicating something’s position in relation to the speaker {the book} {that cat}.
demonstrative adjective. See adjective.
demonstrative pronoun. See pronoun.
denominalized verb. See denominal verb under verb.
denominationalized verb. See denominal verb under verb.
denotational subject. See subject.
denotation. The central meaning of a word, stripped of emotive associations. Cf. connotation.—denotative, adj.—denote, vb.
dental preterite. See regular verb under verb.
deonitic, adj. Of, relating to, or consisting of the use of a modal verb to express necessity, obligation, possibility, etc. {must I sit down?} {you may now leave} {they should certainly tell him}.
dependent clause. See clause.
derivation /dər-ə-və-shən/. 1. The formation of a word by adding an affix to another word, such as broaden from broad, reinforce from enforce, and womanly from woman. 2. See etymology (2).—derivative, adj. & n.—derive, vb.
  ▶ zero derivation. See conversion.
derivational affix. See affix.
derivational suffix. See suffix.
descriptive adjective. See adjective.
descriptive grammar. See grammar.
descriptive possessive. See possessive.
descriptivism /dɪ-skri-tɪ-vɪzəm/. An approach to language study that forswears value judgments in deciding what is “correct” or “incorrect,” effective or ineffective, and instead describes how people use the language without ever passing judgment on the forms they use. Cf. prescriptivism.—descriptivist, adj. & n.
determiner. A word that (1) indicates that one of the words occurring soon after it is a noun and (2) serves as one means of identifying a word as a noun. Examples
are articles (a, an, the); the possessive forms of nouns and pronouns (Bill’s, my, our, your, his, her, its, their); indefinite adjectives (all, any, both, each, either, every, few, less, little, many, more, most, much, neither, no, several, some, that, these, this, those, what, whatever, which, whichever); and numerals (one, two, three, etc.).—Also termed noun indicator.

diacritical mark /di-ә-krit-i-kәl/. An orthographical character that indicates a special phonetic quality for a given character.—Also termed accent.

diaeresis /di-ә-ә-si-s/. 1. A mark [¨] over the second of two adjacent vowels, signaling that the marked vowel is treated as a second syllable, as in Zoë. Cf. umlaut. 2. The division of a sound into two syllables, esp. by separating two vowels in a diphthong. For example, a diaeresis occurs when medieval is pronounced /med-i-ee-vәl/ (separating the -ie- into two vowel sounds) rather than /med-ee-vәl/ (keeping the -ie- as one vowel).—Also spelled dieresis. Cf. synaeresis.

dialect /di-ә-lekt/. A linguistic variety routinely spoken by an identifiable group of native speakers, usu. categorizable by region (e.g., New England), class (e.g., middle), ethnic group (e.g., Black English), or occupation (e.g., engineering). A dialect is identifiable by its grammar and vocabulary.—dialectal, adj.

› class dialect. A dialect used by a particular social group, esp. as reflecting a more or less well-defined stratum of society according to educational level.—Also termed social dialect.

› regional dialect. A dialect used in a particular geographic area.

› social dialect. See class dialect.

diction. 1. Vocabulary or choice of words, esp. in poetry; the selection of words, esp. as regards meaning and contextual appropriateness. Diction can be simple, abstruse, heightened, low, pedantic, colloquial, voguish, archaic, etc. 2. Distinct enunciation, as of a public speaker or actor.

dieresis. See diaeresis.

differentiation. The linguistic process by which similar words, usu. those having a common etymology, gradually diverge in meaning, each taking on a distinct sense or senses.

digraph, n. A combination of two letters to represent a single sound (as with -ch- in chic). Cf. ligature.

diminutive. A suffix that denotes smallness (e.g., the -ella in novella, the -ette in luncheonette, or the -ule in granule). By extension, diminutives may also connote fondness (e.g., the -kins in lambkins), subordinate rank or age (e.g., the -ling in underling or sapling), or inferiority (e.g., the -aster in poetaster).
diphthong /dɪf-thɒŋ/. A combination of two vowel sounds in one syllable; specif., a vowel sound in a single syllable that glides from one quality to another because the speech organs move from one position to another during the articulation, as in high and out.—diphthongal, adj.

direct address. 1. The use of the second person (you) in speaking straight to a listener or writing straight to the reader {you may well wonder just why you can’t get that rate of return in this market}. 2. The use of the vocative {Mr. President, we appreciate your time and effort}.

direct discourse. See discourse (1).

directive, n. A statement using the imperative mood of a verb.—Also termed command.

direct object. See object.

direct question. See question.

direct speech. See direct discourse under discourse (1).

discourse. 1. Continuous expression or exchange of ideas; connected communication of thought.

- **direct discourse.** A statement that reports and expressly quotes the verbatim words of a speaker {she said, “Please send my regards”}. Direct discourse normally appears within quotation marks.—Also termed direct speech; oratio recta; oratio directa.

- **indirect discourse.** A statement that reports another’s words without quoting, either as a paraphrase or as a verbatim rendering but without quotation marks {she asked me to send her regards}.—Also termed indirect speech; oratio obliqua.

2. A formal disquisition, treatise, lecture, or sermon. 3. The power of analytically consecutive thought; esp., the ability to deduce conclusions from the successive consideration of factual and rule-based premises. 4. The human faculty or ability to communicate one’s mental states to other minds by means of language.

disjunctive /dɪs-ʃɒŋ[k]-tɪv/, adj. Denoting an alternative, a choice, a contrast, or opposition. The conjunction or is the most frequent word performing a disjunctive function (sometimes with its correlative conjunction either). Neither–nor are also disjunctive words.—disjunctive, n.

disjunctive conjunction. See conjunction.

dissimilation. A change in a sound to make it unlike another nearby sound. An example is seen in the change from the Old French cinnamome to the English cinnamon, or from Old French berfrey to belfry in English. Cf. assimilation.
ditransitive verb. See verb.
double comparative. See comparative.
double genitive. See double possessive under possessive.
double modal. A nonstandard verb-phrase construction in which two modal auxiliary verbs appear in succession {*had ought} {*might could} {*ought to could}. In Standard English, only one modal verb appears in a verb phrase.
double negative. A statement in which two negatives are unnecessarily used {*I didn’t say nothing} —as opposed to using only one negating term {I said nothing} {I didn’t say anything}.
double possessive. See possessive.
double subject. See subject.
double superlative. See superlative.
doublet /dәb-lә-t/. 1. A word differing in form or meaning from another word that derives from a common source (e.g., chief and chef, frail and fragile). 2. A synonymic doubling of terms characteristic of the rhetorical and oratorical style of Middle English. Examples are all and sundry, fit and proper, and total and entire.
drift. The increasing tendency of speakers of a given language to use a particular form, structure, or word choice—esp. one not traditionally considered part of the standard language.
d-structure. See deep structure under structure.
dummy auxiliary verb. See auxiliary verb.
dummy word. See expletive (1).
dynamic verb. See verb.
dysphemism /dis-fә-miz-әm/. 1. A disagreeable word or phrase that is substituted for a neutral or even positive one (e.g., sawbones for surgeon). 2. The use of such a word or phrase. Cf. euphemism.—dysphemistic, adj.

Early Modern English. The English language used from about 1500 to about 1700.

echo utterance. A question or exclamation that mirrors another speaker’s sentence {“John missed the opening.” “He missed what?”} {“Sit there.” “Sit where?”} {“What a wonderful gift.” “What a wonderful gift, indeed!”} —Sometimes shortened to echo.—Also termed echo question.—echoic, adj.
elision /i-lizh-әn/. 1. The omission or suppression of a syllable or sound, esp. to improve the sound and flow of a writing, as in o’er the ramparts we watch or e’en now the raven haunts me. 2. The omission of a word, sentence, or passage from a text, usu. for some particular purpose.—elide, vb.
ellipsis /i-lip-sәs or ee-/. 1. The omission of a sound, syllable, word, phrase, or clause; esp., the shortening of a clause or phrase by the omission of one or more words that can be easily understood from the context or from the reader’s common sense. Speakers and writers often use an ellipsis to avoid repetition (e.g., in if I can lift that weight, anybody can, a second occurrence of lift that weight after anybody can is understood even though the predicate in the main clause is incomplete). Cf. recoverability. 2. Collectively, the three period-dots that mark a writer’s omission of one or more words from a quoted passage.—elliptical, adj.

elliptical clause. See clause.

embedded clause. See clause.

embedded question. See question.

emphatic pronoun. See intensive pronoun under pronoun.

emphatic verb. See verb.

empty auxiliary verb. See dummy auxiliary verb under auxiliary verb.

enclitic /en-klit-ik/, n. A compound that is formed when a word that follows another is pronounced with so little emphasis that it is usu. combined with the preceding word. This occurs, for example, when can not becomes cannot (not is the enclitic element), or when a contraction is compounded from a word and an informal part (such as n’t in couldn’t). Cf. bound morpheme under morpheme.

endocentric compound. See compound.

epenthesis /i-penthә-sәs or ee-/. The addition of a sound or an unetymological letter into a word. For example, the -b- in thimble has no etymological basis, but the letter began appearing in the 15th century, perhaps because of thimble’s similarity to humble and nimble. A modern example is *preventative (for preventive). When the additional sound is that of a vowel—as when athlete is erroneously pronounced /ath-ә-leet/ instead of /ath-leet/, or film is pronounced /fil-әm/ instead of /film/ —the technical name is anaptyxis.—epenthetic, adj.

eponym /ep-ә-nim/. 1. A person, real or imaginary, after whom an event, invention, etc., is named (e.g., Louis Pasteur, the French chemist and bacteriologist, is the eponym for pasteurize and pasteurization). 2. A word derived from a proper name (the word boycott, for example, comes from Captain C. C. Boycott [1832–97], an English landlord who was stigmatized by his Irish tenants in 1880 for raising rents).—eponymous, adj.

ergative verb. See verb.

essential appositive. See restrictive appositive under appositive.

essential clause. See restrictive clause under clause.
etymological sense. The meaning of a word at an earlier time in its history, esp. when it then bore a literal meaning but has since taken on extended meanings.

etymology /et-ә-mә-lә-i-jee/. 1. The study of word origins. 2. The origin and history of a word or of words generally.—Also termed (in sense 2) derivation.

etymon /et-i-mon/, n. 1. A word or morpheme from which a word or words are formed, esp. in another language. For example, the Greek oktopous is the etymon of the English word octopus. 2. A word’s original or fundamental sense.

euphemism /yoo-fә-miz-am/. 1. A soft or relatively unobjectionable word or phrase used in place of a harsh or objectionable one; a terminological replacement for a word or phrase that has lost prestige or has become subject to a taboo. 2. The use of such a word or phrase. 3. The process by which such replacements occur in language. Cf. dysphemism.—euphemistic, adj.

euphony /yoo-fә-nee/. The prose quality of sounding pleasant; agreeableness to the ear.—euphonic, adj.

euphuism /yoo-fә-wә-zәm/. A convoluted, artificial, embellished style of speaking or writing.—euphuistic, adj.

exclamation. A sentence that conveys or purports to convey a fairly strong emotion {oh, dear!} {we thought he was a scoundrel!} {what a fine mess you’ve made of this!}.—Also termed exclamatory sentence.—exclamatory, adj.

exclamatory adverb. See adverb.

exclamatory question. See question.

existential sentence. See exclamation.

extraposition. The placement of a clause outside its normal position in the sentence, as by using an expletive—e.g., why you came doesn’t matter when it becomes it doesn’t matter why you came.—extrapositioning, n.

factitive complement. See objective complement under complement.
factitive object. See objective complement under complement.

factitive verb. See verb.

false attraction. A mismatching in the number of a verb with its subject caused by the intervention (between the two) of another noun of a different number {the number of students are [read is] increasing} {the interests of each child is [read are] best served by the appointment of a guardian}.—Also termed (less judgmentally) concord of proximity.

feminine gender. See gender.

figurative language. An expression or reference in which the words aren’t to be taken literally because they involve a metaphor, usu. to add beauty or force. See figure of speech.

figure of speech. An expression in which language is manipulated for rhetorical effect. Specific categories into which figures of speech fall include anticlimax, antithesis, climax, euphemism, hyperbole, litotes, metonymy, and synecdoche.

filler. A more or less meaningless brief utterance, such as um, like, or you know, that commonly appears in speech just before a peak of information {that house looks like—you know—a mansion} {that was, like, a mansion}. Fillers allow the speaker to formulate the coming material and signal to the hearer that the speaker will continue talking (that is, that the hearer’s turn to reply hasn’t yet come). Fillers are widely condemned when they become so numerous in speech as to be noticeable. But a competent user of the language edits them out automatically. Unless they are frequent or habitual enough to become distracting, the hearer tends not to notice them.

final conjunction. See conjunction.

finite clause. See clause.

finite verb. See verb.

flat adverb. See adverb.

folk etymology. 1. The alteration, in popular usage, of an unfamiliar word to a more familiar form (as with crayfish, which derives from the French crevisse [crab] but was changed to the unrelated -fish). 2. A popular misconception about the origin of a word (e.g., the false notion that posh derives from “port outward, starboard home”).

form class. See part of speech.

formulaic subjunctive. See subjunctive, n.

form word. See function word under word.

fragment. A group of words that, although written as a sentence, doesn’t constitute a grammatically complete sentence {We took a break for lunch at noon.
*Because we were hungry.*—Also termed sentence fragment; fragmentary sentence; period fault.

**free morpheme.** See morpheme.

**froneting.** See inversion.

**full sentence.** See sentence.

**full verb.** See lexical verb under verb.

**function.** The grammatical role that a word or group of words plays in a sentence. For example, an adjective’s function is to modify a noun element; a preposition’s function is to relate its object to some other word in the sentence; and an adverb’s function is to modify a verb, adjective, or other adverb.

**functional change.** See functional variation.

**functional morpheme.** See functional variation.

**functional shift.** 1. See conversion. 2. See functional variation.

**functional variation.** The ability of a word or phrase to be used in different parts of speech without a change of form.—Also termed functional shift; shift; functional change. Cf. conversion.

**function word.** See word.

**fused participle.** A gerund used after a noun element that would more properly be a possessive adjective. In *the author having full rights to the work means you must ask the author for permission*, the participle *having* is fused with the preceding noun to form the subject *the author having*. Traditional grammarians prefer *the author’s having full rights to the work means* . . . . See § 158.

**future-perfect tense.** See tense.

**future tense.** See tense.

**Garner’s Law of Loanwords.** The principle that the more arcane or technical a loanword is, the more likely it is to retain a foreign plural, diacritical marks, and italics, and that the more common it becomes, the more likely it is to lose them. Corollary: if the loanword becomes widespread, it typically loses italics first, diacritical marks second, and a foreign plural last.

**gender /jen-dәr/.** 1. A system of dividing nouns and pronouns into sets according to their morphology regardless of the characteristics of the things denoted, so that in Spanish *un vestido* (= a dress) is masculine and *una cartera* (= a purse) is feminine. Some languages also have the neuter and common genders. 2. A property indicating the sex or sexlessness of something denoted by a noun or pronoun, or described by an adjective. In English, only a few words reflect a referent’s sex. Among them are the pronouns *he* and *she*, nouns such as *bull* and
heifer, fiancé and fiancée, and adjectives such as distrait and distraite (although the feminine forms of adjectives are rapidly disappearing).

- **common gender.** The gender of a noun element that names a person or animal without indicating sex {adviser} {author} {orator} {postal carrier}.—Also termed **indefinite gender.**

- **feminine gender.** The gender of a noun or pronoun indicating female sex {sister} {mother} {aunt} {she} {her}.

- **indefinite gender.** See common gender.

- **masculine gender.** The gender of a noun or pronoun indicating male sex {brother} {father} {uncle} {he} {him}.

- **neuter gender.** The gender of a noun or pronoun indicating absence of sex {it} {airplane} {seat} {engraving} {book}.

**generalization.** The broadening of a word’s meaning over time. For example, pigeon originally referred to a young dove but now refers to any bird of the whole family. Cf. specialization.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.

generic, adj. (Of an expression) referring to an entire class or kind and not just to one or several specific individuals. Context typically determines whether a term is being used generically {the cockatoo is an Australian parrot} or specifically {the cockatoo escaped from its cage}.
- **of-genitive.** An of-construction by which the idea of possession, ownership, quantity, or close relationship is indicated {the plays of Shakespeare} {the role of the publisher} {the roar of the lion} {a bushel of corn}.—Also termed *periphrastic genitive; periphrastic possessive; phrasal genitive.*

- **partitive genitive.** An of-genitive used in expressing a quantity {a gallon of milk} {a cupful of sugar} {a pint of beer}.

- **periphrastic genitive.** See of-genitive.

- **phrasal genitive.** See of-genitive.

*genitive case.* See possessive case under case.

*gerund* /jer-әnd/. A present participle (ending in -<i>ing</i>) used as a noun. A gerund may be another verb’s subject {traveling makes me tired}, another verb’s object {I enjoy your singing}, a noun complement {my hobby is collecting stamps}, or a preposition’s object {the storm prevented me from attending}.—Also termed verbal noun. Cf. participle.

- **perfect gerund.** A gerund form that indicates completed action {I regret having gone there} {she remembers having been seen by him}.—Also termed present-perfect gerund.

- **present gerund.** A gerund that suggests timelessness, that is, connoting past, present, future, or continuing action or status {walking through museums is a great pleasure} {being ignored can be a huge annoyance}.

- **present-perfect gerund.** See perfect gerund.

*gerund phrase.* See phrase.

*get-passive.* A passive-voice construction consisting of the verb get plus a past participle (as opposed to the more frequent be plus a past participle) {he got rejected}.

*good grammar.* See grammar.

*gradable, adj.* (Of an adjective or adverb) capable of being sorted into a series of degrees, such as positive, comparative, and superlative.

*gradable adjective.* See adjective.

*gradable antonyms.* See antonym.

*grammar* /gram-әr/. 1. A language’s structure and system for oral and written communication; specif., a conventional system of rules by which the speakers of a language form the expressions that belong to the language. 2. The set of rules and notions about the standard use of a language. 3. The field of linguistics concerned with a language’s morphology and syntax, and sometimes also with phonology and semantics. 4. The study of how a given language operates, esp. in its standard form.

- **bad grammar.** The use of a construction, inflectional form, or dialectal idiom not in accord with the accepted usage of educated people. Examples
are double negatives {I don’t have no money}, stigmatized words {I ain’t got no money}, violations in agreement {we was there}, incorrect cases {me and John went to see Sally and he} {please give it to Sally or I}, and catachreses {if I had of went there, I would of seen it}.

- **descriptive grammar.** The synchronic study of how speakers (and, to a much lesser extent, writers) actually use a given language, with a decided agnosticism about whether any given grammatical construction might be preferable to another.

- **good grammar.** The use of constructions, inflectional forms, and idioms that are conventional among educated people.

- **historical grammar.** The diachronic study of a given language, the development of its grammatical constructions and concepts, and the evolution of its syntax and word forms.

- **prescriptive grammar.** The study of how speakers and (esp.) writers of a standard language can use it most effectively. Ideally, a prescriptive approach is based on a sound knowledge of how native speakers of the language actually use it—or else the approach is of little value.

**grammatical, adj.** 1. Of, relating to, or involving grammar. 2. In accord with the traditional rules of grammar, rightly understood. Cf. **lexical.**

**grammatical category.** See **part of speech.**

**grammatical function.** 1. The type of role that a given word performs in a sentence, as fitted into a known category. 2. A category for which some words are inflected, such as case, gender, number, definiteness, person, tense, mood, and aspect. See **function.**

**grammatical morpheme.** See **bound morpheme** under **morpheme.**

**group genitive.** See **genitive.**

**group possessive.** See **possessive.**

**group preposition.** See **phrasal preposition** under **preposition.**

**group verbal.** See **verbal, n.**

**half conjunction.** See **conjunctive adverb** under **adverb.**

**hapax legomenon /hap-aks lә-gom-ә-nәn/, n.** 1. A word or phrase found only once in the written record of a language. 2. A word or phrase found only once in the work of a particular author.

**haplology /ha-plo-lә-je/.** The contraction of a word by omitting an internal sound or syllable that is identical or similar to another (as with the pronunciation “deteriate” for **deteriorate**, “meterology” for **meteorology**, or “prob’ly” for **probably**).—**haplogonic, adj.**
head. 1. The key word in a grammatical unit; esp., the grammatically central word in a particular phrase {large red-brick house} {played furiously}. 2. The main constituent of a compound word, the other constituents being its modifiers {armchair} {newspaper}. 3. The notional (principal) verb in a verb phrase {has been considered}.

helper. See auxiliary verb.

helping verb. See auxiliary verb.

heteronym. 1. A word that is spelled like another word but has a different meaning and is pronounced differently. For instance, lead can mean “to guide” (/leed/) or “a metallic element” (/led/). Similarly, alternate can mean “the next choice” (/awl-tәr-nit/) or “to switch back and forth” (/awl-tәr-nayt/). 2. A phrase referring to a thing that is called by an entirely different name in a different geographical area. For example, an apple coated with hardened red sugar syrup is called a “candy apple” in New York and a “taffy apple” in Pennsylvania. 3. A word that has the same meaning as another but is not written similarly and has a different origin. Bucket and pail, for instance, refer to the same object, but bucket derives from Anglo-Norman, while the precise origin of pail is unknown—though it may derive from Old French.—heteronymous, adj.

historical grammar. See grammar.

historical-present tense. See tense.

homograph /ho-mә-graf or hoh-/ A word that is spelled the same as another but is pronounced differently (e.g., minute [n.] /min-әt/ vs. minute [adj.] /mi-n[y]oot/).—homographic, adj.

homonym /hom-ә-nim or hoh-mә-/. 1. A word that is spelled and pronounced the same as another word but has a different meaning and usu. a different origin (e.g., riverbank, savings bank). 2. A word that has the same pronunciation as another word but is spelled differently and has a different meaning, such as taut—taught, tea—tee, and there—their—they’re.—Also termed (in sense 2) homophone.

homophone /hom-ә-fohn or hoh-mә-/. 1. A word that sounds like another but is spelled differently (e.g., there, their, and they’re are homophones). —Also termed homonym. 2. A letter or combination of letters denoting the same sound as a dissimilar letter or set of letters. For example, -ea- and -ie- have the same sound in tear and tier, the short -e- and -ea- sound alike in led and lead, the -au- in taut sounds like the -augh- in taught, and the -e- in vinegar sounds like the -u- in dug.

hybrid /hә-brid/. A word whose elements have roots in more than one language. For instance, automobile derives partly from the Greek autos, partly from the Latin mobilis.
hypallage /hi-pal-ә-jee/. A figure of speech in which the proper subject is displaced by what would logically be the object (if it were named directly), as in a careless cigarette (it’s not the cigarette that’s careless but the smoker) or educated speech (it’s not the speech that’s educated but the speaker).

hypercorrection. The erroneous use of a word or form resulting from a misdirected effort to use what is believed to be a grammatically correct form (e.g., saying I when the objective case me is called for, as in *between you and I instead of between you and me).

hyphaeresis /hi-fer-ә-sis/. The omission of a syllable or sound from within a word (as when over is made o’er or heaven is made heav’n).—Also termed syncope. See syncope.

hyponym. A narrowed synonym—that is, a word that denotes one type of a broader genus denoted by a more general synonym. Hence scarlet is a hyponym of red, bedroom is a hyponym of room, and noun is a hyponym of word. Cf. superordinate.

hypotaxis /hi-poh-tak-sis/. The subordinate relationship that a dependent clause has with an independent clause.—hypotactic, adj.

idiolect /id-ee-ә-lekt/. The language traits of a particular person, influenced by many conditions such as age, sex, geographic area, and level of education.

idiom. 1. An expression characteristic of a particular culture and language; a group of words that bear a peculiar sense in a specific language {to put up with} {to bring about} {to come by [= obtain]} {to set about [= begin]}. 2. Loosely, a language or dialect used by a specific group of people {the Spanish idiom}. See modal idiom.—idiomatic, adj.

illative conjunction. See conjunctive adverb under adverb.

illative coordinating conjunction. See final conjunction under conjunction.

illeism /il-ee-iz-әm/. The act or an instance of referring to oneself in the third person, as by using one’s own name {let me tell you what Bob thinks [Bob is speaking]} or by using a third-person pronoun {he thinks this problem has no easy solution [Bob is still speaking]}. Often thought to be silly or pretentious in Modern English, illeism is sometimes used in self-mockery.

illiteracy. 1. Traditionally, a serious departure from Standard English committed only by uneducated people {*he done real good} {*it don’t make me no nevermind}. 2. Inability to read and write. 3. More broadly, lack of education; esp., ignorance of literature. See vulgarism.—illiterate, adj.

immediate constituent. See constituent.
imperative /im-per-a-tiv/, adj. (Of verbs) expressing a command {come here}, prohibition {don’t touch that}, request {help me a minute}, warning {stay out or else!}, or the like. An imperative is normally a clause lacking an express subject and beginning with an uninflected verb. Cf. subjunctive, interrogative & indicative.

- vocative imperative. An imperative that begins or ends with an address form {Hyuk, get over here!}.

imperative mood. See mood.
imperative sentence. See sentence.
imperfect aspect. See aspect.
impersonal pronoun. See indefinite pronoun under pronoun.
impersonal sentence. See sentence.
inanimate noun. See noun.
inclusive we. A plural first-person pronoun that is intended to include the reader or listener in the statement.
incomplete sentence. See sentence.
indefinite adjective. See adjective.
indefinite article. See article.
indefinite gender. See common gender under gender.
indefinite noun. See noun.
indefinite pronoun. See pronoun.
independent adverb. See sentence adverb under adverb.
independent clause. See clause.
independent element. A word, phrase, or clause outside the grammatical structure of the sentence in which it appears, as when it is a nominative of address, an interjection, a sentence adverb, a transitional term, or an absolute construction.
independent genitive. See independent possessive under possessive.
independent possessive. See possessive.
indirect discourse. See discourse (1).
indirect object. See object.

indirect question. See question.

indirect speech. See indirect discourse under discourse (1).

infinitive /in-fin-ə-tiv/, n. A verb’s uninflected form, almost always preceded by to, that is not affected by voice, tense, person, or number but that may take objects and adverbs. For instance, in the teacher started to grade the exams, started is a finite verb that is limited by the singular noun teacher, the past tense, and the indicative mood, but the infinitive to grade is wholly unaffected. An infinitive can also readily function as a noun (as in to dream is to create). An infinitive is also called a nonfinite verb or an infinitive verb.—infinitival /in-fin-i-ti-vaI/, adj.

bare infinitive. An infinitive in which to is omitted. This type almost always follows an auxiliary verb {Rupert would enjoy this view}, although ought is an exception {that ought to do the job} and a bare infinitive may follow the verbs dare and help {he dared not do it} {I helped look after the baby}. A bare infinitive is also used frequently in dependent clauses {we watched Edward wash his car}.—Also termed plain infinitive; pure infinitive; simple infinitive; present stem; unmarked infinitive.

complementary infinitive. An infinitive that completes the sense of the predicate verb but is neither an objective nor a subjective complement {we are to sing tomorrow}.

marked infinitive. An infinitive in which the word to is included. To is sometimes called the “mark” or “sign” of the infinitive.

perfect infinitive. An infinitive that indicates action that has occurred before that of the principal verb {he is known to have been a member of that gang} {the manuscript seems to have been edited recently}.—Also termed present-perfect infinitive.

plain infinitive. See bare infinitive.

present infinitive. An infinitive suggesting action simultaneous with or later than that of the principal verb {to know her is to like her} {her not-so-secret ambition was to become president} {we asked him to play with us again next week}.

present-perfect infinitive. See perfect infinitive.

pure infinitive. See bare infinitive.

simple infinitive. See bare infinitive.

split infinitive. An infinitive in which one or more words are inserted between to and the verb (e.g., to constantly demand instead of to demand constantly). See § 148.
unmarked infinitive. See bare infinitive.

infinitive phrase. See phrase.

infinitive verb. See infinitive.

infix /in-fiks/, n. 1. A sound element, such as a letter or syllable, inserted within a word. In a string of suffixes, as in cleanliness where -ly and -ness are both suffixes, some grammarians treat all but the last-added syllable as infixes. Otherwise, infixes are comparatively rare in English. 2. A word inserted between the parts of a compound word, often typical of slang (e.g., some-damn-where, absoblobby-duly-lutely).—infixation, n.

inflect, vb. To change the ending of (a word) to express varying grammatical function. Whereas Latin is a highly inflected language, English is little inflected.

inflected possessive. See possessive.

inflection /in-flek-shәn/. 1. A grammatical change in a word's form, through declension (e.g., woman–woman's, women–women's), conjugation (e.g., drive–drove–driven), or comparison (e.g., big–bigger–biggest). 2. The act of inflecting words.—Also spelled inflexion.—inflectional, adj.

irregular inflection. An inflection that does not follow strict morphological rules and is therefore anomalous, as with the plurals for man and woman or the past tense and past participle of go.

regular inflection. An inflection that follows strict morphological rules, as with the plurals for cat and dog or the past tense for beg.

inflectional affix. See affix.


inflectional suffix. See suffix.

inflexion. See inflection.

initialism /i-nish-ә-li-zәm/. A word or abbreviation that is (1) formed from the initial letters of other words or syllables and (2) pronounced by sounding out the letters individually {FBI} {VP}.—Also termed alphabetism. Cf. acronym.

inner complement. See complement.

intensifier. An adverb that cannot modify a verb but that always modifies either an adjective {he worked very hard} or an adverb {she swam quite fast}, usu. by strengthening the characteristic described—though rather and somewhat can moderate the characteristic. Examples are rather, quite, and very. See § 220.—Also termed intensifying adverb.

intensifying adverb. See intensifier.

intensifying pronoun. See intensive pronoun under pronoun.
**intensive pronoun.** See pronoun.

**interjection /in-tәr-jek-shәn/**. A word or group of words that are grammatically independent of a sentence and that convey an exclamation, usu. with a mild to strong but always sudden emotion {oh!} {ouch!} {hurray!}.

**interrogative /in-tә-ro-gә-tiv/, adj.** Expressing a question (as in *who is making that awful noise?* or *why didn’t the mail come today?*). Cf. subjunctive, imperative & indicative.

**interrogative, n.** A question. See interrogative sentence under sentence.

**interrogative adjective.** See adjective.

**interrogative adverb.** See adverb.

**interrogative pronoun.** See pronoun.

**interrogative sentence.** See sentence.

**interrupter.** Any parenthetical matter, such as an aside, that breaks one main thought of the sentence {we listened closely to the (ahem) maestro} {Bill, however, had a different view} {in *Lamie v. United States Tr.,* 540 U.S. 526 (2004), Justice Scalia noted his rejection of legislative history as bearing on his vote}.

**intonation.** The pitch variation of speech; spoken melody.

**intonation pattern.** The rhythmic pattern of natural speech, including stressed syllables, pitches, and pauses.

**intransitive verb.** See verb.

**introductory adverb.** See conjunctive adverb under adverb.

**intrusive r.** An unetymological r-sound added in some dialects between a word ending in a vowel and another word that begins with one {the idear is to make a little money}.

**intrusive schwa.** The insertion of a schwa sound by epenthesis in some dialects, as with the standard two-syllable *athlete* mispronounced /ath-ә-leet/ or the one-syllable *film* mispronounced /fil-әm/. See epenthesis.

**invariable noun.** See noun.

**inversion.** The changing of words from their ordinary positions within a sentence; esp., a sentence arrangement that puts all or part of the predicate before the subject {up the hill came Jack}.—Also termed (when the movement is to the beginning of a sentence) fronting.

**irregular, adj.** (Of a word or phrase) not conforming to the usual rules of grammatical formation. For example, an irregular noun forms its plural in some way other than adding -s or -es (e.g., *woman* becomes *women*; *phenomenon* becomes *phenomena*). Cf. regular.
irregular inflection. See inflection.

irregular plural. See plural.

irregular verb. See verb.

irreversible binomial. A set phrase consisting of two coordinated elements whose order cannot be switched while maintaining standard idiom {spaghetti and meatballs} {cup and saucer} {fish and chips}.

joint possessive. See group possessive under possessive.

language, n. 1. A particular system of conventional signs by which human beings communicate. 2. The ability of human beings to communicate through such a system.

learned loanword. See loanword.

lexeme. A unit in the vocabulary or lexicon of a language, whether it is a single word {paper}, part of a word {auto-} {non-}, a phrase {pass the buck} {keel over}, or a clipping {bus} {flu}.—lexemic, adj.

lexical, adj. 1. Of, relating to, or involving a word or words. 2. Of, relating to, or involving the vocabulary of a language. 3. Of, relating to, or involving a dictionary. Cf. grammatical.

lexical category. See part of speech.

lexical morpheme. 1. See free morpheme under morpheme. 2. See content word under word.

lexical verb. See verb.

lexicology /lek-si-kol-ә-jee/. The study of the derivation and meaning of words in a language.—lexicological, adj.

lexicon /lek-si-kәn/. 1. The vocabulary of an individual, of those who speak a common language, of a branch of knowledge, or of a language. 2. A dictionary. 3. The mental dictionary that speakers of a language unconsciously acquire as they learn a language.

lexis, n. The semantic units of a language (morphemes, words, and idioms).

ligature, n. A written symbol (such as æ or æ) made from two letters that are visually linked. Cf. digraph.

limiting adjective. See adjective.

linguistic genotype. See deep structure under structure.

linguistic phenotype. See surface structure under structure.

linguistics. The systematic study of language and its structure, including morphology, syntax, phonetics, semantics, sociolinguistics, dialectology, psycholinguistics, lexicography, computational studies, and applied linguistics.
linking verb. See verb.

loan translation. An expression made by translating a foreign word or (more typically) phrase into the host language.—Also termed calque.

loanword. A word borrowed from a foreign language and naturalized.

- learned loanword /lәr-nәd/. A bookish foreignism used in educated circles and typically retaining some of its foreignness, as by being italicized and preserving one or more characteristics of the originating language, such as pronunciation, diacritical marks, inflections, and sense-associations \{Festschrift–Festschriften\} \{bête noire\} \{prolegomenon–prolegomena\}. See Garner’s Law of Loanwords.

local possessive. See possessive.

long passive voice. See passive voice.

long syllable. See syllable.

loose appositive. See nonrestrictive appositive under appositive.

macron /may-kron/. In some pronunciation systems, the long straight line placed over long vowels to show that they are to be so pronounced /lī-bā-shәn/.

main clause. See independent clause under clause.

main verb. See verb.

major sentence. See complete sentence under sentence.

majuscule, n. A capital letter.

malapropism /mal-ә-prop-iz-әm/. The misuse of a word or phrase that produces a humorous effect.

mandative subjunctive. See subjunctive, n.

manner adverb. See adverb.

marked infinitive. See infinitive.

marker. A word that identifies a particular grammatical element that follows it. Hence determiners are noun markers; auxiliaries are markers of principal verbs; prepositions are phrase markers; relative pronouns are clause markers, as are subordinating conjunctions; and interrogative words such as how, what, where, who, and why are question markers.—Also termed indicator.

- plural marker. An adjective or indefinite pronoun that indicates more than one, such as two, few, several, and both.—Also termed plural indicator.

- portion marker. An adjective or indefinite pronoun that indicates an amount of a thing, such as half, much, or little.—Also termed portion indicator.
singular marker. An adjective or indefinite pronoun that indicates only one: each, one, anyone, someone, etc.—Also termed singular indicator.

masculine gender. See gender.

mass noun. See noun.

material noun. See mass noun under noun.

matrix clause. See clause.

melioration /meel-ə-ray-shən or mee-lee-ə-/ The elevation of a word’s meaning or the improvement of its connotations. Cf. pejoration (1).—meliorative, adj.

metaphor /met-ə-fohr or -fər/. A figure of speech in which one thing is called by the name of something else (e.g., welcome to my modest Taj Mahal) or is said to be that other thing (e.g., life is a cabaret); an implicit comparison. Cf. simile.

metathesis /mә-tath-a-sәs/. The transposition of successive sounds or letters in a word (e.g., pronouncing comfortable /kәmf-tәr-bәl/ instead of /kәm-fәr-tә-bәl/, or misspelling chipotle as *chipolte.—metathetic, adj.

metonymy /mә-ton-ә-mee/. Substitution of an attribute or other suggestive word for a name (e.g., referring to the president as the White House or rich people as moneybags).—metonymic, adj.

Middle English. The English language used from about 1100 to 1500.

minor sentence. See incomplete sentence under sentence.

misplaced modifier. See modifier.

modal, n. See modal auxiliary verb under auxiliary verb.

 Ability modal. See double modal.

modal auxiliary verb. See auxiliary verb.

modal idiom. An expression that behaves somewhat like a modal auxiliary verb; specif., a form such as had better {we’d better leave}, would rather {she would rather not go}, are to be {we’re to be there at eight o’clock}, and have go to or have to {we have to stay here}. See idiom.

modality. See mood.

modal tense. See potential tense under tense.

mode. See mood.

Modern English. The English language in use since about 1500.

modificand. A word, phrase, or clause modified by another word, phrase, or clause.

modification structure. See structure.
modifier. A word or group of words that describes, limits, or qualifies the meaning of another word or group of words; esp., an adjective or adverb, or its equivalent in the form of a phrase or clause.

- **compound modifier.** See *phrasal adjective* under *adjective*.
- **dangling modifier.** See *dangler*.
- **misplaced modifier.** A modifier so placed that it appears to modify some word other than the one that it was probably or obviously intended to modify {dirty men’s golf shoes littered the bag room} {I saw the Statue of Liberty flying into Newark} {once disfavored, English teachers now approve of an occasional split infinitive—if it is essentially unavoidable}.
- **postpositive modifier.** See *postpositive adjective* under *adjective*.
- **resumptive modifier.** A sentence-ending modifier that repeats a word or idea from the main clause and elaborates or qualifies it {Twain attacked representative government with a fierce humor, fierce because in Congress he could see how men of sawdust and solder could make a democratic-republican government a corruption and an absurdity}.
- **sentence modifier.** See *sentence adverb* under *adverb*.
- **squinting modifier.** A modifier ill-advisedly placed so that it might modify either the element preceding it or the element following it {the marble that was damaged today is being discounted} {she pledged during the summer to help in our fundraising efforts}.—Also termed *squinting construction*.
- **summative modifier.** A modifier that wraps up the idea in the main clause by bringing it to a conclusion {the taxpayers’ initiative was to lower property taxes—an idea long thought to be unworkable} {imagine having your own actions in any given situation universalized for all of humankind—a version of Kant’s categorical imperative}.

**monophthong** /ˈmɒn-əf-thɒŋ/. A single vowel sound, as in *cat, sit, sleet*.

**monotransitive verb.** See *verb*.

**mood.** A conjugational category that shows something about the speaker’s attitude toward the action, as by expressing a fact, a command, a wish, an assumption, a desirability, or a possibility (e.g., *he writes* [factual attitude = indicative mood]; *if he wrote* [conditional attitude = subjunctive mood]; and *write!* [directing attitude = imperative mood]).—Also termed *mode; modality*.

- **imperative mood.** The mood used in expressing a command {go to your places!}, making a request {please call me next week}, or giving directions {open carefully and fold the flaps back}. 

446
indicative mood. The mood used in making statements of fact or opinion and in asking questions.

subjunctive mood. Traditionally speaking, the mood used in expressing (1) conditional statements that are contrary to fact or contain a strong element of doubt {if I were Harry, I’d . . .}, (2) wishes or prayers {I wish I were in that position}, (3) motions, resolutions, demands, recommendations, commands, or requests involving that-clauses {I demand that he remove the fence immediately}, and (4) archaically, concessions {though this be incorrect, all must consider it}.

morpheme. The smallest meaningful unit into which a word can be divided {un-mean-ing-ful-ly} {anti-dis-establish-ment-arian-ism}.—morphemic, adj.

bound morpheme. A morpheme that never occurs except by being attached to another morpheme {dogs} {disheveled}.—Also termed clitic; grammatical morpheme.

free morpheme. A morpheme that can occur by itself, esp. as a stand-alone word in a sentence {the} {notebook} {stationery}.—Also termed lexical morpheme.

functional morpheme. See function word under word.

lexical morpheme. 1. See free morpheme. 2. See content word under word.

morphology /mor-fo-la-jee/. 1. The study of internal word structures and of word formation in a language, esp. as regards inflection, derivation, and compounding. 2. The means by which words are formed in a language. See word formation.

inflectional morphology. See accidence (2).

multiword verb. See phrasal verb under verb.

mutation plural. See plural.

negation. The introduction of a negative—esp. not, -n’t, or un-—into a construction.

negative, adj. (Of a clause or sentence) expressing the absence or nonexistence of some thing or condition {they weren’t cold}, or else the falsity of a proposition {that was not a sincere letter}.

negative cleft sentence. See sentence.

negative question. See question.

neoclassical compound. See compound.

neologism /nee-ol-a-jiz-əm/, n. A newly coined word.—neologic, adj.

neologizing, n. The creation of new words, esp. when not based on existing morphemes.—neologize /nee-ol-a-jı/z/, vb.

neuter gender. See gender.
The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation

nominal, adj. Of, relating to, or involving a noun element.

nominal, n. A noun, noun phrase, or noun clause—that is, a noun element.

→ predicate nominal. See predicate nominative.

nominal clause. See noun clause under clause.

nominal element. See noun element.

nominalization. 1. The conversion into a noun of a word or phrase that is not ordinarily a noun, esp. by suffixation {prioritization} {eloquentness}. 2. A word so converted. In sense 2, when the word displaces a verb, a nominalization is also termed a zombie noun (e.g., protect is replaced by the phrase provide protection to—protection being the zombie noun).—nominalize, vb.

nominal phrase. See noun phrase under phrase.

nominative, adj. (Of a pronoun [or, not quite correctly, the noun]) being the subject of a sentence.—Also termed subjective.

nominative, n. The case of a pronoun that functions as the subject of a sentence.

nominative absolute. See absolute construction.

nominative case. See case.

nominative of address. See vocative, n.

nonaction verb. See stative verb under verb.

noncount noun. See noun.

nonessential appositive. See nonrestrictive appositive under appositive.

nonessential clause. See nonrestrictive clause under clause.

nonfinite verb. See verb & infinitive.

nonlimiting clause. See nonrestrictive clause under clause.

nonreferential it. See expletive (1).

nonreferential there. See expletive (1).

nonrestrictive, adj. (Of the modifier of a noun element) supplying additional information that is omissible. Cf. restrictive.

nonrestrictive appositive. See appositive.

nonrestrictive clause. See clause.

nonsentence. 1. A group of words not constituting a grammatically complete sentence {the boy down the street}. Cf. full sentence under sentence. 2. See verbless sentence under sentence.

notional concord. See synesis.
notional passive. A construction that contains a passive idea even though it lacks a passive-voice verb, esp. through the use of an ergative verb {your book will ship [= be shipped] on Tuesday}.

notional verb. See principal verb under verb.

noun /noun/. A word that names a thing, whether tangible or intangible; the part of speech that denotes thingness and can serve as the subject of a sentence. There are several ways to classify nouns: common vs. proper, count vs. mass, and abstract vs. concrete.

abstract noun. A noun that names an idea, quality, condition, or action that cannot be physiologically sensed (e.g., administration, courage, fear, husbandry, inertia, intelligence, profundity, tenderness, truth, warfare).

agent noun. A noun that denotes someone or something that performs the action of a verb. Agent nouns typically end in -er {employer} {worker} or -or {illustrator} {sculptor}. Cf. recipient noun.

animate noun. A noun that denotes a living thing {boy} {girl} {bull} {cow}.

attribute noun. See predicate noun (1).

attributive noun. A noun placed immediately before another noun and used adjectivally to denote a characteristic of it (e.g., dawn patrol, harvest moon, newspaper reporter). The noun used attributively functions as an adjective.—Also termed noun adjunct.

bounded noun. A noun that in the singular is ordinarily preceded by an article or other determiner {ball, hall, mall, wall}.

collective noun. The name of a group considered as a unit, as with club, faculty, flock, herd, party, team.

common noun. A noun that informally names a generic class or type of person, place, or thing (e.g., apple, chair, desk, engineer, highway). It is capitalized only if it is the first word in a sentence.

compound noun. A noun formed from two or more words combined—usu. written as a single word {deskbook} {football} {typescript}, but also sometimes as a hyphenated word {father-in-law} {case-in-chief} or as a noun phrase consisting of separate words {credit card} {editor in chief} {ice cream}.

concrete noun. The name of a person, place, or thing perceivable by one or more of the senses {cologne} {fence} {films} {Kansas City} {pianist} {screwdriver}.

count noun. A common noun that names something that comes in discrete, countable units {car} {hammer}, whether or not the noun has an explicit
plural form to contrast with a singular {buffalo} {fish}.—Also termed countable noun.

- **definite noun.** A count noun that, being preceded by a definite article, refers to a particular referent or set of referents {the cow} {the cattle}.

- **inanimate noun.** A noun that denotes something that isn’t living {bag} {cart} {orthodoxy}.

- **indefinite noun.** A count noun that, being preceded by an indefinite article or a zero article, refers to no particular thing or set of things {a cow} {cattle}.

- **invariable noun.** A noun that either is always singular {New York is a great city} or does not change its form when functioning as a plural as opposed to a singular because it is either always singular {linguistics is fun} or always plural {the scissors are on the table}.

- **mass noun.** A common noun that names unsegmented material in an undifferentiated body, pile, heap, or load; esp., a noun denoting something that does not come in countable units and that does not ordinarily accept an indefinite article or a plural inflection (e.g., *equipment*, *robustness*).—Also termed noncount noun; material noun.

- **material noun.** See mass noun.

- **noncount noun.** A common noun referring to an entity that neither can be counted nor can vary for number {milk} {salt} {air}.—Also termed uncountable noun; mass noun.

- **partitive noun.** A noun that when coupled with the preposition of creates a countable expression from a mass noun—examples being bit and piece {a bit of luck} {a piece of bad news}.—Also termed noun of partition.

- **predicate noun.** 1. A noun, noun phrase, or pronoun functioning as a subjective complement {Caroline is a lawyer}.—Also termed attribute noun; predicate pronoun. 2. A noun functioning as an objective complement {they elected her chair}.

- **proper noun.** A noun that is the formal or official name of a specific person, place, or thing (e.g., *Paul McNamara*, *Buckingham Palace*, *the Hope Diamond*) and that is always capitalized, regardless of how it is used. A common noun may become a proper noun (e.g., *the ballpark* becomes *the Ballpark in Arlington*). Sometimes a proper noun may become a common noun (e.g., *sandwich* gets its name from its supposed inventor, the Earl of Sandwich).—Also termed proper name.

- **recipient noun.** A noun that denotes a person who receives some thing or action, or one for whom something is done. Cf. agent noun.

- **simple noun.** A noun not made by compounding {house} {paper} {vision}.
- **verbal noun.** See gerund.
- **zombie noun.** An abstract noun that obscures the agent of the action it denotes—esp. one ending in -ion, -ence, -ance, -ity, or -ment.—Also termed nominalization.

**noun adjunct.** See **attributive noun** under **noun**.

**noun-banging.** The unfortunate stylistic tendency to use several attributive nouns at once {the Department of Defense strategy defense tactic apologists argue otherwise}.

**noun clause.** See **clause**.

**noun cluster.** A noun and all its modifiers {the antiquarian books held at the HRC are invaluable [the noun books is modified by the article the, the attributive adjective antiquarian, and the relative clause (with a whiz-deletion) held at the HRC]}. 

**noun element.** A noun, pronoun, noun phrase, or noun clause.—Also termed substantive; nominal; nominal element. 

**noun group.** A construction that consists of a noun preceded by one or more single-word modifiers {he threw out his battered green canvas fishing hat}.

**noun indicator.** See **determiner**.

**noun phrase.** See **phrase**.

**number.** 1. The quality of a word as being (in Modern English) either singular or plural, as reflected in declension (e.g., I–we), conjugation (e.g., say–says), and agreement between different parts of speech (e.g., this book–these books). 2. One of a series of symbols or words used in arranging or classifying quantities; esp., a numeral.—Also termed (in sense 2) numeral. 

- **cardinal number.** A number as it is used in counting {one, two, three}.
- **ordinal number.** A numerical adjective used to indicate order {first, second, third}.
- **plural number.** The form of a noun, pronoun, or verb indicating that a reference is to more than one {the flowers are pleasingly varied} {they bloom throughout the cold months}.
- **singular number.** The form of a noun, pronoun, or verb indicating that a reference is to only one {the prospective hire is most promising} {someone texted me last night}.

**numeral.** See **number** (2).

**numeral adjective.** See **numeric adjective** under **adjective**.

**numeric adjective.** See **adjective**.

**numerical adjective.** See **numeric adjective** under **adjective**.
object. A noun element that either (1) is acted on by or receives the action of a verb, or (2) is the main noun in a prepositional phrase. An object does not control the inflection of a verb. Cf. subject.—objective, adj.

- cognate object. An object that is closely related etymologically to the verb of which it is an object {he drank a stiff drink} {she built a great building} {she died a good death}.

- complementary object. See objective complement under complement.

- compound objects. Two or more objects that are recipients of the action of one transitive verb {we traveled over mountains, lakes, and plains}.—Also termed coordinate objects.

- direct object. A noun element that denotes a thing or person that is necessarily involved in the action of a transitive verb and that completes the meaning of the predicate. The direct object is essential to the sentence's meaning; the sentence does not make sense if the transitive verb lacks a direct object {I lit a match}. In that example, I lit would make no sense without the direct object a match. In other sentences the meaning would change {I burned the soup}. That example would make sense without the direct object, the soup, but the sense would be quite different.—Also termed object accusative; patient.

- indirect object. A noun element that identifies a person or thing that is affected by a transitive verb, usu. as the recipient of the action but not immediately involved in the action; the first object after a ditransitive verb {bake your sister a cake}. In that example, the act of baking affects your sister (she will get a cake), but she is not what is baked, so a cake is the direct object and your sister is an indirect object. If the indirect object were excluded, the sentence would still make sense {bake a cake}. An indirect object can always be replaced by a prepositional phrase {bake a cake for your sister}. An indirect object always precedes the direct object—and normally it occurs only in a sentence having a direct object.

- object of a gerund. The noun element that receives the action of a gerund {teaching the seminar will be great fun} {we enjoyed hosting the party}.

- object of an infinitive. The noun element that receives the action of an infinitive {to admire her is inevitable} {the committee was formed specifically to investigate allegations}.

- object of a preposition. A noun element related to the grammatical structure of a sentence by a preposition {we’ll be gone by midnight} {her daughter traveled with her} {I’m the guest of a friend}.

- oblique object. The object of a preposition {he hid under the stairs}.

object accusative. See direct object under object.
object complement. See complement.

objective /ob-je-k-tiv/, n. See objective case under case.

objective attribute. See objective complement under complement.

objective case. See case.

objective complement. See complement.

objective predicate. See objective complement under complement.

object of a gerund. See object.

object of an infinitive. See object.

object of a preposition. See object.

oblique case. See case.

oblique object. See object.

of-genitive. See genitive.

Old English. The Anglo-Saxon language, used in England from around AD 450 to 1100.—Also termed Anglo-Saxon.

onomatopoeia /o-nә-mat-ә-peә/. The effect of matching the sound to the sense of a word or phrase. Some words are formed by imitating the sound associated with the intended meaning, such as buzz, cock-a-doodle-doo, and pop.

open syllable. See syllable.

open word class. See word class.

oratio directa; oratio recta. See direct discourse under discourse (1).

oratio obliqua. See indirect discourse under discourse (1).

ordinal number. See number.

orthoepy /or-thә-we-pee or or-thoh-ә-pee/. 1. The study of the customary pronunciation of words, esp. what is considered correct. 2. The accepted or correct pronunciation of words.—orthepist, n.

orthography /or-thog-rә-fee/. 1. The system for writing the words or sounds of a particular language. 2. The art of spelling words properly.—orthographer, n.

orthology /or-thol-ә-jee/. The art of using words properly.—orthological, adj.

outer complement. See complement.

overgeneralization. The creation of a nonstandard linguistic form by false analogy. Cf. clang association.

oxymoron. A figure of speech that is or seems to be a contradiction in terms (e.g., jumbo shrimp; explicit allusion).—oxymoronic, adj.
paradigm, *n.* A set of linguistic items that form mutually exclusive choices in particular syntactic roles; esp., a roster of conjugations or declensions that show a word in all its inflectional forms.—*paradigmatic* /pa-ә-dig-mat-ik/, *adj.*

parallelism, *n.* The use of successive grammatical constructions that correspond in structure, sound, meaning, etc.; the use of coordinate parts having the same grammatical form {she typed accurately, answered calls professionally, and presented herself impeccably}.—Also termed *parallel structure.*—*parallel, adj.*

parallel structure. See parallelism.

parataxis /pair-ә-tak-sis/. See asyndeton.

parenthetical element. A word or group of words that suspends the flow of a sentence to provide a transition, additional information, an aside, or some other interpolated idea.

parse, *vb.* To explain the construction of a sentence by describing the grammatical relationships within it; esp., to diagram a sentence according to the traditional Reed–Kellogg system.

participial adjective. See adjective.

participial phrase. See phrase.

participial verb. See verb.

participle. A verb form that may be used as either a verb or an adjective. Cf. gerund.—*participial, adj.*

- **past participle.** The inflected form of a verb (marked by an *-ed* ending in regular verbs) used to indicate action that has already occurred {canceled by one network, the show was picked up by a rival network} {the canceled show was picked up by a rival network}. A past participle may be used to express either the perfect tense (with the auxiliary *have*) {we have arrived} or the passive voice (with the auxiliary *be*) {he is expected to arrive any day now}.

- **perfect participle.** A past participle when used with *having* (in the active voice) {having learned from Harvey Penick, I will never be complacent} or *having been* (in the passive voice) {having been taught by Harvey Penick, I will never be complacent}.

- **present participle.** The inflected form of a verb (marked by an *-ing* ending in regular verbs) used to indicate action that is occurring {running past a stream, we saw an otter} {a young otter was playing in the running water}.

- **present-perfect participle.** The past participle when paired with the auxiliary *having* (in the active voice) {having considered your proposal, we are happy to accept it} or the auxiliaries *having been* (in the passive voice) {having been passed over last time, I hope I’ll get the promotion this time}.
**particle** /pahr-ti-kәl/. A word or wordlike element that cannot be inflected, has little meaning, and serves other functions, usu. as an affix or part of a phrasal verb; specif., a small word (or an affix) that does not fit into any clear word class. In English, particles include prepositions used in phrasal verbs (as in take in, take off, take over, and take up); a few spatial adverbs (such as aback, ahead, aside, away, back, in front); prefixes such as un- (as in pleasant–unpleasant); and suffixes such as -ness (as in good–goodness).

**partitive genitive.** See genitive.

**partitive noun.** See noun.

**part of speech.** One of a class of words grouped according to function within a sentence and their inflectional characteristics. Traditionally, there are eight parts of speech in English: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Some grammarians add a ninth (articles).—Also termed *lexical category; grammatical category; word class; form class.*

**passive clause.** See clause.

**passive voice.** The voice formed with a *be-*verb and a past participle {the hamster was named Bernie} {he is being appointed secretary} {the theory has been accepted for centuries}. In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence does not perform the action of the predicate but is acted on, often by the object of a *by-*phrase {the role of Martha was played by Elizabeth Taylor}. See *voice.* Cf. active voice.

- **long passive voice.** A passive-voice construction in which the actor is specified in a prepositional phrase beginning with *by* {the book was read by Derek Jacobi}.

- **short passive voice.** A passive-voice construction in which the actor is omitted from the predicate {the book was read}.—Also termed *agentless passive; truncated passive.*

**past participle.** See participle.

**past-perfect tense.** See tense.

**past subjunctive.** See subjunctive, *n.*

**past tense.** See tense.

**patient.** See *direct object* under *object.*

**pejoration** /pee-ja-ray-shәn or pej-ә/. 1. The depreciation, dilution, or erosion of a word’s meaning; esp., a word’s gradual acquisition of negative connotations or sometimes even denotations. For example, in Old English, the word *silly* meant “happy” or “blessed.” In Middle English, the meaning changed to “innocent,” then “feeble-minded” or “ignorant.” Today it means “foolish.” Cf.
melioration. 2. The depreciation of a word by adding a negative affix such as -aster. For example, a poet is merely one who writes verse; the word denotes nothing about quality. But a poetaster is a poet who produces trash.

perfect aspect. See aspect.
perfect gerund. See gerund.
perfect infinitive. See infinitive.
perfect participle. See participle.
perfect tense. 1. See compound tense under tense. 2. See present-perfect tense under tense. 3. See past-perfect tense under tense.
period fault. See fragment.
peripheral adjective. See adjective.
periphrasis /pə-rɪ-frə-səs/. 1. Circumlocution; roundabout wording, as when a cook is called a practitioner of the culinary arts. 2. The use of a function word (e.g., more, less) instead of an inflection, esp. to express degrees of comparison (e.g., more stupid is the periphrastic alternative to stupider).—periphrastic, adj.
periphrastic comparative. See comparative.
periphrastic genitive. See of-genitive under genitive.
periphrastic modal. Any one of a set of complex modal verbs, such as be able to or be about to.
periphrastic possessive. See of-genitive under genitive.
periphrastic superlative. See superlative.
person. A category of declension (I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they) and conjugation (am, are, is) that specifies the person speaking (first person), spoken to (second person), or spoken about (third person).
personal adjective. See adjective.
personal pronoun. See pronoun.
phatic exchange. A rudimentary, superficial conversation made only for general purposes of social interaction and not for literal meaning. {Hello. How are you? Just fine, thanks. And you? Fine. Have a good day.}.
phoneme /foh-neem/. A language’s smallest distinct sound unit that can distinguish two words; specif., the basic unit of a language’s sound system as it can be varied or arranged in vocal expression. It can be a single letter, such as a vowel or consonant. The vowels a, i, and o produce very different sounds in tap, tip, and top. The consonants b, d, p, and t also distinguish words: tab, tad, tap, tat. Cf. morpheme.—phonemic, adj.
phrasal adjective. See adjective.
phrasal adverb. See *adverbial phrase* under *phrase*.

phrasal conjunction. See *conjunction*.

phrasal genitive. See *of-genitive* under *genitive*.

phrasal preposition. See *preposition*.

phrasal prepositional verb. See *verb*.

phrasal pronoun. See *pronoun*.

phrasal verb. See *verb*.

phrase. 1. A grammatical unit of two or more words that do not include a related subject and predicate and that do function together as a single part of speech in a sentence {Rob, a big-animal veterinarian, loves to browse used-book stores [the phrases *big-animal* and *used-book* function as adjectives modifying *veterinarian* and *stores*, respectively]}. A phrase may contain a subordinate clause {Dad sold the big house that I grew up in [the phrase *the big house that I grew up in* contains the clause *that I grew up in*, functioning as an adjective modifying *house*; but the full phrase serves a single grammatical function in the sentence: a noun that is the direct object of the verb *sold*]}. Some typical simple phrases: *might be expected*; *could be seen*; *ran down the street*; *all the king’s horses*; *very excited*; *over the counter*; *not very compelling*. 2. In some newer grammars, the smallest syntactic unit, which is usu. (though not necessarily) more than one word.—phrasal, adj.

- adjective phrase. Any phrase that modifies a noun element—often a prepositional phrase {the shell on the beach was one I’d never seen}, a participial phrase {the man living down the street was wandering in the woods}, or an infinitive phrase {the last person to leave the room should tidy up}. Traditionally, *phrasal adjective* refers to a prepositive modifier {an on-the-fly lunch}, whereas *adjective phrase* refers to a postpositive modifier {lunch on the fly}.

- adverbial phrase. A phrase that functions as an adverb {he hung 68 portraits on the wall} {she called to extend her condolences}. It differs from an adverbial clause only because it lacks a subject and predicate.—Also termed *adverb phrase*; phrasal adverb.

- appositional phrase. See *appositive*.

- appositive phrase. A phrase used in apposition {she kept her promise to visit daily}.

- gerund phrase. A phrase that consists of a gerund, its object, and any modifiers that may be present {playing two rounds of golf in one day made him happy}; a noun phrase in which a gerund is the head {building houses is her main occupation} {my job was filing papers}. 

Select Glossary
infinitive phrase. A phrase in which an infinitive is the head; specif., the full infinitive (with to expressed), together with any object and modifiers that may be present {to sail the North Sea in his sailboat has long been his monomaniacal goal}. An infinitive phrase may function as an adjective phrase {her desire to shorten the story left the characters underdeveloped}, an adverbial phrase {he did his own laundry to economize}, or a noun phrase {there is nothing better than to help others}.

noun phrase. A phrase that functions as a noun. Transformational grammarians tend to refer to individual nouns as noun phrases.—Also termed nominal phrase; substantive phrase.

participial phrase. A phrase consisting of a participle together with any modifiers or complements, as well as any modifiers that might belong to the complement {a soloist singing quickly could finish the piece in under 60 seconds} {the music stands placed near the choir-room entrance have been damaged}. A participial phrase may be either an adjective phrase (as in the preceding examples) or an absolute phrase {generally speaking, band students do quite well academically}.

prepositional phrase. A phrase consisting of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers or connectives that may be present.

set phrase. A phrase that is fossilized in form and meaning, such as on bended knee (bended is the old past form of bend; now the only acceptable past form, apart from that idiom, is bent).

substantive phrase. See noun phrase.

verb phrase. 1. Two or more words functioning together as the verb within a clause {must have thought} {would have voted}. 2. In transformational grammar, one or more words performing this function.—Also termed verb cluster.

phrase marker. See tree diagram.

phrase-structure tree. See tree diagram.

pied-piping. See preposition-stranding.

plain infinitive. See bare infinitive under infinitive.

pluperfect. See past-perfect tense under tense.

plural, adj. Denoting more than one of a thing.

plural, n. The form of a noun indicating more than one of a thing.

irregular plural. A plural that is formed in some way other than by adding -s or -es {women} {phyla}.
mutation plural. An irregular plural in which the contrast between the singular and the plural forms consists of a simple vowel alteration {foot–feet} {goose–geese}.—Also termed umlaut plural.

regular plural. A plural that is formed in the normal way by adding -s or -es {tables} {hands}.

umlaut plural. See mutation plural.

uninflected plural. A plural that is identical in form with its singular {deer} {fish [although fishes is permissible for a few individual ichthyic animals]} {moose} {swine}.—Also termed zero plural.

weak plural. A plural consisting of a base plus -en {brethren} {children} {oxen}. Only a few such forms survive in Modern English.

zero plural. See uninflected plural.

plural indicator. See plural marker under marker.

plural marker. See marker.

plural number. See number.

point of view. The speaker’s or writer’s attitude vis-à-vis the reader as evident from pronouns (first person, second person, third person).

polar question. See yes–no question under question.

polysemous /po-lee-seem-as/ adj. (Of a word) having more than one sense, usu. many senses (e.g., bank can mean “a financial institution,” “the earth beside a river,” or “a billiard shot that bounces off the edge of the table”).—polysemic, n.

polysyndetic coordination. See coordination.

polysyndeton /pol-ee-sin-da-ton/. The repeated—and sometimes repetitive—use of conjunctions in a series of words, phrases, or clauses {we will keep our hopes alive and we will keep pursuing our goals and we will win in the end}. Cf. syndeton & asyndeton.—polysyndetic /pol-ee-sin-det-ik/, adj.

portion indicator. See portion marker under marker.

portion marker. See marker.

portmanteau word. See word.

positive, adj. & n. The lowest degree of comparison for gradable adjectives and adverbs. The positive is the ordinary condition of such a word (e.g., smart is positive, smarter is comparative, and smartest is superlative). For both adjectives and adverbs, the positive merely expresses quality without comparison to any other thing. See degree. Cf. comparative & superlative.

positive adjective. See adjective.

positive question. See question.
possessive /pə-ˌzes-əv/, n. The case used to show possession, ownership, or close relationship. In English, most nouns form the possessive by adding -’s to the singular and irregular plural forms, and an apostrophe alone to regular plural forms. But the term possessive also embraces words such as mine, yours, ours, and theirs, as well as my, your, our, and their. See §§ 71–72, 98, 518. See genitive.

- descriptive possessive. The possessive form of a noun used in a way that describes (so that it functions as a descriptive adjective) {men’s restroom} {children’s pool} {heroin’s victims}.

- double possessive. The idiomatic combination of an inflected possessive and a periphrastic possessive {a friend of Alexandra’s} {a relative of Father’s}.—Also termed double genitive; postgenitive.

- group possessive. A possessive construction in which two or more words are considered as a unit and therefore take a single -’s {several of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musicals are masterpieces} {let’s go to Neil and Tasca’s house}.—Also termed joint possessive.

- independent possessive. A possessive that has a noun elided after it because the context makes the meaning obvious {my little brother is taller than Jane’s}.—Also termed independent genitive.

- inflected possessive. A possessive ending in -’s or -’s’, used most commonly for nouns that refer to people and that indicate ownership or source {John’s house} {Sally’s ideas}.

- joint possessive. See group possessive.

- local possessive. A possessive used for denoting a business or similar establishment {McDonald’s} {Schlotzsky’s} {St. James’s}.

- periphrastic possessive. See of-genitive under genitive.

possessive adjective. See adjective.

possessive case. See case.

possessive pronoun. See pronoun.

postpositive. See double possessive under possessive.

postpositive /pohs[t]-ˈpoz-ə-tiv/, adj. & n. A word or particle that is placed after or suffixed to another word. Postpositives include adjectives {accounts receivable} {battle royal} and prepositions used in phrasal verbs {settle down} {step out}. Cf. prepositive.

postpositive adjective. See adjective.

postpositive modifier. See postpositive adjective under adjective.

potential tense. See tense.
pragmatics, *n.* The study of meaning as it derives from context; esp., the analysis of language as it relates to human users and their behavior.—**pragmatic,** *adj.*

**predicate.** The part of a clause that begins with a finite verb; the core part of a clause minus the subject.

- **complete predicate.** The finite verb of a clause with all its modifiers, objects, and associated complements {she called her broker, who was in Venice Beach at the time}.—Also termed *verb cluster.*
- **compound predicate.** Collectively, two or more finite verbs joined by a coordinating conjunction and having the same subject {she relaxed and watched TV} {he grilled steaks but didn’t enjoy it}.
- **simple predicate.** The finite verb of a clause, whether independent or dependent {she called her broker, who was in Venice Beach at the time}.

**predicate adjectival.** See *predicate adjective* under *adjective.*

**predicate adjective.** See *adjective.*

**predicate attribute.** See *predicate adjective* under *adjective.*

**predicate complement.** See *subjective complement* under *complement.*

**predicate nominal.** See *predicate nominative.*

**predicate nominative.** A pronoun (or noun) that follows a linking verb (in traditional syntax) and refers to the subject {this is he} {you are a saint} A *predicate nominative* is one type of subjective complement.—Also termed *subjective noun; subjective pronoun; attribute noun; attribute pronoun; predicate noun; predicate nominative; predicate pronoun; predicate substantive.* See *subjective complement* under *complement.*

**predicate noun.** 1. See *noun.* 2. See *predicate nominative.*

**predicate objective.** See *objective complement* under *complement.*

**predicate pronoun.** 1. See *predicate noun (1)* under *noun.* 2. See *predicate nominative.*

**predicate substantive.** See *predicate nominative.*

**predicate verb.** See *verb.*

**predicating verb.** See *action verb* under *verb.*

**predication.** See *clause.*

**predicative, *adj.*** (Of an adjective) occurring after a linking verb {Billy is rowdy} {the mood became cheery} or after an object {she painted the walk blue}.

**prefix /pree-fiks/.** An element, such as a letter, number, syllable, or word, placed at the beginning of a word to alter or qualify the meaning. For instance, a prefix may distinguish word classes (such as the verb *sleep* and the adjective *asleep*), denote an opposite (such as *nondairy–dairy*), or denote a distinction (such as
between *bicycle* and *tricycle*). Among the most common prefixes are *con-, dis-, ex-, in-, non-, post-, pre-,* and *un-. Cf. suffix.—prefixation, *n.*

**preposition**: /prep-a-zh-әn/. A word or phrase that shows a relationship between its object and another part of the sentence (such as between the nouns in *the devil is in the details*). The preposition’s object is usually a noun or pronoun, which is always in the objective case (e.g., in *that sounds good to me*, the pronoun *me* is the object of the preposition *to*, so it is in the objective case). Although the preposition usually appears immediately before its object, it can also follow it {we have a serious problem to talk about}. (See § 249.) Prepositions frequently serve as particles in phrasal verbs. See *particle.*—prepositional, *adj.*

- **complex preposition.** A phrasal preposition that indicates more than one relationship between the antecedent and the preposition’s object {as of} {from between} {out from under}. See *phrasal preposition.*
- **compound preposition.** 1. A preposition consisting of two or more words written as one {within} {without}. 2. See *phrasal preposition.*
- **deferred preposition.** See *stranded preposition.*
- **group preposition.** See *phrasal preposition.*
- **phrasal preposition.** A preposition made up of two or more words and used as a single prepositional unit (e.g., *according to*; *along with*; *as regards*; *because of*; *by means of*; *contrary to*; *in accordance with*; *in front of*; *in place of*; *in respect of*; *on account of*; *regardless of*; *together with*; *with regard to*).—Also termed *group preposition*; *complex preposition*; *compound preposition.*
- **simple preposition.** A preposition not made through compounding (*down*, *in*, *on*, *out*, *up*, etc.).
- **stranded preposition.** A preposition that is not directly followed by its object {what are you calling about?} {what do you need a screwdriver for?}.—Also termed *terminal preposition*; *deferred preposition.*
- **terminal preposition.** See *stranded preposition.*

**prepositional phrase.** See *phrase.*

**prepositional verb.** See *phrasal verb* under *verb.*

**preposition-stranding.** The act or practice of putting a preposition at the end of a sentence or clause.—Also termed *pied-piping.*
prepositive, adj. (Of a particle, phrase, word, etc.) placed before or attached to the front of a word or stem (e.g., quasi-scientific, absolutely wonderful, very questionable premise). Cf. postpositive.

prepositive, n. A word or particle that is placed before or attached to the front of a word.

prepositive adjective. See attributive adjective under adjective.

prescriptive grammar. See grammar.

prescriptivism /pree-skrip-ti-viz-əm/. An approach to language study that embraces the role of value judgments in deciding what is linguistically effective or ineffective, better or worse, and therefore guides people in a didactic manner toward mastering a standard language. At its best, prescriptivism is grounded in empirical evidence such as the ngrams displayed in chapter 4. At its worst, it amounts to ill-informed, off-the-cuff pronouncements by people without an understanding of linguistic study. Cf. descriptivism.—prescriptivist, adj. & n.

present gerund. See gerund.

present infinitive. See infinitive.

present participle. See participle.

present-perfect gerund. See perfect gerund under gerund.

present-perfect infinitive. See perfect infinitive under infinitive.

present-perfect participle. See participle.

present-perfect tense. See tense.

present stem. See bare infinitive under infinitive.

present subjunctive. See subjunctive, n.

present tense. See tense.

preterit. See past tense under tense.

preterite. See past tense under tense.

primary stress. See stress.

primary verb. See verb.

principal clause. See independent clause under clause.
principal part. Any one of the three verb forms from which almost all verbs are formed—namely, the present stem (or simple infinitive) {ring}, the first person of the past tense {rang}, and the past participle {rung}. Only the defective verbs may, can, must, ought, shall, and will don’t have all the principal parts. Regular verbs have only two distinct forms for the three {careen–careened–careened} {play–played–played} {state–stated–stated}. As for irregular verbs, some have three distinct forms {go–went–gone} {sing–sang–sung}, others have identical forms for both past forms {bring–brought–brought} {sell–sold–sold}, still others are distinct only in past tense {come–came–come} {run–ran–run}, and a few are the same in all three forms {cut–cut–cut} {hit–hit–hit}.

principal verb. See verb.

privative /priv-ə-tiv/, adj. Expressing the idea that some quality has been subtracted, lost, or negated, or is absent. Common privative affixes are a- {amoral}, -less {useless}, non- {nondisposable}, and un- {unknown}.

progressive aspect. See aspect.

progressive tense. See tense.

pronominal adjective. See adjective.

pronoun /proh-nown/. A word that can substitute for a noun element, whether that element is expressed or understood. When its antecedent is clear, use of a pronoun avoids awkward repetition.—pronominal /proh-nom-i-nal/, adj.

▸ adjective pronoun. See pronominal adjective under adjective.

▸ anaphoric pronoun. A pronoun that has an antecedent. Almost all properly used pronouns in English are anaphoric.

▸ attribute pronoun. A pronoun functioning as a subjective complement {this is he}.

▸ compound pronoun. A pronoun that consists of two or more words written as one {nobody} {myself} {someone} {whomever} {whosoever}.

▸ demonstrative pronoun. The pronoun this, that, these, or those when used by itself as a noun element {this will be fun} {those are my favorites}. Cf. demonstrative adjective under adjective.

▸ impersonal pronoun. See indefinite pronoun.

▸ indefinite pronoun. A pronoun that doesn’t refer to a definite person or thing {anyone} {anybody} {someone} {one} {somebody}.—Also termed impersonal pronoun.

▸ intensive pronoun. Any one of several compound personal pronouns ending in -self or -selves and functioning as an appositive modifier for emphasis {I
did it myself} {you yourself said so} {the CEO himself gave me a tour of the C-suites}.—Also termed intensifying pronoun; emphatic pronoun.

- **interrogative pronoun.** A pronoun that introduces a direct or indirect question in which the pronoun serves as a noun element {who placed that call?} {we all wondered what we would do}.

- **personal pronoun.** A pronoun that refers to a specific person or thing; specif., a pronoun used for a speaker (first person: I or we), someone spoken to (second person: you), or someone or something spoken of (third person: he, she, it, or they). A personal pronoun formed with -self or -selves {ourselves} {yourself} is termed a compound personal pronoun.

- **phrasal pronoun.** A pronoun that consists of two words written separately {each other} {one another}.

- **possessive pronoun.** A pronoun in the possessive case—namely, my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, our, ours, their, theirs, or whose.

- **predicate pronoun.** 1. See predicate noun (1) under noun. 2. See predicate nominative.

- **reciprocal pronoun.** A pronoun phrase that expresses mutuality of relationship—the two examples in English being each other and one another.

- **reflexive pronoun.** Any one of several compound personal pronouns ending in -self or -selves and functioning as a direct object, a subjective complement, or the object of a preposition, gerund, or infinitive:

  - Direct object: Jane hurt herself.
  - Indirect object: Give yourself plenty of leeway.
  - Subjective complement: Bob is himself again.
  - Object of a preposition: We saved some water for ourselves.
  - Object of a gerund: Bill’s praising himself was unseemly.
  - Object of an infinitive: They wanted to make themselves available.

  The reflexive pronouns are myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, themselves, itself, and oneself.

- **relative pronoun.** A pronoun that introduces a subordinate clause and relates it to the main clause. Common relative pronouns include what, which, who, and that. Who is the only relative pronoun that changes form when it changes case: who (nominative: who wants the last piece of cake?), whom (objective: an informant whom we cannot identify), and whose (possessive: whose notes did you borrow?). See §§ 80–93, 192.

- **resumptive pronoun.** A grammatical fault in which a pronoun subsumed with a relative clause is inappropriately included at the end of the clause {sometimes you will receive gifts that you don’t like them}. 
simple pronoun. A pronoun that has always consisted of a single word {I} {you} {he} {she} {they}.

pronoun–antecedent agreement. See agreement.

pronunciation. 1. The way words are said; the act or an instance of saying words or syllables aloud. 2. The study of how words or syllables are correctly said aloud according to the standard of educated speakers.

retarded pronunciation. An unusually old-fashioned pronunciation.

spelling pronunciation. A pronunciation or mispronunciation that is influenced by or derived from a word’s spelling, such as by sounding the traditionally silent -t- in often, the silent -l- in salmon, or the silent -mp- in comptroller /kәn-troh-lәr/.

proper adjective. See adjective.

proper name. See proper noun under noun.

proper noun. See noun.

prosody /prә-ә-dee/, n. 1. The study of the accent, quality, and quantity of syllables, esp. in metrical composition such as verse. 2. The meaningful variation of pitch, volume, speed, and rhythm of speech.—prosodic /prә-sod-ik/, adj.

protasis /prә-tә-sәs/. See conditional clause under clause.

pro-verb. See dummy auxiliary verb under auxiliary verb.

pseudo-transitive verb. See verb.

pure infinitive. See bare infinitive under infinitive.

purism, n. 1. The belief that a language has an absolute, immutable standard of correctness. Self-described “purists” are often stunningly ill-informed about grammar and usage. 2. Archaic. The belief that the foreign element in a language is highly undesirable—e.g., that Anglo-Saxon compounds (agenbite, for example) are preferable to words of non-English origin (remorse).—purist, adj. & n.

qualifying adjective. See descriptive adjective under adjective.

question. An interrogative sentence calling for an answer; a request for information.

alternative question. A question that offers the choice of two or more options {is your favorite reading fiction or nonfiction?} {would you prefer sausage or bacon—and if sausage, link or patty?}.

declarative yes–no question. A reduced yes–no question phrased as a sentence {you own Norwegian elkhounds?}.

direct question. An interrogative sentence that poses a straightforward query {may I take a day off?}.
- **echo question.** See echo utterance.
- **embedded question.** A question that appears in indirect discourse {I asked whether he thought he was up to the trip}.
- **exclamatory question.** A sentence that structurally resembles a question but is used as an exclamation, usu. to express a strong feeling while seeking the listener’s or reader’s assent {wasn’t that hailstorm scary!} {was she ever angry!}.
- **indirect question.** A declarative sentence that includes but does not pose a query {he asked whether he might take a day off}. In this type of sentence, the question is placed in a subordinate clause {I want to know where Ollie hid my Christmas present [instead of where did Ollie hide my Christmas present?]}.  
- **negative question.** A question phrased with a negating word {will we never go?}.
- **polar question.** See yes–no question.
- **positive question.** A question phrased without negation {when will we go?}.
- **rhetorical question.** An interrogative sentence that does not invite an answer, usu. because the answer is obvious or the speaker clearly does not expect one (e.g., a comment such as have you ever seen so much traffic? is often rhetorical).
- **tag question.** A question that follows and mirrors a statement, the purpose being to seek (or purport to seek) assent; a follow-on clause asking for confirmation of the idea in the preceding clause {it’s a pretty day, isn’t it?} {that wasn’t so bad, was it?}.—Also termed confirmation clause.
- **wh-question.** A question beginning with who, what, when, where, why, or even (by common acceptance) how.
- **yes–no question.** A question that is directly answerable in either the affirmative or the negative, even though a fuller response may be appropriate.—Also termed polar question.

recipient noun. See noun.

reciprocal pronoun. See pronoun.

recoverability. The ability of a listener or reader to infer exactly which words have been left out from an elliptical expression {he asked whether I could go with him, but I said I couldn’t [go with him]} {you like? [do you like this?]} {[the] government [is] to bail out banks}. Cf. ellipsis (1).—recoverable, adj.

- **situational recoverability.** Inferability of the full form of a sentence by virtue of the circumstance in which it appears {don’t want to go}.
- **structural recoverability.** Inferability of the full form of a sentence by virtue of the reader’s or listener’s linguistic knowledge {5,000 to be hired}.
textual recoverability. Inferability of the full form of a sentence by virtue of considering the rest of the text, esp. the rest of the sentence {Sandra consulted two books and Jenny five articles}.

redundancy, n. The use of words that could be omitted with no loss in meaning and usu. with a gain in both clarity and force; linguistic superfluity.

redundant subject. See double subject under subject.

reduplication. The formation of a word through rhymed, highly alliterative syllables {hurly-burly} {mishmash} {zigzag}.—reduplicative, adj.

Reed–Kellogg diagram. A traditional sentence diagram developed in the 19th century and illustrated in §§ 339–64.

referent. Something to which a word or symbol refers. The referent of stool, in the ordinary sense, is the three-or four-legged object on which a person can sit. In the sentence I saw the musical and liked it, the referent of it might be considered either the antecedent (the phrase the musical) or the musical production itself.

reflexive, n. 1. A part of speech used for emphasis by repetition. A reflexive pronoun mirrors the subject and ends in either -self or -selves. It often follows the subject immediately {the thought itself is unimportant}. But it may also follow the verb {Sarah painted the room herself}. (See reflexive pronoun under pronoun.) A reflexive verb has a reflexive pronoun as its object {Esteban worked himself into a panic}. 2. Any construction in which two words or noun phrases are understood to have the same referent.

reflexive pronoun. See pronoun.

reflexive verb. See verb.

regional dialect. See dialect.

register, n. A variety of language usu. classifiable on a spectrum of formal–informal and used for particular purposes in particular circumstances.

regular, adj. (Of a word or phrase) conforming to the usual rules of grammatical formation. For example, a regular noun forms its plural by adding -s or -es (e.g., pot becomes pots; fox becomes foxes). Cf. irregular.

regular inflection. See inflection.

regular plural. See plural.

regular verb. See verb.

relative adjective. See adjective.

relative adverb. See adverb.

relative clause. See clause.

relative pronoun. See pronoun.
restrictive, adj. (Of the modifier of a noun element) adding information that more positively identifies the referent. For example, in *the tents that are on aisle 3 are on sale*, the clause *that are on aisle 3* is restrictive because it identifies which tents are on sale—tents on other aisles may not be. Similarly in *the senator–songwriter Orrin Hatch will perform*, the name *Orrin Hatch* specifically identifies which senator–songwriter is being referred to, so it is a restrictive appositive. Restrictive modifiers are never set off from the rest of the sentence by commas. Cf. nonrestrictive.

restrictive appositive. See appositive.

restrictive clause. See clause.

resumptive modifier. See modifier.

resumptive pronoun. See pronoun.

retarded pronunciation. See pronunciation.

retronym. A word or phrase invented to denote what was originally a genus term but has now become just one more species in a larger genus (e.g., *solid-core door* came to describe what all old doors used to be until the advent of the *hollow-core door*).

rhetorical question. See question.

root. The irreducible base of a word—the part left behind after all affixes have been stripped away (e.g., *form* is the root of *performances*). Cf. stem.

run-on sentence. 1. See sentence. 2. See comma splice.

run-together sentence. See comma splice.

schwa /ʃwa/. A short indeterminate vowel represented as [ә] (an inverted backward e), sounded as in the first syllable of *about* or the final syllable of *schadenfreude*. See intrusive schwa.

semantic contamination. A change in meaning that occurs through the influence of a similar-sounding word. See clang association.

semantics. 1. The study of the significance of words and the development of their meanings. 2. Meaning in language.—semantic, adj.

semantic shift. A change in a word’s meaning; specif., the gradual transfer of a word’s denotations from one set of referents to another.

semi-auxiliary verb. See auxiliary verb.

sensory verb. See verb.

sentence. A grammatical unit that conveys a complete thought, that consists of a subject and predicate, either of which may be express or understood, and for which the rules of grammar do not control the order in which it is placed in
relation to other units; esp., a stretch of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with terminal punctuation (a period, question mark, or exclamation mark). For example, grammatical rules govern the placement of it, here, and bring in forming a sentence: bring it here! (understood subject [you], verb, object, adverb). But grammar does not govern where to place that sentence in a paragraph. A sentence is made up of one or more clauses.—**sentential, adj.**

- **cleft sentence.** A syntactic variant in which an *it*-clause, a *what*-clause, or a similar clause changes the focus by adding two or three words (such as it, was, and who; there, are, and that; or what and is) {it was he who was responsible} {there are many reasons that underlie our decision} {what we need is more ingenuity}. Most often a cleft sentence begins with the expletive *it* and a be-verb {it was the building code that caused her so many headaches} {it was the goalie who won outstanding player}. A cleft sentence is also called an “*it*-cleft” when it has an *it*-clause or a “*wh*-cleft” when the first clause begins with a *wh*-word.—Often shortened to cleft.

- **complete sentence.** Another term for sentence as defined above in the main entry.—Also termed major sentence. Cf. incomplete sentence.

- **complex sentence.** A sentence consisting of an independent clause and at least one subordinate clause {because we’re celebrating, I’ll bring champagne [because we’re celebrating is a subordinate clause because it cannot stand on its own; I’ll bring champagne is the independent (main) clause]}.

- **compound-complex sentence.** A sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause {I don’t know if he’ll be allowed to watch the football game, but he hasn’t finished those chores that he was assigned}.

- **compound sentence.** A sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction {the moon has risen, and the air is getting cold} or a semicolon {the moon has risen; the air is getting cold}.

- **conditional sentence.** A sentence expressing the relation of condition to conclusion between its subordinate and main clauses. Several types of conditional sentences are past neutral (e.g., *if* he won, he was lucky), past contrary to fact (e.g., *had* he won, he would have been lucky), present neutral (e.g., *if* he is winning, he is lucky), present contrary to fact (e.g., *if* he were winning, he would be lucky), future less vivid (e.g., *if* he should win, he would be lucky), and future more vivid (e.g., *if* he wins, he will be lucky). See apodosis & conditional clause under clause.

- **declarative sentence.** A sentence that takes the form of a simple statement (as contrasted with a command, a question, or an exclamation).
• **exclamatory sentence.** See *exclamation*. 

• **existential sentence.** A sentence that expresses the existence of something by using the expletive *there* plus a *be*-verb {*there are many rare animals at the National Zoo*}. 

• **fragmentary sentence.** See *fragment*. 

• **full sentence.** A sentence in which the subject and verb are expressly stated. Cf. *nonsentence*. 

• **imperative sentence.** A sentence expressing a command {*close the door!*}, making a request {*please let me know*}, or giving directions {*check to see that all bolts are tight*}. 

• **impersonal sentence.** A sentence in which the main actor’s identity is kept unmentioned, as with the use of a truncated passive {*mistakes were made*}, an expletive {*it’s hard to say*}, or gerunds and infinitives {*sleeping well is important*} {*to wine and dine is of limited value in this business*}. 

• **incomplete sentence.** A statement that is not grammatically complete {*nothing of that sort*} {*nonsense*} {*when I can*}.—Also termed *minor sentence*. Cf. *complete sentence*. 

• **interrogative sentence.** A sentence that poses a direct question {*how many people live here?*} {*what will this cost me?*}. By contrast, a sentence containing an indirect question {*she asked me where the main campus is*} is considered a declarative sentence.—Also termed *interrogative*. 

• **major sentence.** See *complete sentence*. 

• **minor sentence.** See *incomplete sentence*. 

• **negative cleft sentence.** A cleft sentence that creates or implies a contrast by negating the opening clause {*it was not he who was responsible [someone else was responsible]*} {*there are not many reasons that underlie our decision [there are only a few]*} {*what we do not need is more ingenuity [we need something else]*}. See *cleft sentence*. 

• **run-on sentence.** 1. A grammatical fault whereby independent clauses are fused together without any proper link such as a conjunction or appropriate punctuation {*we need to leave soon we might be late*} {*I want that book it looks interesting*}. In these examples, the statements consist of two independent clauses; in the absence of a conjunction between the independent
clauses, a semicolon is needed after *soon* in the first example and after *book* in the second. 2. Loosely—and improperly, from a grammarian’s standpoint—a sentence that is awfully long.

- **simple sentence.** A sentence containing one principal clause and no dependent clauses.

- **verbless sentence.** A group of words conveying meaning even though the statement contains no finite verb {nonsense!} {what claptrap!} {heavens to Betsy!} {scones, anyone?} {what else?}.—Also termed *nonsense*.

**sentence adverb.** See adverb.

**sentence fragment.** See fragment.

**sentential relative clause.** See clause.

**set phrase.** See phrase.

**shift.** 1. A faulty grammatical construction in which an unwarranted change occurs in number {civics is my favorite class, and they are important for participating in society}, person {one must be careful with your technique}, mood {if you go, you would see}, tense {Hamlet then fights Laertes and died}, or subject and voice {I carried the boxes downstairs, and then they were set on the dais}. 2. See *functional variation*.

**short passive voice.** See passive voice.

**simile** /sim-ə-lee/. A figure of speech in which two things of different kinds are explicitly compared using the word *like* or *as* (e.g., *the humidity made the air as sticky as molasses*). Cf. metaphor.

**simple.** 1. (Of a sentence) consisting of one independent clause and no dependent clauses. 2. (Of a sentence element) consisting of one part not compounded with any other elements. 3. (Of a tense) formed by a verb without an auxiliary (e.g., *walks* rather than *is walking*).

**simple adjective.** See adjective.

**simple adverb.** See adverb.

**simple conjunction.** See conjunction.
simple infinitive. See *bare infinitive* under *infinitive*.

simple noun. See *noun*.

simple-past tense. See *past tense* under *tense*.

simple predicate. See *predicate*.

simple preposition. See *preposition*.

simple pronoun. See *pronoun*.

simple sentence. See *sentence*.

simple subject. See *subject*.

simple tense. See *tense*.

singular, *adj*. Denoting one of a thing or a mass of indivisible stuff; not plural {bell-man} {excuse} {receptionist} {snowball} {sugar}.

singular indicator. See *singular marker* under *marker*.

singular marker. See *marker*.

singular number. See *number*.

situational recoverability. See *recoverability*.

slang, *n*. A purposely undignified form of expression that marks its user as being part of a particular in-group, usu. of some youthful or antiestablishment bent.

social dialect. See *class dialect* under *dialect*.

solecism /'sɒl-ə-siz-əm/,* n*. 1. A grammatical or syntactic error, often a gross mistake; the use of a nonstandard grammatical form {look at them golf balls!} {they’s a-floatin’!}. 2. Figuratively, a social impropriety.—*solecistic,* *adj*.

specialization. The narrowing of a word’s meaning over time. For example, *molest* long meant “to interfere with (a person), usu. but not always with bad intent.” Today the word’s primary sense is “to sexually assault, esp. a child.” Cf. *generalization*.

spelling, *n*. The representation of words by written letters.

spelling pronunciation. See *pronunciation*.

spelling reform. Any suggestion or campaign to change the methods of English spelling to make it more nearly reflect pronunciation.
split infinitive. See infinitive.

squinting construction. See squinting modifier under modifier.

squinting modifier. See modifier.

s-structure. See surface structure under structure.

Standard English. The type of English traditionally used by educated people of the recent past; specif., a prestigious variety of the language taught in traditional grammars, customarily used in schools and universities, and used for public affairs throughout the nation.

Standard Written English. The refined Standard English found in writing that has been professionally edited or that more or less meets that standard.

statement. 1. The act of saying or writing something. 2. A verbal presentation, esp. a formal or precise one. 3. Something that is said or written.

stative verb. See verb.

stem. A basic word or part of a word that can be combined with prefixes, suffixes, or both to derive other words. For instance, the basic noun thought can take the prefix un- and the suffix -ful to derive the adjective unthoughtful, and the additional suffix -ness to derive the noun unthoughtfulness.—Also termed word-stem; base. Cf. root.

stranded preposition. See preposition.

stress, n. The vocal emphasis placed on a word or a particular syllable, usu. by raising the voice, changing the pitch, drawing out the sounds, or a combination; esp., the relative intensity with which vowels are pronounced.

primary stress. The most prominent stress in a word or phrase.

strong verb. See irregular verb under verb.

structural recoverability. See recoverability.

structure. The arrangement of individual parts of speech into an utterance.

- deep structure. In transformational grammar, the underlying form of a sentence, bearing its essential meaning; specif., the abstract structure of a sentence from which its actual structure (or surface structure) may be derived by transformation. In scientific terms, it would be the “linguistic genotype.”—Sometimes abbreviated d-structure.

- modification structure. A head together with all its modifiers {the man who lives down the street and likes to walk at night with a miner’s cap has gone missing}.
surface structure. In transformational grammar, the form of a sentence that appears after it has been subjected to transformations. In scientific terms, it would be the “linguistic phenotype.” —Sometimes abbreviated s-structure.

structure word. See function word under word.

subject. The noun element that (1) performs the first syntactic function in a basic sentence and (2) controls the number of the verb. It usually identifies the thing that brings about the action, state, or condition in the predicate (in the active voice) or receives the action, state, or condition (in the passive voice). In yes–no questions, it is inverted with the auxiliary verb. Cf. object. —subjective, adj.

anticipatory subject. A subject that has been inverted with its verb, which must anticipate it. A delayed subject is one type of anticipatory subject. See delayed subject.

complete subject. The simple subject of a finite verb along with all its modifying elements {huge tomes lined the walls} {the golf course that we played last week was recently redesigned}.

compound subject. Collectively, two or more noun elements that are subjects of the same verb {Sam and Siobhan arrived together} {what they want and what they need may be different things altogether}. Individually, the two or more noun elements are called coordinate subjects.

coordinate subject. See compound subject.

delayed subject. The subject that appears after the verb in a sentence that begins with an expletive {here comes the judge} {there will be flowers at the altar}. —Also termed deferred subject; anticipatory subject.

double subject. A construction in which both a pronoun and its antecedent are used as the subject of the same verb—a violation of Standard English characteristic of children’s speech and certain dialects. Oddly, this construction is considered faulty in spoken English only when the antecedent and the pronoun are delivered in rapid succession {my sister she’s a cheerleader} {my father he’s a mechanic}, whereas a pause makes a difference in acceptability as Standard English {my sister—she’s a cheerleader} {my father—he’s a mechanic}. —Also termed redundant subject.

redundant subject. See double subject.

simple subject. The noun element that identifies the person, place, thing, or idea about whom or which a statement is made—that is, the complete subject minus any modifiers {the tennis courts that we played on yesterday were state-of-the-art [courts is the simple subject of the main clause, with the
simple predicate *were*; *we* is the simple subject of a relative clause, with the corresponding simple predicate *played*).

- **subject of an infinitive.** A noun element that precedes an infinitive in an infinitive phrase {the participants asked her to make the presentation} {for him to have stayed silent seems anomalous}. As in those examples, if the subject of the infinitive is a pronoun, it is inevitably in the objective case.

- **understood subject.** The pronoun *you* when it is only implicit (not expressly stated) as the subject of a verb in the imperative mood {[*you*] don’t go in that room!}.

**subject case.** See *nominative case* under case.

**subject clause.** See clause.

**subjective.** See *nominative, adj.*

**subjective adjective.** See *predicate adjective* under adjective.

**subjective case.** See *nominative case* under case.

**subjective complement.** See complement.

**subjective noun.** See *predicate nominative*.

**subjective pronoun.** See *predicate nominative*.

**subject of an infinitive.** See subject.

**subject–verb agreement.** See agreement.

**subjunctive** /səb-ʃən-tiv/, adj. (Of a verb) expressing a contrary-to-fact assumption {if I were you}, a supposition {if I were to go, I’d be late}, a wish {I wish I were better!}, a demand or command {I insist that you be there}, a suggestion or proposal {I suggested that she think about it more carefully}, or a statement of necessity {it’s necessary that we all be there}. Cf. imperative, interrogative & indicative. See §§ 167–71; pp. 103–5, 109–11, 114–15.

**subjunctive, n.** A verb mood that expresses a contrary-to-fact assumption, a supposition, a wish, a demand or command, a suggestion or proposal, or a statement of necessity.

- **formulaic subjunctive.** An idiom or set phrase that contains a subjunctive verb {would that it were so!} {come what may, we’ll be there} {be it noted that she wasn’t even present}.

- **mandative subjunctive.** A subjunctive verb used in expressing a demand, proposal, resolution, or other attitude of requirement or obligation {I demand that you be there} {I propose that he wait until all the bids are in}. The mandative subjunctive is much more prevalent in AmE than in BrE.
past subjunctive. A subjunctive form that conveys present or future meaning by using a past tense, esp. *were* {if *I* were in Cincinnati, I’d go see her} {if they were urged they would nevertheless decline}.—Also termed *were-subjunctive*.

present subjunctive. A subjunctive that conveys present or future action by using the word *be* {I suggest that he be promoted} {we insist that all Ebola victims be quarantined}.

*were*-subjunctive. See past subjunctive.

subjunctive mood. See mood.

subordinate clause. See dependent clause under clause.

subordinating conjunction. See conjunction.

subordination. The combining of simple sentences into a complex sentence by using a dependent clause and an independent clause. Cf. coordination.

upside-down subordination. A faulty construction in which a more important idea appears in a subordinate clause and a less important idea appears in the principal clause {the planes flew for four straight hours, finally falling to the ground in a fiery crash when they ran out of fuel}. In that example, timing is in the main clause, perishing in the subordinate. Better phrasing matches the grammar of the sentence with its meaning {after flying four straight hours, the planes finally ran out of fuel and fell to the ground in a fiery crash}. Note that the original emphasized *fuel* by putting it in the final position (the most important) in the sentence; the revision emphasizes *fiery crash*, which is surely the most important idea: it is now in a principal clause in the most emphatic position.

subordinator. See subordinating conjunction under conjunction.

substantive. See noun element.

substantive clause. See noun clause under clause.

substantive phrase. See noun phrase under phrase.

suffix /səf-iks/. An affix attached to the end of a word-stem, either by derivation (e.g., *fill*–*filler*) or by inflection (e.g., *fill*–*filled*). Common suffixes include -able, -ation, -ful, -fy, -ing, -itis, -ly, and -ness. Cf. prefix.—suffixation, n.

derivational suffix. A suffix that reliably produces a noun {-ion}, verb {-ize}, or adjective {-ous}.

inflectional suffix. A suffix that marks (but does not itself produce) a particular part of speech (as with the past-tense -ed or the comparative -er).

summative modifier. See modifier.

superlative /sa-pər-lə-tiv/, adj. & n. The highest of three degrees of comparison for gradable adjectives and adverbs, showing that one thing has more of a quality
than any of the other things to which it is compared. A superlative adjective or adverb is usually signaled by an -est suffix or by most or least. A superlative adjective compares a specified quality possessed by at least three things and denotes the quality’s extreme amount or intensity (e.g., that was the best movie Spielberg ever made). A superlative adverb compares a specified action or condition common to at least three things (e.g., he is the most talented player on the baseball team); it might also be used loosely for emphasis instead of comparison (e.g., because the presentation was very important, Belle prepared most diligently). See degree. Cf. comparative & positive.

- **double superlative.** A grammatical fault in which the superlative degree is indicated twice—redundantly {*Rudolph is the most wisest person I know}.
- **periphrastic superlative.** A superlative formed by using an auxiliary word or words to serve the function of inflection {least qualified} {most accomplished}.
- **synthetic superlative.** An inflective superlative formed by adding -est to the positive form of the adjective or adverb {fastest} {lamest}.

**superlative adjective.** See adjective.

**superordinate, n.** A genus-term—that is, a word whose meaning embraces that of several more-specific terms. Hence blue is a superordinate of azure, room is (for most normal senses) a superordinate of kitchen, and word is a superordinate of verb. —Also termed hypernym. Cf. hyponym.

**suppletion /sa-plee-shən/, n.** An inflection change involving a complete replacement of the underlying word {be–am} {go–went} {good–best}.

**surface structure.** See structure.

**suspended prepositional construction.** A grammatical construction in which two or more prepositions have the same subject {I disagreed with but did not overtly object to the opinions he espoused} {we assented to and even expressed appreciation for the plan to acquire new conference tables}.

**syllable. 1.** A pronunciational unit that has only one vowel sound, which may or may not be flanked by consonants, and forms part or all of a word (e.g., a has one syllable, table /tay-bal/ two, furniture /far-ni-char/ three, and so on). 2. The smallest possible utterance or writing, often used figuratively (as in I’d never have whispered a syllable if an innocent person hadn’t been accused). —syllabic, adj.

- **closed syllable.** A syllable ending with a consonant.
- **long syllable.** A syllable with a long vowel or else a short vowel followed by two or more consonants.
- **open syllable.** A syllable ending with a vowel.
syllepsis /sә-lep-sәs/. 1. A construction in which one part of speech, often a verb, applies to two things in different ways (e.g., while trying to teach the children to bake, I ran out of flour and patience). 2. See zeugma (1). —syleptic, adj.

synaeresis /sә-nair-ә-sәs/. The contraction of two syllables or vowels into one, or into a diphthong (e.g., you all becomes, in Southern speech, y’all); al Qaeda /ahl kah-ee-da/ becomes, in English, /ahl kә-dә/; lien /lee-әn/ becomes /leen/). Cf. diaeresis (2).

synaloepha /sin-ә-lee-fә/. The contraction of two syllables into one, seen most frequently in old poetry, often where a word’s terminal vowel may flow into the immediately following word’s identical initial vowel (e.g., th’elements for the elements).—Also spelled synalepha.

syncopation. See syncope.

syncope /sin[g]-kә-pee/. The omission of a sound from the interior of a word; specif., the elision of one or more letters, syllables, or sounds in the middle of a word (e.g., ne’er for never, probably in two syllables instead of three, subsidiary in four syllables instead of five, meteorologist in five syllables instead of six).—Also termed syncopation. See hyphaeresis.

syndetic coordination. See coordination.

syndeton /sin-di-ton/. A construction in which the parts are joined by conjunctions or phrases. Cf. asyndeton & polysyndeton.—syndetic, adj.

synecdoche /sә-nek-da-kee/. A figure of speech in which a less inclusive term is used to mean a more inclusive term, esp. a part of something for the whole thing. For example, hands may refer to workers, or eyes to proofreaders.

synesis /sin-ә-sәs/. A construction in which the syntax is governed by meaning and not by strict grammar (as in a multitude of complaints await the new mayor, in which the grammatically singular multitude has a plural sense and takes a plural verb). The number of the verb is determined by the sense of the sentence rather than the grammatical number of the true subject.—Also termed notional concord; constructio ad sensum. See §§ 10–13, 186; p. 120.

synonym. 1. Most strictly, a word that bears a sense virtually identical with that of another in the same language {cocktail–mixed drink} {face–mien–visage}. 2. More broadly, any one of two or more words (within the same language) bearing the same general sense, but each possessing also other senses and idiomatic uses not shared by the others {snake–serpent} {reddish–rubicund} {happy–joyful–joyous} {homicide–murder}. Cf. hyponym.—synonymy /si-non-i-mee/, n.—synonymous, adj.
syntax /sin-taks/. 1. The rules governing the arrangement of words and phrases to form sentences. 2. The arrangement itself. 3. The study of a language’s rules that affect how words and phrases are arranged.—syntactic, adj.

synthetic comparative. See comparative.

synthetic language /sin-thet-ik/. A language that expresses grammatical structure by inflecting words rather than using additional, auxiliary words. Cf. analytic language.

synthetic superlative. See superlative.

taboo. A tacit social convention by which a subject or word is prohibited in normal discourse.

tag question. See question.

tautology /taw-tol-ə-je/, n. Unintentional repetition; the saying of the same thing more than once, usu. in different words {his firstborn child was a girl} {abandoned by all, he stood by himself and meditated in the solitude of one who was without companion}.—tautological, adj.

tense. A verb quality that expresses the time of action—past, present, or future.

compound tense. A tense that is compounded by using a form as an auxiliary—that is, the present perfect {have left}, past perfect {had left}, future perfect {will have left}, or any progressive {is leaving}.—Also termed perfect tense. See §§ 176–78.

continuous tense. See progressive tense.

expanded tense. A tense that requires additional words for its expression; esp., any one of the progressive tenses. See progressive tense. See § 179.

future-perfect tense. The tense indicating that an act, state, or condition is expected to have been completed before some other future act or time {the deadline will have expired by midnight}. The future perfect is formed by using will have with the verb’s past participle (e.g., will have seen). For more on tense, see § 176.

future tense. The tense indicating that an act, state, or condition is likely or certain to occur {we will arrive safely} or will be started or completed at some time after the statement {Harry is going to begin his first year at West Texas A&M in August}. Some grammarians and linguists contend that English lacks a distinct future tense because it does not use inflection but relies on will (or, rarely, shall) plus an infinitive, or a present-tense verb plus an adverb of time to express expectations, promises, predictions, and the like. Essentially, these grammarians distinguish between tense (form) and time (meaning). But in the popular mind, the future tense still exists. See §§ 175, 178.
historical-present tense. The present tense used (1) in a statement that is permanently true {Aristotle remains the ancient philosopher with the broadest influence on modern thought}, (2) in a narrative about the past that, as a matter of mannerism, is cast as now occurring {he then walks into the bar, asks what year it is, and upon being told 1880, takes out his pistol and begins shooting}, or (3) in a plot summary {Hamlet first confronts the ghost in act I, scene iv}. See p. 95.

modal tense. See potential tense.

past-perfect tense. The tense indicating that an act, state, or condition was completed before another specified past time or past action. It is formed by using had with the principal verb’s past participle {before we could say anything, he had slammed the door}.—Also termed pluperfect tense.—Often shortened to past perfect; pluperfect. See § 177.

past tense. The tense indicating that an act, state, or condition was completed or ended at some time before a statement’s frame of reference {Pamela danced all night}. This tense is also used to express many subjunctive statements. There is no time element because what is expressed in subjunctive has not yet occurred and may never occur {if I typed faster, I could finish my term paper sooner}.—Also termed preterit; preterite; simple-past tense. See § 174.

perfect tense. 1. See compound tense. 2. See present-perfect tense. See § 176.

pluperfect tense. See past-perfect tense.

potential tense. A term sometimes used for any tense form that includes can, could, may, or might {I could read that book if I wanted to} {it might rain today}.—Also termed modal tense.

present-perfect tense. The tense indicating that an act, state, or condition was completed in the indefinite past or continues up to the present. The present-perfect tense is formed by using have or has with the principal verb’s past participle (e.g., have tossed; has argued) {I have swept the patio} {the wind has blown more leaves on it already}. The present-perfect tense differs from the past tense in that the past tense indicates a more specific or a more remote time in the past.—Sometimes shortened to perfect tense. See § 176.

present tense. The tense indicating a current action, state, or condition {Arnold teaches English} {we drive there routinely}. The action, state, or condition may be ongoing {Amy is writing her master’s thesis}. See § 173.

preterit tense. See past tense.

progressive tense. An expanded tense form that shows action continuing or progressing. More modernly, grammarians tend to separate progressive aspect from any notion of tense.—Also termed continuous tense. See § 179.
simple-past tense. See past tense.

simple tense. A tense that does not involve any compounding of the verb with an auxiliary—that is, present tense {sees} or past tense {saw}. See §§ 173–74.

terminal preposition. See stranded preposition under preposition.

textual recoverability. See recoverability.

that-clause. See clause.

that-complement. See complement.

tmesis /[ta-]mee-sas/. A figure of speech by which a compound word is broken apart and one or more words are inserted between the parts (e.g., what person soever).

tone. 1. The style or manner of somebody’s use of language, either in speech or in writing; the method of address. 2. The musical pitch or intonation of an utterance.

transformation. A grammatical operation or rule that changes one linguistic structure into another. Transformations may add, subtract, replace, or rearrange elements within a string.—transformational, adj.

transitional adverb. 1. See conjunctive adverb under adverb. 2. See sentence adverb under adverb.

transitive, adj. (Of a verb) taking a direct object—and therefore typically followed by a noun element.

transitive verb. See verb.

tree diagram. In transformational grammar, a diagram that depicts the structure of a sentence.—Also termed branching diagram; phrase marker; phrase-structure tree.

truncated passive. See short passive voice under passive voice.

umlaut. 1. In some languages, such as German, the change of one vowel to another, esp. as a result of the partial assimilation to a succeeding sound; vowel mutation. 2. A diaeresis in German used to indicate umlaut. Cf. diaeresis (1).

umlaut plural. See mutation plural under plural.

uncountable noun. See noncount noun under noun.

understood subject. See subject.

ungrammatical, adj. 1. Not in accord with traditional notions of Standard Written English. 2. (In linguistics) of, relating to, or consisting of a form or arrangement that the language does not allow. Cf. grammatical.

uninflected plural. See plural.

unmarked infinitive. See bare infinitive under infinitive.
unmarked word. A word that lacks a semantic limitation present in semantic subtypes (e.g., sheep is unmarked for sex whereas ram and ewe are both marked, and so is lamb for age).

upside-down subordination. See subordination.

usage. 1. The established, customary ways of using language; the traditional meanings and uses of words and idioms. Hence it is possible to speak of standard and nonstandard usage. 2. A particular expression or collocation in speech or writing.

variant. An alternative form or version of a standard thing. For instance, the word archaeology is frequently spelled archeology, a variant spelling recorded in many dictionaries.

verb. A word that denotes the performance or occurrence of an action (such as throw, leap, drive) or denotes a state of being or condition (such as dream, consider, fear). A verb is traditionally considered the only part of speech that can stand alone (the subject is understood) and form a sentence, usually a command {stop!} {look!} {listen!}.

- action verb. Any transitive or intransitive verb—in contrast to a linking verb {the teacher presented several awards} {the horse galloped}.—Also termed predicating verb; dynamic verb.
- ambitransitive verb. See ergative verb.
- anomalous verb. See irregular verb.
- asserting verb. See linking verb.
- auxiliary verb. See auxiliary verb.
- being verb. See linking verb.
- be-verb. A linking verb consisting of an inflected or uninflected form of the verb to be (is, are, was, were, been, being, be, and am).
- complete verb. 1. A verb phrase {they have been known to do things like that}. 2. The notional verb in a verb phrase {they have been known to do things like that}. 3. Any finite verb other than a linking verb {like} {write} {skate}. On the reasons for avoiding this phrase, see § 145.
- connecting verb. See linking verb.
- coordinate verbs. Two or more verbs joined in a compound predicate {she sat down and ordered her dinner} {he protested but found no relief}.
- copular verb. See linking verb.
- copulative verb. See linking verb.
- defective verb. A verb that lacks one or more principal parts so that it can’t be fully conjugated. Can and may, for example, lack participial and infinitive
forms. And the verbs must and ought can’t make past-tense, participial, or infinitive forms.

- **denominal verb.** A verb that has been derived from a noun {contact me next week} {we need to prioritize these agenda items}.—Also termed denominalized verb.

- **ditransitive verb.** A transitive verb that takes both a direct object and an indirect object {the chef cooked us a feast}. In that example, cooked behaves as a ditransitive verb with the direct object feast and the indirect object us. An indirect object can be substituted by a for- or to-phrase {the chef cooked a feast for us} {let me give some advice to you}. Cf. monotransitive verb.

- **dummy auxiliary verb.** See auxiliary verb.

- **dynamic verb.** A verb that expresses action that an agent (the subject) can perform.—Also termed action verb.

- **emphatic verb.** An expanded form of a verb consisting of the appropriate form of do plus the present stem of the principal verb {we do plan to board the plane in a moment} {I do hope that all turns out well}.

- **ergative verb /әr-gә-tiv/.** A verb that can be used transitively {Chuck closed the window} or intransitively {the window closed}. See § 139.—Also termed ambitransitive verb.

- **factitive verb.** 1. A verb that is followed by a direct object and an objective complement, used in such a way that the verb brings about a change in its object. Among the common factitive verbs are appoint, choose, designate, elect, keep, make, name, and render {we elected Gary president} {the cashier’s incompetence made customers upset} {flooding rendered the building uninhabitable}. 2. Any verb capable of taking both a direct object and an objective complement. Under this broader definition, all the verbs listed in sense 1 would be included plus such verbs as call, consider, find, imagine, judge, prove, and think {we considered him a virtuoso} {they proved him wrong}.

- **finite verb /fi-nit/.** A verb’s inflected form showing voice, mood, tense, person, or number and not preceded by to; esp., a verb form marked for either present or past tense. A finite verb can serve as the principal verb of a sentence or clause. The inflection limits the verb {we played basketball till dark [the verb played is limited by the indicative mood and past tense]}. Cf. infinitive.

- **full verb.** See lexical verb.

- **helping verb.** See auxiliary verb.

- **infinitive verb.** See infinitive.
\textbf{intransitive verb.} A verb that takes a subject but not a direct object because it is capable of making a complete statement without the aid of an object \{we soon left\} \{they came and went as they pleased\}.—Also termed \textit{verb of complete predication}.

\textbf{irregular verb.} A verb that is inflected (1) by internal vowel change but not by affixation, (2) by no change at all, or (3) by radically changing in the past-tense and past-participial forms, which are not predictable from the root. For example, the root verbs \textit{begin} and \textit{shrink} might suggest that irregular verbs with an \textit{-i-} take an \textit{-a-} in the past tense and a \textit{-u-} in the participle (e.g., \textit{begin–began–begun}, \textit{shrink–shrank–shrunk}). But the pattern doesn’t apply universally (e.g., \textit{bring–brought–brought}). Some irregular verbs do not change at all (e.g., \textit{cast–cast–cast}). And a few verbs, such as \textit{be} and \textit{go}, change radically (i.e., \textit{be–was–been}, \textit{go–went–gone}). Only about 165 verbs currently used in English are irregular verbs.—Also termed \textit{strong verb; anomalous verb}. Cf. \textit{regular verb}.

\textbf{lexical verb.} A verb with semantic content; specif., any verb other than an auxiliary verb.—Also termed \textit{full verb}. See \textit{principal verb}.

\textbf{linking verb.} A connecting verb, esp. a form of \textit{be}, that links the subject of a sentence with an adjective or complement (e.g., \textit{Shannon is happy today} or \textit{Marlon is a teacher}). Other verbs besides \textit{be}—\textit{appear, become, feel, seem, and taste}, to name a few—can function as linking verbs (e.g., \textit{Linda soon grew restless}).—Also termed \textit{connecting verb; copula; copulative verb; copular verb; being verb; asserting verb}.

\textbf{main verb.} The final verb in a clause; esp., a verb that is not auxiliary \{we will soon be returning to the airport\}. See \textit{principal verb}.

\textbf{middle verb.} A verb that is neither intransitive nor fully transitive because it cannot ordinarily be used in a passive-voice construction (e.g., \textit{fit, have, resemble, suit}).

\textbf{modal auxiliary verb.} See \textit{modal auxiliary verb} under \textit{auxiliary verb}.

\textbf{monotransitive verb.} A transitive verb with a single object; specif., within a verb phrase, the verb that expresses the action, state, or relation—and doesn’t function as an auxiliary verb. Cf. \textit{ditransitive verb}.

\textbf{multiword verb.} See \textit{phrasal verb}.

\textbf{nonaction verb.} See \textit{stative verb}.

\textbf{nonfinite verb.} A verb form not marked for tense—that is, either an infinitive \{to dive\} or a participle \{diving\}. See \textit{infinitive}.

\textbf{notional verb.} See \textit{principal verb}.
participial verb. A participle that functions not as an adjective but as a verb {the trip tired me}.

phrasal prepositional verb. A verb–particle–prepositional combination that functions as a verb {get away with} {put up with}.

phrasal verb. A verb made up of more than one word, often a verb and a preposition acting as an adverbial particle (e.g., knock out, point out, put off, put up with, stand aside).—Also termed multiword verb; prepositional verb; verb–adverb combination.

predicate verb. The finite verb that functions as the head of a predicate {we watched as she ascended the hill}.

dedicating verb. See action verb.

prepositional verb. See phrasal verb.

primary verb. A verb that can function as either a principal verb or an auxiliary verb. There are three primary verbs: (1) be {she is cheerful [principal]} {she is becoming more cheerful [auxiliary]}; (2) have {he has frostbite [principal]} {he has been frostbitten several times [auxiliary]}; and (3) do {you do the math [principal]} {they do need fuel badly! [auxiliary]}. principal verb. Within a verb phrase, the verb that expresses the action, state, or relation—and doesn’t function as an auxiliary verb. If combined with another verb, it expresses the main thought of the combination (e.g., a lion is roaring).—Also termed lexical verb; main verb; notional verb. Cf. auxiliary verb.

pro-verb. See dummy auxiliary verb under auxiliary verb.

pseudo-transitive verb. A verb that takes a direct object but cannot be made into a passive-voice construction {he has a good temperament [not *a good temperament is had by him]}

reflexive verb. The principal verb that precedes a reflexive pronoun {he acquitted himself with honor}.

regular verb. A verb that is inflected by affixation and has predictable past-tense and past-participial forms. For example, the general rule for verb inflection is to add an -ed ending (dropping a silent -e, if necessary) to form the past and participle (e.g., walk–walked–walked, reap–reaped–reaped). Linguists call this the dental preterite. Most verbs in English are regular.—Also termed weak verb. Cf. irregular verb.

semi-auxiliary verb. See auxiliary verb.

sensory verb. A verb that pertains to one of the senses (feel, look, smell, sound, taste). They are often linking verbs {that felt great} {sounds good!} {it tastes
sour}, but some of them can be transitive {he smelled the sour milk} {she sounded the alarm} or intransitive {the refrigerator smells!} {the water tastes of gasoline}.

- **stative verb.** A verb that expresses a state or condition instead of an activity or event—examples being be and know (as opposed to throw or usurp).—Also termed nonaction verb.

- **strong verb.** See irregular verb.

- **transitive verb.** A verb that takes a direct object {we saw the car}. It is sometimes called a verb of incomplete predication because it needs the object to complete its meaning.

- **verb of complete predication.** See intransitive verb.

- **verb of incomplete predication.** See transitive verb.

- **weak verb.** See regular verb.

**verb–adverb combination.** See phrasal verb under verb.

**verbal, adj.** 1. Of or relating to a verbal. 2. Of or relating to a verb.

**verbal, n.** 1. One of the three verb forms—namely, gerunds, infinitives, and participles—that function as a noun or modifier rather than as a verb.

- **group verbal.** A phrase made up of more than one verbal {trying to decide is what always stalls us}.

  2. In some grammars, the verb element (whether a single verb or a verb phrase) within a clause.

**verbal adjective.** See participial adjective under adjective.

**verbalist, n.** 1. A critic of words; one who deals with words, esp. as a profession.

  2. Someone who prizes words over ideas and linguistic form over substance.

**verbal noun.** See gerund.

**verbarian, n.** A word-coiner; neologist.

**verb cluster.** 1. See verb phrase (sense 1 or 2) under phrase. 2. See complete predicate under predicate.

**verb group.** A verb phrase that has an adverb contained within it {will soon be going} {cannot be readily seen} {will more than double}.

**verbless sentence.** See sentence.

**verb of complete predication.** See intransitive verb under verb.

**verb of incomplete predication.** See transitive verb under verb.
verbomaniac, n. Someone who obsesses about words; one who is excessively preoccupied with words and their etymology, meaning, and use, almost to the exclusion of the things they represent.

verb phrase. See phrase.

vocabulary. 1. The word-stock of a language. 2. The (much more limited) word-stock of an individual.—vocabularian, n.

vocative /vah-ka-tiv/, adj. (Of words, esp. nouns and pronouns) used to address someone or something directly. In some languages, vocative words have special forms, but not in English. The term is still used for the vocative O {O Canada}.

vocative, n. 1. The use of the name or abstraction being addressed directly {Mrs. Robinson, do you really mean to do this?} {Frank, I appreciate your candor}. 
2. The name or abstraction so used.—Also termed nominative of address.

vocative imperative. See imperative.

vogue word. A faddish term (e.g., awesome).

voice. 1. A quality of a transitive verb showing whether the subject acts (active voice) or is acted on (passive voice); in other words, whether the subject performs or receives the action of the verb. Compare the car is towing the trailer (active voice: the car is acting) with the trailer is being towed by the car (passive voice: the trailer is receiving). See active voice & passive voice. 2. A sound produced by vibration of the vocal cords and used to pronounce vowels and some consonants.

vowel, n. 1. A spoken sound produced without interrupting the airflow and without audible friction. 2. Broadly, the most prominent sound in a syllable. 3. A letter that represents such a sound, usu. a, e, i, o, u. Cf. consonant.

vulgarism. 1. A word or phrase widely thought to be offensive to good taste or indicative of lack of culture or refinement, esp. because it is coarse or scatological. 2. Any violation of good usage. Cf. illiteracy; catachresis; solecism.

weak plural. See plural.

weak verb. See regular verb under verb.

were-subjunctive. See past subjunctive under subjunctive, n.

whiz-deletion. The reduction of a relative clause by omitting the relative pronoun and the be-verb (e.g., who is—hence whiz) {the person [who is] sitting there happens to be my cousin}.

wh- question. See question.

word. The smallest complete unit that can be uttered and understood alone and can be used alongside similar units to make up a sentence. It is typically
identifiable as an item listed separately in a reliable dictionary. In print, a word has a space on each side to set it off.

- **compound word.** See compound.
- **content word.** A noun, verb, adjective, or adverb—that is, a word that conveys semantic significance as opposed to signaling syntactic relationships (as function words do).—Also termed lexical morpheme.
- **function word.** A word that is more important for the part it plays in the structure of the sentence than for its semantic content. Examples are articles, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, interjections, more and most used in comparisons, to as part of the infinitive (traditionally viewed as a preposition), and the expletives there and it.—Also termed structure word; form word; functional morpheme.
- **portmanteau word** /pohrt-man-toh/. A word formed by combining parts of two existing words, such as motel (from motor and hotel) or brunch (from breakfast and lunch).—Also termed blend. See p. 219.
- **superordinate word.** See superordinate.
- **unmarked word.** See unmarked word.

**word class.** A group of words with the same or similar syntactic qualities and grammatical categories. Modern linguists often use this term in preference to part of speech. See part of speech.

- **closed word class.** A verbal type whose members can be exhaustively listed or recognized—examples being pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and irregular verbs.—Often shortened to closed class.
- **open word class.** A verbal type whose members cannot be exhaustively listed or recognized, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

**word formation.** The study or practice of building words from roots and affixes. See morphology.

**word order.** The sequencing of words, esp. as a signal of grammatical structure.

**word-stem.** See stem.

**yes–no question.** See question.

**zero article.** See article.

**zero derivation.** See conversion.

**zero plural.** See uninflected plural under plural.

**zeugma** /zoo-g-ma/. 1. A construction in which one part of speech applies to two things but matches only one for number, gender, etc. {neither the sisters nor the brother is available just now}. 2. See syllepsis (1).

**zombie noun.** See noun.
Sources for Inset Quotations

Epigraphs on Frontispiece


Select Bibliography

English Grammar


**Transformational Grammar**


**English Usage**


Grammatical Pedagogy


**The English Language**


Plain English


Style Manuals


English-Language Dictionaries
(New versions of most issued periodically.)

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.
The Concise Oxford Dictionary.
Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary.
The Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus.
The Random House Dictionary of the English Language.
Webster’s New World College Dictionary.
Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language.

Etymology


**Punctuation**


**Literary Terms**


A book like this one couldn’t materialize without the contributions of many friends and allies. I’m especially grateful to my own collegiate teachers of grammar: our close family friend the late Pat Sullivan of West Texas A&M University, and both Thomas Cable and the late John W. Velz of the University of Texas at Austin. My de facto godfather, the noted Chaucerian Alan M. F. Gunn of Texas Tech University, aroused my interest in grammar when I was young and encouraged it through the time when I started writing professionally about English philology nearly 40 years ago.

My parents, of course, were responsible for much of this early exposure to English professors and for the almost-nonstop commentary on the English language in the Garner household. Little did they know . . . or perhaps somehow they did.

Some debts are more immediately related to the book. Garrett Kiely and Mary Laur of the University of Chicago Press encouraged me to expand my chapter 5 of The Chicago Manual of Style into this stand-alone book—and gave useful advice as the manuscript took shape. Their outside reviewers of the manuscript—John Hoarty, John McIntyre, Elizabeth Metzger, Alison Parker, and David Yerkes—made many valuable suggestions. I’m grateful to Shmuel Gerber for reading and commenting on an early draft. Ruth Goring of the University of Chicago Press and Karen Magnuson of Portland, Oregon, each copyedited the final manuscript with acumen and punctilio.

The book’s ultimate form and focus were influenced by my informal panel of local educators—namely, David Brown of St. Mark’s School of Texas; Monica Cochran and Megan Griffin of Ursuline Academy of Dallas; Gary M. Nied of Cistercian Preparatory School; and Katherine Downey, Jennifer Boulanger, and Jennifer McEachern of the Hockaday School. In one of our sessions, Marie Sidonie of St. Paul also made helpful suggestions.

As always, my colleagues at LawProse proved enormously helpful: I’m grateful to Jeff Newman, Tiger Jackson, Becky R. McDaniel, and Ryden McComas Anderson for the relentless pains they took to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the
book. In particular, Jeff Newman—a typesetter as well as a splendid lawyer and editor—made possible the many diagrams and graphic elements, including ngrams, that appear throughout. I am fortunate to have a team as dedicated and as professional as Jeff, Tiger, Becky, and Ryden.

The book is dedicated to my wife Karolyne, our general counsel at LawProse Inc., who similarly helped on various aspects of the book, such as collecting exemplars of punctuation marks from major writers for part 5. She makes home life and work life a great pleasure. For a writer or anyone else, that’s priceless.

—B.A.G.
Dallas, Texas
Word Index

Asterisk (*) denotes an invariably inferior form.

a, 20–21, 22, 61, 62, 228
aberration, 329
abhor, 229
abhorrence, 329
abhorrent, 329
abide, 74, 329
ability, 228
abjure, 228–29
abound, 329
about, 129, 130, 139, 140, 229, 240, 283–84, 286
above, 130, 139, 143
abridgment, 229
abrogate, 229
absolute, 68
absolve, 329
absolved, 329
abstain, 329
abstruse, 298
abut, 329
accede, 329
accept, 229
acceptance, 229
acceptation, 229
access, 229–30
accommodate, 329
accompanied, 329
accompany, 329
accord, 230, 329
accordance, 230, 329
according to, 140
account, 329
accountable, 329
accuse, 230, 329
acknowledgment, 230
acquainted, 329
acquiesce, 230, 329
acquit, 329
across, 129, 139
act, 81, 215, 330
actual fact, in, 230
actually, 230
acuity, 230
acumen, 230
acute, 230
ad, 217
adapt, 232, 330
addendum; addenda, 231
addicted, 231, 330
additionally, 237
adduce, 231
advent, 330
adequate, 68, 231, 330
adhere, 330
adherence, 231, 330
adhesion, 231, 330
adjacent, 330
adjure, 228–29
adjust, 330
administration; administer; *administrate, 217
administrator; administratrix, 271
admission, 231–32
admit, 330
admittance, 231–32
adopt, 232
adopted, 232
adoptive, 232
adult, 284
adverse, 232, 330
advert, 330
advice, 232
advise, 232
adviser; advisor, 232
advisory, 232
affect, 232–33, 282
affiliate, 330
affirmative, in the, 233
afflict, 284, 330
affront, 268
after, 129, 130, 133, 139, 148, 149, 194, 233, 273, 316
*after having [+ past participle], 233
afterward, 129, 233, 320
afterwards, 320
afterword, 233
against, 139, 295
*aged — years old, 233
agenda, 28, 233–34
agendas, 234
agendum, 233
aggravate, 234
agree, 330
aid, 234
aide, 234
*ain't, 234
airplane, 216
albeit, 148
alga; algae, 27
alibi, 234
alight, 74
alike, 129
all, 60, 234, 299
alleged(ly), 234
allow, 330
all ready, 235
all right, 235
all together, 236
allude, 235
allusion, 235
almost, 129
alongside (of), 139, 140, 235
along with, 120, 140
a lot; *alot, 235
already, 235
*alright, 235
also, 129, 147
altar, 236
alter, 236
alternate, 236, 330
alternative, 236
although, 146, 148, 166, 188, 236, 298, 322
altogether, 129, 236
alum, 236
alumna; alumnae, 27, 236
alumnus; alumni, 27, 28, 236
always, 129, 130, 135, 249
am, 73, 112–15, 121, 170
am able, 85
amend; amendment, 236
amiable, 236
amicable, 236
amid; amidst, 244
am not, 83, 170
*amn't, 83
among; amongst, 244
amount, 236
an, 20–21, 61, 62, 228
analogous, 330
anchor; anchorperson, 327
and, 39, 40, 69, 116, 117–18, 120, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 237, 296, 347, 348
*and etc., 270
and/or, 237
and so forth, 350
and the like, 350
anecdotal, 237
anecdote, 237
angry, 292, 330
annoy, 234
another, 42, 50, 56, 60
answer, 330
antagonism, 330
antagonistic, 330
antepenultimate, 303
anticipate, 237
antidisestablishmentarianism, 214
antidote, 237
antipathy, 330
anxious, 237, 330
any, 22, 42, 56, 60, 173, 237–38
anybody, 40, 56, 118, 173, 327
any one, 237–38
anyone, 40, 55, 56, 118, 173, 237–38, 322
anyone who, 322
any place; *anyplace, 238
anything, 56, 173
anyway; *anyways, 238
anywhere, 129, 130, 173, 238
apart from, 140
*apparati, 238
apparatus(es), 28, 238
appear, 72, 81–82, 135
appendix; appendixes; appendices, 238
appertain, 304
apply, 330
appoint, 164
appraise, 239
appreciate, 239
apprise, 239, 330
approve, 239
approximately, 229
apropos, 330
apt, 239
are, 9, 73, 112–15, 121, 178
area, 239, 314
aren’t, 84, 170
argue, 73, 330
arise, 74
around, 129, 139
arrive, 72
arrogate, 229
as, 37, 133, 139, 143–44, 146, 148, 149, 256, 270, 291
as a consequence, 147
as against, 140
as a result, 147
as—as, 45, 67, 147
as between, 140
as compared with, 140
as distinct from, 140
as distinguished from, 140
as far as, 140, 148, 239
as for, 239
aside from, 140
as if, 133, 143–44, 148, 291
as is, 239–40
“as is” basis, on an, 240
ask, 330
as long as, 148
as much as, 148
*as of yet, 241
*as opposed to, 140
*as per, 240
as regards, 140
assault, 240
assemblage, 240
assembly, 240
assent, 240
as—so, 176
associated with, 283
as soon as, 188
as such, 240
assuming, 141
assumption, 240
assure, 269
as though, 146, 148
as to, 140, 240
as touching, 140
as touching, 140
as well as, 120, 148, 241
*as yet, 241
at, 139, 187
athlete, 217
at present, 241
attach, 72
attain, 241
attend, 330
attendee; attender, 33
at the cost of, 140
at the hands of, 140
at the instance of, 140
at the point of, 140
at the present time, 241
at the risk of, 140
at the time that/when, 241
at this time, 241
attributable to, 267
attribute, 330
auger, 241
augur; augury, 241
author; authoress, 327
avenger, 241
averse, 232, 330
avocation, 241
awake, 74
away, 129
a while, 241–42
awhile, 241–42
bacillus; bacilli, 27
backward(s), 320
bacterium; bacteria, 27, 242
bade, 74
badge, 330
badger, 330
bail, 242
*baited breath, 243
balance, 330
bale, 242
ban, 330
banish, 330
bank, 330
blend, 330
block, 72
blossom, 330
blow, 75
blunder, 330
bode, 241
body politic, 199
bombastic, 246
bona fide, 246
bona fides, 246
bond, 331
boo-boo, 218
boogie-woogie, 218
boohoo, 218
border, 331
bored, 68, 331
bork, 219
born, 246, 331
borne, 246, 331
borrow, 72
both, 56, 60
both–and, 147, 176, 247
boundaries, 302
boy, 216
boycott, 331
brace, 331
breach, 247
break, 75, 331
breakdown, 216
break Priscian's head, 14
breech, 247
breed, 75
brighten, 213
bring, 75, 163, 247
bristle, 331
broadcast, 74, 75, 247
*broadcasted, 247
browbeat, 75
browse, 331
brush, 331
budget, 331
build, 75
bunch of, 20
burn, 75, 247
burned, 247
burn out; burnout, 82
burnt, 247
burst, 75
bus, 216
but, 143, 146, 147, 150, 151, 173, 237, 247, 347
butt, 331
buy, 72, 75, 163, 331
by, 91, 129, 139, 143, 145, 207, 247
by contrast with, 140
by means of, 140, 247
by reason of, 140, 248
by way of, 140
cablecast, 74
cache, 248
cachet, 248
cactus; cacti, 27, 248
cactuses, 248
cahoo, 331
cajoled, 331
call, 73, 99–105, 257
can, 83, 121–22, 170, 248
candelabrum; candelabra; *candelabras, 248
cannon, 248
cannot, 170, 248
can not only–but also, 248
canon, 248
can't, 84, 170, 248
*can't hardly, 278
capability, 228
capable, 331
capacity, 228, 331
capital, 248
capitalize, 331
capitol, 248
capitulate, 331
carat, 249
care, 331
careen, 249
career, 249
careful, 331
careless, 331
caret, 249
cars, 19
case, 249
cast, 75
catch, 75
cause, 331
caused, 331
cause(s) célèbre(s), 249
cautious, 331
celebrated, 331
cellphone, 219
censer, 249–50
censor, 249–50
censure, 250, 331
center, 331
*center around, 250
center on, 250
certitude, 250
chafe, 331
chagrined, 331
chair; chairperson, 250, 327
chairman; chairwoman, 250
chaise(s) longue(s); *chaise lounge, 251
chance, 331
characteristic, 331
characterize, 331
charge, 73, 230, 331
chase, 331
chastise; *chastize, 251
cheap(en)(ed), 213
cheat, 331
check, 331
cherub; cherubim, 27, 251
cherubs, 251
chide, 331
chief, 68
child, 284
childish, 251
childlike, 251
china, 20
choose, 75, 164
chord, 251
shortle, 331
chute, 217
circumstances, 251–52
citation, 252
cite, 252
citizen, 252
claim, 331
clamor, 331
class, 252
classic, 252
classical, 252
clean, 252
cleanse, 252
cleave, 75, 252
cleaved, 252
cleft, 252
clench, 253
climate; climatic, 253
climax; climactic, 253
clinch, 253
cling, 75, 331
clock, 23
close, 72, 129, 253
*close proximity, 253
closure, 253
clothe, 75
cloiture, 253
clove(n), 252
cluster, 331
coeses, 331
coga, 331
coeeducational; coed, 216
coequal, 331
coeerce, 331
cognizant, 331
cohabit, 253
*cohabitate, 217, 253
cohabitation, 253
cohesion, 331
cohort, 253
coin (a phrase/word), 253
coincide, 331
coincidental, 331
coleslaw; *coldslaw, 254
collaborate, 254, 331
collaboration, 70
collaborative, 70
collapse, 72
collectibles, 70
college, 254
collegial; colleague, 254
collegete; college, 254
collide, 331
collude, 331
collusion, 331
| colonization, 215 | condition, 305 |
| combine, 214 | condol; condolence, 255–56 |
| come, 72, 75 | conducive, 332 |
| comfort, 331 | confer, 332 |
| commendable, 254 | conference, 332 |
| commendatory, 254 | confidant, 256 |
| commensurate, 331 | confidante, 256 |
| comment, 284, 331 | confide, 332 |
| commiserate, 331 | confidence, 332 |
| commit, 331 | confident, 256 |
| common, 254 | conflict, 332 |
| commonweal, 254 | conform, 332 |
| commonwealth, 254 | conformance, 332 |
| commune, 331 | confuse, 332 |
| communion, 331 | confusion, 332 |
| comp, 216 | congruence, 332 |
| compare, 254, 331 | congruent, 256, 332 |
| compare with/to, 254 | congruous, 256 |
| compatible, 331 | connected, 332 |
| compel(led), 254 | connivance, 332 |
| compendious, 254 | connive, 332 |
| compete, 331 | connote, 256 |
| competitive, 331 | consent, 240 |
| complacent, 255 | consequent, 256 |
| complaisant, 255 | consequently, 147 |
| complement; complementary, 255, 331 | consider, 73, 256, 332 |
| complete, 68 | considerate, 332 |
| *completely decimated, 261 | consideration, 332 |
| compliant, 255 | considering, 141, 149 |
| compliment; complimentary, 255, 332 | consist, 256–57, 332 |
| comply, 332 | consistent, 332 |
| comport, 332 | consist of/in, 255, 256–57 |
| compose, 255 | console; consolation, 255–56 |
| composed (of), 255, 332 | consonant, 332 |
| composition, 216 | conspire, 332 |
| compress, 332 | constrain, 332 |
| comprise, 255, 283 | constraint, 332 |
| *comprised of, 255 | construe, 332 |
| compromise, 332 | construed, 332 |
| conceive, 332 | consult, 332 |
| concept, 255 | consultant, 332 |
| conception, 255 | contact, 229, 257 |
| concerning, 141, 286 | contagious, 257 |
| concord, 332 | contaminate, 332 |
| concur, 332 | contemporaneous, 257, 332 |
| concurrence, 332 | contemporary, 257, 332 |
| condemn, 332 | contempt, 332 |
contemptible, 257
contemptuous, 257
contend, 332
content, 257
contents, 257
contiguous, 332
contingent, 332
continual, 257–58
continuous, 257–58
contract, 332
contrary (to), 140, 332
contrast, 332
contravene, 258
contrary (to), 140, 332
contrast, 332
contravene, 258
convenient, 332
conversant, 332
convict, 332
convince, 304, 332
co-op, 216
cooperative, 216
coordinate, 332
coordination, 332
copter, 216
copyright(ed), 258
cord, 251
core, 258
corollary, 258
corporal, 258
corporeal, 258
corps, 258
correlate, 332
relation, 258, 332
respond, 332
respond, 332
respond, 332
respond, 332
respond, 332
corrigerendum; corrigenda, 27
corroboration, 254
cost, 75, 202

couch potatoes, 219
cough, 72
could, 121–22, 248
could have; could’ve; *could of, 258
couldn’t, 84
couldn’t care less; *could care less, 258–59
councillor, 259
counselor/counsellor, 259
count, 332
couple, 20, 259, 332
court-martial, 259–60
credible, 260
credit, 332
creditable, 260
creep, 260
crease, 260
crave, 260
cracks, 260
crisis; crises, 27
*criteria, 260
criterion; criteria, 27, 28, 260
crow, 75
crusade, 332
cry, 72
culminate, 332
cure, 332, 333
current, 260
currently, 241, 260
cut, 72, 75
dabble, 333
dally, 333
damp, 260
dampen, 260
dare, 85, 124
darken, 213
data, 27, 28, 261
dawdle, 333
deadly, 261
deal, 75, 333
deathly, 261
debate, 333
debate, 333
debut, 229
deceptively, 263
decide, 263, 333
decide whether/if, 263
decimate, 261
deduce, 231, 333
deduct, 333
deduction, 333
depth, 129
| Word Index |
|------------|----------------|
| defamati**on**, 261 | despondent, 333 |
| default, 333 | desserts, 263 |
| defer, 333 | destitute, 333 |
| deference, 333 | destructive, 333 |
| deferential, 333 | determine, 263 |
| defiant, 333 | determine whether/if, 263 |
| definite, 261–62 | detract, 265, 333 |
| definitive, 261–62 | detriment, 333 |
| defrauded, 333 | detract, 265, 333 |
| defuse, 262 | deferential, 333 |
| degenerate, 333 | devote, 333 |
| delegate, 310 |  
| deliberate, 262 | device, 263 |
| deliberative, 262 | devise, 263 |
| delight, 333 | devoid, 68, 333 |
| delighted, 333 | devolve, 333 |
| *delimitate, 217 | devoted, 333 |
| delve, 333 | devotee, 333 |
| demonstrate, 333 | devotion, 333 |
| denote, 256 | dice, 263 |
| denounce, 262 | dictate, 333 |
| dental, 214 | did, 125, 169–70 |
| dentist, 214 | die, 263, 267, 333 |
| dentition, 214 | differ, 333 |
| denture, 214 | difference, 333 |
| depend, 262, 333 | different, 263–64, 333 |
| dependant, 262 | different from/than/to, 263–64 |
| dependent, 231, 262, 333 | differentiate, 333 |
| depend on, 262 | differently (than), 263, 333 |
| depict, 333 | differ from/with, 264 |
| deprecate(d), 262–63 | diffuse, 262 |
| deprive, 333 | dig, 75 |
| derisive, 263 | digress, 333 |
| derisory, 263 | digression, 333 |
| derive, 333 | diphtheria, 264 |
| derogate, 333 | diphthong, 264 |
| derogatory, 333 | disabuse, 333 |
| described, 333 | disappear, 72 |
| deserts, 263 | *disassociate, 265 |
| desideratum; desiderata, 27 | disbar, 333 |
| design, 255 | disburse, 264 |
| designated, 333 | disc, 265 |
| designation, 333 | discomfit(ed); discomfiture, 264 |
| desist, 333 | discomfort, 264 |
| despair, 333 | discourage, 333 |
| desolate, 333 | discouraged, 333 |
| despite, 140, 166, 263, 298 | discover, 35 |
| discrete, 264 | discredit, 333 |
| discreet, 264 | discreet, 264 |
discriminate, 333
discriminating, 264–65
discrimination, 264–65
discriminatory, 264–65
disdain, 333
disdainful, 333
disgruntled, 333
disinterested, 333
disinterested, 265
disk, 265
disloyal, 333
disloyalty, 333
disorganized, 265
dispense, 333
disperse, 264
displaced, 333
displeased, 333
dispose, 333
disposition, 334
dispossessed, 334
dispute, 334
disqualify, 334
disregard, 334
dissent, 334
dissimilar, 334
dissociate, 265, 334
distaste, 334
distinctive, 265
distinguish, 334
distinguishable, 265
distinguished, 265, 334
distract, 265
distraught, 334
distressed, 334
dive(d); dove, 75, 265–66
diverge, 334
diverted, 334
divested, 334
divide, 334
divided, 334
DNA, 219
do, 37, 75, 83, 125, 126, 158, 169–70
do away with, 82
doctrinaire, 266
doctrinal, 266
does, 125
dominant, 305, 334
dominate, 305–6, 334
dominion, 334
done, 125
don’t, 84
doom, 334
doomed, 334
door, 72
dote, 334
doubt, 73
doubtfully, 266
doubtless; *doubtlessly, 129, 266
doubt that/whether/if, 266
dove, 265–66
dovetail, 334
down, 129, 139, 143
downward(s), 266, 320
draft, 73
drag, 266
dragged, 266
drank, 266
draw, 76, 284
drawing, 217
dread, 73
dream, 76, 266
dreamed; dreamt, 74, 266
drink, 73, 76, 266
drip, 334
drive, 73, 76
drown, 266
drowned, 266
drug, 266
drunk, 266, 267
drunken, 267
dual, 267
due, 334
duel, 267
due to, 267
due to the fact that, 267
dumb, 267
dun, 334
during, 139, 141
dwarf(s); *dwarves, 267
dwell, 76
dye, 267
dyeing, 87, 267
dying, 87, 267
each, 39, 40, 42, 56, 60, 118, 267
each other, 36, 42, 50, 267
eager, 67, 237
ear, 334
early, 130
earmark, 334
eat, 76
eatable, 268
economic, 267–68
economical, 267–68
ecstatic, 334
edible, 268
educate, 334
education, 334
effect, 232–33
effective, 334
effete, 268
effrontery, 268
e.g., 270, 281
either, 40, 42, 56, 60, 147, 268, 296
either–or, 39, 121, 147, 151, 176, 193
eject, 214
elated, 334
elect, 164
elemental, 268
elementary, 268
elements, 302
elicit, 268
eligible, 334
else, 57, 147, 148
elude, 235
e-mail, 257
embark, 334
embarrass, 278
embody, 334
emend; emendation, 236
emerge, 334
emigrant, 282
emigrate, 282, 334
émigré, 282, 334
eminent, 268
emotional, 268
emotive, 268
empathize, 334
empathy, 269
emphatic, 334
employ, 334
enamored, 334
encouraged, 334
encroach, 334
encumbered, 334
endemic, 270
endorse, 239
donor, 334
defined, 334
derivative, 269
derve, 334
deny, 269
deny, 334
deny, 334
enlarge, 334
enlighten, 213
enormity, 269
enormousness, 269
enough, 231
enquire; enquiry, 285
ensure, 269, 334
enter, 334
*enthused, 270
enthusiastic, 270, 334
entice, 334
entire, 67, 68
entitle, 334
entrap, 334
entrapment, 334
entrust, 334
enumerable, 270
envious, 334
envision, 334
envy, 287
epidemic, 270
equal, 334
*equally as, 270
equate, 334
equidistant, 334
equivalent, 334
equivocal, 334
ere, 133
erratum; errata, 27
escalate, 334
escape, 334
espresso, 270
establish, 215
estimate, 229
estranged, 334
estrangement, 334
et al.; *et alii, 270, 350
etc.; *et cetera, 270, 350
etch, 334
ethics, 118
even, 129
event, 271
eventuality, 271
every, 39, 60, 118
everybody, 40, 56, 118, 271
every day, 271
everyday, 271
every one, 271
everyone, 40, 50, 56, 118, 271
*everyplace, 271
everything, 56
everywhere, 130, 271
evoke, 271
evolve, 334
exam, 217
exasperate, 234
exasperated, 334
except, 140, 148, 173, 229
exceptionable, 271
exceptional, 271
excerpt, 334
exclusive (of), 140, 335
excuse, 234
executor; executrix, 271
*exempli gratia, 281
exile, 335
exist, 72, 73
exonerate, 335
expand, 335
expect, 237
explicit, 271
export, 335
*expresso, 270
expropriate, 335
expunge, 335
extolled, 335
extradite, 335
fail, 215
fall, 72, 76
false, 68
family, 217
famous, 335
far, 129
farther, 129, 271
fascinated, 335
fascination, 335
fashion, 335
fast, 129
fasten, 335
fast results, 33–34
fatal, 68
fault, 335
favor, 335
favorite, 68
fax(es), 271–72
faze, 272
feed, 76
feel, 76, 81–82, 85, 135, 272
feel bad; *feel badly, 135, 272
female, 326
feud, 335
few, 19, 20, 60, 169, 172
fewer, 66, 290
fiction, 272
fictional, 272
fictitious, 272
fictive, 272
fidget, 335
fight, 76
filch, 335
file, 72
filet(s), 27
filet(s) mignon(s), 27
fill, 335
*filtrate, 217
final, 68
finalize, 272
finally, 288
find, 76, 335
finicky, 335
finish, 272
firefighter, 328
first(ly), 272, 288
fish(es), 272
fit, 76, 202, 272–73
fitted, 272–73
fix, 72
fixation, 335
flagrant, 246
flair, 273, 335
flammable, 273
flare, 273
flare up, to; flare-up, a, 82
flaunt, 273
flee, 76, 335
fleshly, 273
fleshy, 273
flimflam, 218
flinch, 335
fling, 76
flirt, 335
floodlight, 76
flounder, 273
flout, 273
fly, 73, 76
following, 273
fond, 335
fondness, 335
foolishly, 130
for, 139, 147, 148, 284, 285, 347
forage, 335
forbear, 76, 274
forbid, 76, 335
force, 335
forebear, 274
forecast, 76
foreclose, 335
forego, 274
foregone conclusion, 274
foresee, 76
foretell, 76
foreword, 274
for example, 142, 270
for fear of, 140
forget, 76
forgive, 76
forgo, 274
for instance, 142
formally, 274
former, 274
for purposes of, 140
forsake, 76
forswear, 76
for the sake of, 140
fortify, 335
fortuitous, 274
fortunate, 274, 335
fortunately, 318
forward, 130, 320
forwards, 320
founder, 273
fraternize, 335
fraught, 335
free, 335
free rein; *free reign, 274
freeze, 76
French, 70
fret, 335
fridge, 216
from, 139, 264, 265
from among, 140
from between, 140
from–to, 374
froutfoul, 218
frugal, 335
fulminate, 335
fulsome, 274
fume, 335
fun; *funner; *funnest, 274
fungus; fungi, 28
furious, 335
furnish, 335
furniture, 29
further, 129, 237, 271
furthermore, 237
future, in the near, 274
gainsay, 76
gallop, 72
gamut, 335
gantlet, 275
gantlope, 275
gasp, 335
gauntlet, 275
generally, 135
generous, 335
formerly, 274
frustrated, 335
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>genial</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gentle</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gentleman</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>76, 81, 90, 163, 275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get rid of</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gibe</td>
<td>275, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gild</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>72, 76, 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>given</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glare</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glisten</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glitter</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gloat</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>76, 81, 275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goes</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gone</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gourmand</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gourmet</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduate</td>
<td>276, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graffito</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grapple</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grateful</td>
<td>276, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gratified</td>
<td>276, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gravitate</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greater</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grieve</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grievous</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harebrained*</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hairbrained*</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hale</td>
<td>277, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>half</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hammer</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hamstring</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handful</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand held device</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handy</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hangar</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanged</td>
<td>277–78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanger</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hangry</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanker</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happen</td>
<td>72, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harass</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardened</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardly</td>
<td>132, 169, 172, 278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harebrained*</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hark back; *harken back; *hearken back</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harm</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harp</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>97, 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasn’t</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hassle</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hate</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>37, 76, 83, 84, 97, 125–26, 201, 202, 278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have got</td>
<td>126, 278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have to</td>
<td>123, 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>38, 40, 42, 46, 47, 50, 278, 324, 327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthful</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthy</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he and I</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>76, 85, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*hearken back</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heave</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedge</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heedful</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heedless</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hegemony</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helicopter</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td>85, 152, 278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helter-skelter</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hence, 147
he or she, 47, 278, 326
her, 38, 44, 47, 48, 59
here, 35, 119, 129, 130
hereafter, 129
here and now, 35
hers, 47, 48, 279
herself, 48, 49
*he/she, 278, 324
hesitate, 336
hesitation, 336
hew, 76
hide, 76, 105–11
high, 129
highly, 131
him, 38, 40, 46, 48
*him and I, 9
him or her, 47
himself, 48, 49
himself or herself, 47
hinder, 336
hindrance, 336
hinge, 336
his, 40, 46, 47, 48, 59
his or her, 47
historic, 279
historical, 228, 279
hit, 72, 76
hoard, 279
hobnob, 218, 336
Hobson’s choice; *Hobbesian choice, 279
hocus pocus, 218
hodgepodge, 218
hoi polloi, 279–80
hoity-toity, 279
hold, 77
holdover, 336
hold up, 82
holocaust, 280
home, 136
home in, 280
homesickness, 218
homicide, 295–96
homogeneous; *homogenous, 280
*hone in, 280
honoree, 32–33
hopefully, 266, 280
horde, 279
horses, 19
host, 229
hostile, 336
hostility, 336
hover, 336
how, 129, 131–32, 149, 157, 158, 187, 189
however, 127, 151, 247
huddle, 336
humanitarian, 281
humankind, 293
humdrum, 218
hung, 277–78
hunger, 336
hurly-burly, 218
hurt, 77, 306
hurtle, 336
husband, 34
I, 37, 38, 42, 43, 50, 281, 296, 304
I’d, 84
idea, 255
ideal, 68, 281
identical, 336
identify, 336
id est, 281
idiot, 152
idolize, 336
I’d’ve, 84
idyllic; idyll, 281
i.e., 281
if, 93, 94, 146, 148, 166, 188, 189, 194, 249,
   263, 271, 281, 325
if–then, 147, 176
ignoramus(es); *ignorami, 282
ignorance, 336
ignorant, 336
ilk, 282
ill, 129
illegal, 321
illegible, 282
illicit, 268, 321
illude, 235
imagine, 73
imbued, 336
immediately, 130
immigrant, 282, 336
immigrate, 282, 336
inconsistent, 336
in contrast to, 140
in contrast with, 140
incorporate, 336
incredible, 284
incredulous, 284
inculcate, 284, 336
incumbent, 336
indeed, 129, 152
independence, 336
independent, 336
indicate, 284
indifferent, 336
indigenous, 336
indignant, 336
individual, 284
indoctrinate, 284
induce, 231
induct, 336
indulge, 336
indulgent, 336
in every case, 249
inevitable, 68
in excess of, 284
infatuation, 336
infected, 284
infectious, 257
infer, 225, 283, 336
inference, 284
infested, 284
infiltrate, 336
infiltration, 336
infinite, 68
inflammable, 273
inflict, 284, 336
influence, 282, 336
influenza, 216
inform, 336
information, 19, 28
informed, 336
infringe, 336
infringement, 336
in front of, 130, 140
infuse, 336
ingenious, 285
ingenuous, 285
ingratiate, 336
in, 129, 130, 139, 143
in accordance with, 140
in any event, 142
in apposition with/to, 140
inasmuch as, 146, 148, 283
inaugurate, 336
in a word, 142
in back, 130
Inc., 356
in case of, 140, 146, 249
incidence, 283
incident, 283
incidental, 336
include, 283, 336
inclusive, 336
in comparison with, 140
incompatible, 336
incompetence, 336
incongruent, 336
incongruous, 256, 336
in connection with, 140, 283–84
in consideration of, 140

imminent, 268
imminent, 268
immune, 336
immediate, 282
impatience, 336
impeachment, 282
impel(led), 254
impinge, 336
implication, 284
implicit, 271, 336
imply, 73, 225, 283
import, 336
important(ly), 283
importune, 336
impose, 336
impossible, 67, 68
impractical, 283
impracticable, 283
impregnate, 336
impress, 336
impressed, 336
impression, 336
impute, 336
in, 129, 130, 139, 143
in accordance with, 140
in addition (to), 120, 140, 237
in any event, 142
in apposition with/to, 140
inasmuch as, 146, 148, 283
inaugurate, 336
in a word, 142
in back, 130
Inc., 356
in case of, 140, 146, 249
incidence, 283
incident, 283
incidental, 336
include, 283, 336
inclusive, 336
in comparison with, 140
incompatible, 336
incompetence, 336
incongruent, 336
incongruous, 256, 336
in connection with, 140, 283–84
in consideration of, 140
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in here</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhered</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inherent</td>
<td>285, 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immissible</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initiate</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inject</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inlay</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in most cases</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innate</td>
<td>285, 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innervate</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innocent</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innumerable</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inoculate</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in order that</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in order to/for</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in place of</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in preparing for</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in proximity</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>input</td>
<td>77, 285, 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquire</td>
<td>285, 337–38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquiry</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquisitive</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*in regards to</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in regard to</td>
<td>140, 286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in relation to</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in respect of</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in respect to</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inroad</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inseparable</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inset</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside</td>
<td>130, 140, 299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insidious</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insight</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insist</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insofar as</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>140, 263, 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instance</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instead of</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instill</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insulate</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insure</td>
<td>269, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intense</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensely</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensive care</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intent</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intention</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intently</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inter</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercede</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interested</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interject</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interlace</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interment</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intern</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internecine</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internment</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*interpretate</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interweave</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interweave</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interprene</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the affirmative</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the case of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the circumstances</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the event that</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the interest of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the last analysis</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the long run</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the matter of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the near future</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the negative</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the process of</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the way of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>into</td>
<td>139, 216, 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intrude</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inveigh</td>
<td>287, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inveigle</td>
<td>287, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invidious</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in view of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invoke</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*irregardless</td>
<td>225, 287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrespective (of)</td>
<td>141, 287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrevocable</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irritate</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>73, 84, 112–15, 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is composed of</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*is comprised of</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is concerned</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itch</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’d</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is</td>
<td>1, 45, 287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

525
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it is me, 45, 164, 287</td>
<td>lapse, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s, 48, 287</td>
<td>largely, 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>its, 47, 48, 59, 287</td>
<td>larva; larvae, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itself, 48, 49</td>
<td>laser, 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jealous, 337</td>
<td>lash, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jealously, 287</td>
<td>last(ly), 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jibe, 275, 337</td>
<td>latch, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiggery-pokery, 218</td>
<td>late, 129, 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jive, 275</td>
<td>later, 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>join, 337</td>
<td>latter, 274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalists, 28</td>
<td>laudable, 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jr., 356</td>
<td>laudatory, 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgment, 288</td>
<td>laugh, 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jump, 73, 337</td>
<td>lavish, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junior, 337</td>
<td>lawbook, 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jurisdiction, 337</td>
<td>lax, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just, 129</td>
<td>lay, 77, 288–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just deserts; *just desserts, 263</td>
<td>leach, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justified, 337</td>
<td>lead, 77, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juxtaposed, 337</td>
<td>leaf, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karat, 249</td>
<td>lean(ed); *leant, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep, 77</td>
<td>leap(ed); leapt, 77, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kick, 72</td>
<td>learn(ed); learnt, 74, 77, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kid, 337</td>
<td>lease, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kindness, 337</td>
<td>least, 67, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kind(s), 50, 288</td>
<td>leave, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knack, 337</td>
<td>led, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kneel, 77</td>
<td>leech, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knickknack, 218</td>
<td>leer, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know, 73, 77</td>
<td>leery, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledgeable, 337</td>
<td>lend; lent, 77, 289–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>known, 337</td>
<td>lenient, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kowtow, 218</td>
<td>less, 22, 60, 66, 67, 129, 133, 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudos; *kudo, 288, 337</td>
<td>lessee, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>label, 337</td>
<td>lest, 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labor-intensive, 286</td>
<td>let, 77, 85, 158, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lacking, 337</td>
<td>level, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laden, 337</td>
<td>liable, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lady, 275, 288, 326</td>
<td>liaison, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laid, 288–89</td>
<td>libel, 261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lain, 288–89</td>
<td>liberate, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lament, 337</td>
<td>liberties, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languish, 337</td>
<td>lice, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lap, 337</td>
<td>licence, 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life-and-death; *life-or-death, 290–91</td>
<td>license, 290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lift, 72, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light, 77, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lighted, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lightning, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like, 37, 139, 143–44, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likely, 239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liken, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likeness, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limited, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limits, 302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linger, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lit, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literally, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little, 68, 129, 169, 172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loan, 289–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loath, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loathe, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loathsome; *loathsome, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lock, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look, 81, 135, 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loose, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loosen, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lose, 77, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lot, 20, 116, 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lots, 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loud, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>louse(s); lice, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ltd., 356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lull, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lure, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lurk, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luxuriant, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luxurious, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mad, 292, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magnanimous, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mail carrier, 328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mainstream, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majority, 21, 116, 292–93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majuscule, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make, 72, 77, 85, 164, 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maleficent, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malevolent, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malice, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malodorous, 298–99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maltreatment, 295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man, 26, 275, 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maneuver, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man-hour(s); *men-hours, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manifest, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mankind, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man-of-war; men-of-war; *man-of-wars, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manservant, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manslaughter, 295–96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mantel, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mantle, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manual, 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many, 60, 298, 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marred, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage, 293, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marry, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>martyr, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>martyred, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marvel, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masterful, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masterly; *masterly, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masterpiece, 218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mastery, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>math, 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mathematics, 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may, 83, 122, 201, 248, 293–94, 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maybe, 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me, 38, 50, 152, 281, 296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>means of, by, 140, 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meant, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medal, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meddle, 294, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium; media, 28, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mediums, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*meet(ed) out, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorandum; memoranda, 28, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorandums, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*men-hours, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men-of-war, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menservants, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merge, 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mesh, 337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
metal, 294
mete out, 294
meter/metre, 294
meticulous, 337
mettle, 294
might, 122, 293–94
migrate, 337
militate, 295, 338
mill, 338
mindful, 338
mine, 47, 48
mini, 294
*miniscule, 294
minister, 338
minuscule, 294
miscast, 77
mischievous; *mischievous, 295
misdeal, 77
mishear, 77
mislay, 77
mislead, 77
misread, 77
misspell(ed); misspelt, 77, 295
misspend, 77
mistake, 77
mistreatment, 295
misunderstand, 77
mitigate, 295, 338
*mitigate against, 295
modern, 257
modify, 214
moot, 295
more, 66, 67, 127, 133
more important(ly), 283
moreover, 147, 237
more perfect, 67
more than, 284, 301
most, 66, 67, 127, 134, 292
move, 72
mow, 77
much, 22, 60, 68, 127, 129, 295
mulct, 338
multitude, 116
murder, 295–96
muse, 338
must, 83, 96, 122–23, 125, 201, 312
mute, 267, 295
mutiny, 338
mutual, 254
my, 47, 48, 59
myriad, 116
myself, 48, 49, 50, 296
nail, 338
naive, 338
name, 72
namely, 130
nap, 72
NATO, 218
naturalist, 296
naturist, 296
nauseated, 296
nauseating, 296
nauseous, 296
navicert, 217
near, 129
near future, in the, 274
necessary, 296, 338
necessitous, 296
necessity, 338
need, 73, 85, 124, 338
negative, in the, 233
neglectful, 338
negligent, 338
negotiate, 338
neither, 40, 56, 60, 147, 169, 171, 268, 296
neither–nor, 39, 121, 147, 171, 176, 296
nerve-racking; *nerve-wracking, 297
nestle, 338
never, 129, 132, 135, 169, 171, 177
nevertheless, 146, 147, 297
newcomer, 338
next to, 141
niggardly, 338
niggle, 338
no, 39, 60, 132, 169, 171, 172, 179, 233
nobody, 40, 56, 118, 169, 171
noisome, 297
no less than, 147
nominate, 338
none, 42, 56, 60, 169, 171, 297
nonetheless, 297
nonflammable, 273
nonplussed; *nonplused, 297
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or–or both</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oscillate</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>56, 60, 147, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td>130, 147, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ouch</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ought,</td>
<td>83, 85, 123–24, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oughtn’t</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>47, 48, 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ours</td>
<td>47, 48, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ourselves</td>
<td>48, 49, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our,</td>
<td>47, 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>47, 48, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ourselves</td>
<td>48, 49, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ourself</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outbid</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outdo</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outgrow</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outlet</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of,</td>
<td>139, 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of regard for,</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of respect for,</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>output</td>
<td>77, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outrun</td>
<td>77, 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outsell</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outshine</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside</td>
<td>299, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over</td>
<td>284, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over,</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overbid</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overcome</td>
<td>78, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overdo</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overdraw</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overeat</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overfly</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overgrown</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overhang</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oversear</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overlay</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overlie</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*overly</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overpay</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>override</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overrun</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oversee</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overshoot</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oversleep</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overtake</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overthrow</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owed to</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owing</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owing to</td>
<td>141, 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pacifiers</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair(s)</td>
<td>22, 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palate</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pale</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palette</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pall</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pallet</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panacea</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pandemic</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pander</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panic</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parameters</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paramount</td>
<td>68, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paranoid</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parity</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parlay</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parley</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partake</td>
<td>78, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partake in/of</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partial</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partially</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partly</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pass</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passed</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pastime</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patterned</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peaceable</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peaceful</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peak</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peculiar</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedal</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peddle</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peek</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pendant</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pendent</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peninsula</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penultimate</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>29, 303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
peoples, 29
per, 240
perceive, 338
perceptible, 338
perceptive, 338
perfect, 68
perhaps, 129
period (of time), 303
peripheral, 338
periphery, 338
permeate, 338
permeated, 338
permit, 338
peroration, 303
perpendicular, 338
perpetrate, 303
perpetual, 68
perpetuate, 303
persecution, 338
persevere, 339
persist, 339
person, 29, 284, 327
personally, 303–4
persons, 29, 303
person that/who, 318–19
perspective, 304
persuade, 304, 339
persuaded, 339
pertain, 304
pertaining, 339
pertinent, 339
perturbed, 339
pervaded, 339
phase, 272
phenomenon; phenomena, 28, 304
phylum; phyla, 28
piece, 22
pilfer, 339
pine, 339
pique, 302
piqued, 339
pitiable, 304
pitiful, 304
plane, 216
pleaded, 305
please, 92, 127
pleased, 68
*pled, 305
plenty; plentiful, 58
plethora, 305
plot, 339
plow, 339
plunge, 339
plus, 140
podcast, 219
polar; polarize; polarization, 215
pole, 215
police officer, 328
politics, 118
pom pom, 305
pompon, 305
ponder, 339
pooh-pooh, 218
poor, 35
pop music, 217
populace, 305
populous, 305
pore, 305, 339
possibility, 271
possible, 68, 305
possibly, 127, 259
postmortem, 70
posture, 339
pour, 305
powwow, 218
pox, 339
practicable, 305
practical, 305
preach, 339
precede; *preceed, 305
precedence, 305, 339
precedent, 339
precipitate, 305
precipitous, 305
precise, 339
preclude, 339
precondition, 305
precursor, 339
predestined, 339
predicate, 339
predilection, 339
predisposed, 339
predominant, 305–6
predominate, 305–6, 339
preeminent, 339
preface, 274, 339
prefer, 73
preferable, 68, 339
preference, 339
prefix, 339
pregnant, 67, 339
prejudice, 306, 339
prejudiced, 339
prejudicial, 339
preliminary to, 306
preoccupied, 339
preparatory, 339
prepare, 339
prerequisite, 305, 339
prerogative, 306
prescribe, 307
present, 339
present, at, 241
presently, 306
present time, at the, 241
preside, 339
pretext, 339
prevail, 339
prevent, 339
preventive; *preventative, 217, 306
previously to, 306
principal, 68, 307
principle, 307
principled, 307
prior to, 141, 307
probable, 239
probably, 239
proceed, 305
proceeds, 339
process of, in the, 307
proclivity, 339
procure, 275
prod, 339
prodigal, 339
proficient, 339
profit, 339
program, 255
prohibit, 339
prohibition, 339
prolegomenon; prolegomena, 28
prologue, 339
propaganda(s), 307
propensity, 339
proper, 67
prophecy, 307
prophesy; *prophesize, 307
propinquity, 339
propitious, 339
proscribe, 307
prospective, 304
prostate, 307
prostate/prostatic cancer, 34
prostrate, 307
protect, 339
protective, 339
protest, 339
protrude, 307
protuberance, 307
prove, 81, 308
proved, 308
proven, 308
provide, 339
provided, 141, 149
provided that, 146
provoke, 339
proximity, 253
pun, 72
punctilious, 339
punish, 339
punishable, 339
purge, 339
purposefully, 308
purposely, 308
push, 73
put, 78
puzzle, 339
puzzling, 339
quake, 339
qualified, 339
qualify, 339
qualms, 339
quandary, 339
quarrel, 339, 340
question (of/as to) whether, 308
quibble, 340
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quick</td>
<td>129, 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quickly</td>
<td>130, 152, 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quite</td>
<td>67, 68, 127, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quiver</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quotation</td>
<td>308–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quote</td>
<td>235, 308–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rack</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radar</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radiant</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rage</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rail</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>railroad</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raise</td>
<td>309, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raised</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rally</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ram</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rant</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>130, 135, 169, 172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rate</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rather</td>
<td>127, 129, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rationalization</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rave</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raze</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>react</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>really</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realtor</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason</td>
<td>309, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason ... is that; *reason ... is because</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason of; by</td>
<td>140, 248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason why/that</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuild</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recast</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recede</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>receptive</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reciprocate</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reciprocity</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reckon</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recoil</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recompense</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconcile</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconciliation</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recourse</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recur</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redbird</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redeem</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redo</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redolent</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redound</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reek</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refer</td>
<td>235, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference</td>
<td>235, 309–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referral</td>
<td>309–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrain</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrigerator</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refute</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regale</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regard</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding</td>
<td>141, 149, 286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regardless</td>
<td>225, 287, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regardless of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regret</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regretful; regretfully</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regrettable; regrettably</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehear</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reign</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rein</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reject</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejoice</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related to</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relation</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relegate</td>
<td>310, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relieve</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relieved</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reluctant</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remain</td>
<td>72, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remake</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remarkable</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remember</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remembrance</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reminisce</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reminiscent</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rend</td>
<td>78, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>render</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reneg</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>renounce</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>renowned</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reoccur</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repay, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repellent, 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repent, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repentance, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repetitious, 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repetitive, 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replace, 316, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replaced, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replacement, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replete, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representative, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repress, 300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprisal, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprove, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repugnace, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repugnance, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repulsive, 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>request, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>require, 229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reread, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rerun, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resell, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resemblance, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resemble, 202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resentment, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reservations, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reset, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resign, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resist, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolute, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respecting, 141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respite, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rest (up), 82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurateur; *restauranteur, 225, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restful, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restive, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restrain, 310, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restraint, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>result, 271, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resulting, 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retake, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reticent, 311, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retire, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retroactive, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revel, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revelation, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revenge, 241, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revolute, 217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revolve (around), 250, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revulsion, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reward, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rewrite, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rid, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ride, 71, 78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riffraff, 218</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rifle, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right, 67, 129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ring, 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ripe, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ripen, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rise, 72, 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roam, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rob, 311, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roll, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rpm, 219</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruminate, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run, 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rundown, 216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run the gauntlet/gantlet, 275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sacrilege; sacrilegious, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salesperson, 327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt, 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanction, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanctuary, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sandwich, 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sank, 313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satiate, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfied, 68, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw, 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say, 79, 284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scarcely, 132, 169, 172, 278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scared, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scavenge, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schism, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schooled, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scissors, 22, 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scoff, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scourge, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
scream, 341
screen, 341
scuba, 218–19
seasonable, 311–12
seasonal, 311–12
secede, 341
second(ly), 272, 288
secure, 341
see, 79, 85
seek, 79
seem, 73, 81, 135, 186
segregate, 341
seldom, 130, 135, 169, 172
self-deprecating; self-depreciating, 262
selfie, 219
self-restraint, 310
self-styled, 383
sell, 79
semblance, 214
semi-, 245–46
semiannual, 246
semiweekly, 245
send, 79, 163
sensible, 341
sensitive, 341
sensor, 249–50
sensual, 312
sensuous, 312
sentimental, 341
separate, 341
seraph; seraphim, 28
serve, 341
set, 79
settle, 341
several, 60
sew, 73, 79
sewage, 312
sewer, 312
sewerage, 312
shake, 79
shall, 83, 96, 97, 123, 170–71, 312
shall not, 170–71
shame, 341
shan’t, 170–71
share, 341
sharp, 129
*(s)he, 278
skeptical, 341
sketch, 73
skillful, 341
skullduggery; skullduggery, 313
slacks, 29
slander, 261
slanted, 341
slave, 341
slay, 79, 314
sleep, 72, 79, 341
slew, 313–14
slide, 79
sling, 79
slink, 79
slit, 79
slough, 313–14
slow(ed), 216
slow(er); slowest, 216
slow(ly), 129, 314
*slue, 313–14
smash, 72
smell, 79, 81–82, 135, 314, 341
smelled, 314
smelly, 299
smelt, 314
smile, 72, 341
smite, 79
smitten, 314
sneak(ed); *snuck, 314
sneeze, 72
snuggle, 341
so, 67, 129, 147, 149, 150, 347
so–as, 147
so-called, 383
so far, 241
soften, 213
*solicitate, 217
solicitous, 341
solicitude, 341
solidarity, 341
somber, 67
some, 19, 22, 56, 60, 173, 199
somebody, 40, 56, 118, 173
somehow, 129
someone, 40, 56, 118, 173, 327
something, 173, 217
somewhat, 127, 129
somewhere, 129, 173
soon, 129, 130, 274, 306
sore, 341
sorry, 341
sort(s), 50, 314
so that, 131, 146, 147, 148
so then, 147
sought, 341
sound, 81–82
sow, 79
space, 314
spaghetti, 29
spat, 79, 315, 341
speak, 79, 214
speaking, 149
speaking of, 141
speculate, 341
speculator, 341
speed, 79
spell(ed); spelt, 74, 79, 314
spend, 79
spill(ed); spilt, 79, 314
spin, 79
spit(ted); spat, 79, 315
split, 80
spoil(ed); spoilt, 80, 315
spread, 80
spring; sprang; sprung, 80, 315
spy, 341
squeeze, 341
Sr., 356
stadiums, 28
stanch, 315
stand, 80
standing, 341
standstill, 216
stationary, 68, 315
stationery, 315
staunch, 315
stave, 80
stay, 72, 81
steadfast(ly), 129
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>steal</td>
<td>80, 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stern</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stick</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stiffen</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stigma</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stigmatize</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>still</td>
<td>129, 147, 241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stimulus; stimuli</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sting</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stink</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stint</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stir</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stirfry</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stock</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stoical</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storm</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straight</td>
<td>129, 315-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strains credibility; *strains credulity</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strait</td>
<td>315-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straitjacket; *straightjacket</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stratagem</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*stratas</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategy</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stratum; strata</td>
<td>28, 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stray</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>streak</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>streaked</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stream</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strength</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strew</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strewn</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stricken</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strict</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stride</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strife</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strike</td>
<td>80, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>string</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strive</td>
<td>80, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>struggle</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stumble</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>style; stylish</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sublet</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>submit</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subordinate</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subscribe</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsequent</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsequently</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*subsequent to</td>
<td>141, 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsidiary</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsidy</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsist</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substitute</td>
<td>316, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>succeed</td>
<td>71, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such</td>
<td>56, 59, 240, 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such as</td>
<td>270, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such that</td>
<td>131, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffer</td>
<td>73, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufficient</td>
<td>68, 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suggest</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suit</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suitable</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suited</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summon</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunglasses</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunk</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supersede; *supercede</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superstitious</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supervision</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplement</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplementary</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supply</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supposing</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supposing that</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>susceptible</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspect</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspicion</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspicious</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swam</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swear</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweep</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swim</td>
<td>80, 317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swimming</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swing</td>
<td>80, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swum</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathetic</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathize</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathy</td>
<td>269, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synchronize</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synchronous</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synonymous</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systematic</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systemic</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tactics, 316
take, 72, 80, 247
taken, 342
tally, 342
tantalizing, 317
tantamount, 342
tap, 342
taste, 73, 81–82, 135, 186, 342
taunt, 342
teach, 80, 163
tear, 80, 342
tease, 342
teen, 342
tell, 80, 163, 232
tenacious, 214
tend, 342
tendency, 342	
tender, 342
terms, 342
testator; testatrix, 327
testify, 342

text(ed), 317
than, 45, 143, 146, 148, 318
than I, 143
thankful, 342
thankfully, 318
thank goodness, 318
than me, 143
that’s him, 164
that which, 54
thaw, 319
the, 21, 22, 59, 61, 63, 116, 316
their, 40, 47, 48, 59, 319, 327
theirs, 47, 319
them, 38, 47, 48, 327
*themself, 47, 319
themselves, 47, 48, 49, 319
then, 129
there, 38, 48, 89–90, 119, 129, 173–75, 178, 319
therefor, 319
therefore, 131, 147, 240, 319
there’re, 84
there’s, 84
these, 49–50, 59, 316
*these kind of, 288
*these sort of, 314
they, 38, 42, 46, 47, 50, 259, 324, 327
they’re, 48, 319
think, 80, 164, 272
third(ly), 272
thirst, 342
this, 37, 42, 49–50, 59, 316
this is he; *this is him, 45
those, 49–50, 59, 316
though, 146, 148, 166, 236
thought, 255
threshold, 319
through, 129, 140, 151
throughout, 140
throw, 80
throw down the gauntlet, 275
thrust, 80
thus, 129, 131, 147, 319
*thusly, 129, 319
’til, 319
till, 133, 319
timber, 319
timbre, 319
time, 303
time, at this, 241
time period, 303
time that/when, at the, 241
timid, 343
tinge, 343
tinged, 343	
tinker, 343
titillating, 317
to, 84–85, 123, 127, 135, 139, 140, 185, 189–90, 203–4, 278, 285, 300, 301
toast, 343
today, 130, 241
together with, 120
tolerance, 320, 343
tolerant, 320
toleration, 320
tomorrow, 130
tonight, 130
too, 127, 129, 131
toothpick, 216
torpid, 320
tortious, 320

tortuous, 320
torturous, 320
total, 116
tough, 343
tout, 343
toward, 139, 140, 320
towards, 320
toy, 343
trade, 343
traffic, 343
transcript, 320
transcription, 320
transpire, 320
tread, 80
treat, 343
tremble, 343
trillion, 246
triumphal, 320
triumphant, 320
trouble, 343
trust, 343
try and/to, 320
turbid, 320

turgid, 320
turn, 81

ugh, 152
ultimate, 68, 303
umbrage, 343
unanimous, 68
unavoidable, 68
unawares, 129
unbeatable, 343
unbecoming, 343
unbiased, 343
unbroken, 68
unburden, 343
uncomfortable, 343
uncooperative, 343
undaunted, 343
under, 129, 139
underbid, 80
undercut, 80
undergo, 80
underlie, 80
underneath, 140

underpay, 80
undersell, 80
understand, 73, 80
undertake, 80
under the circumstances, 251
underwrite, 80
undo, 80
undoubtedly, 266
unduly, 301
unequal, 343
unexceptionable, 321
unexceptional, 321
unfaithful, 343
unfamiliar, 343
unfazed, 272
unfeeling, 343
unfortunately, 310
unfreeze, 80
uniform, 68, 343
uniformity, 343
unify, 343
uninterested, 265
unique, 67, 68, 321, 343
universal, 68
unjustified, 343
unlawful, 321
unless, 146, 148, 166
unlucky; unluckier, 66
unmindful, 343
unmisgivingly, 213
unorganized, 265
unpalatable, 343
unphased, 272
unpopular, 343
unreadable, 282
unsparing, 343
unsteady; unstadier, 66
unstinting, 343
unsuitable, 343
unsuited, 343
unthaw, 319
until, 133, 139, 140, 148, 149, 307, 319
unused, 343
unwind, 80
up, 128, 129, 140, 143
upbraid, 343
uphold, 80
upmost, 321
upon, 130, 262, 299
upset, 81, 343
up to, 141
upward(s), 320
us, 37, 38
use, 72, 321
used, 343
usually, 249
utilize, 321
utmost, 321
uxorial, 214
vacillate, 343
value, 343
vanish, 72, 343
variance, 343
variation, 343
variety, 343
vary, 343
venal, 321
vengeance, 241
venial, 321
verbal, 321
verge, 343
versatile, 343
very, 67, 68, 129, 131, 295
very much, 68
vest, 343
vested, 343
vexed, 343
vex, 343
visualize, 343
vocation, 241
void, 68, 343
voluminous, 254
voter awareness, 34

wade, 343
wage, 343
wait, 343
waive, 321
waiver, 343
wake, 81
walk, 73
wangle, 323
want, 343
wanted, 343
wanting, 343
war, 343
was, 21, 73, 112–15, 178
wash, 73, 217
wasn’t, 84
watch, 73, 343
wave, 321
waver, 343
wax, 81
we, 37, 38, 42, 46, 50
weak, 343
weakened, 343
weakness, 344
wean, 344
wear, 81
weave, 81
webinar, 219
wed, 81
wedding, 293
weep, 81, 344
weigh, 202, 344
well, 129, 152
went, 275
were, 21, 73, 93–94, 112–15
wet, 81
what, 38, 42, 51, 52, 54, 55, 148, 149, 157,
  158, 178–79, 189
whatever, 55, 187
Whatever!, 259
wheat, 29
when, 129, 131–32, 133, 148, 149, 157, 187,
  188, 189, 194, 241
whence, 133
whenever, 129, 188
where, 119, 129, 131–32, 133, 148, 149, 157,
  187, 188, 189, 194
whereas, 322
where–there, 147, 176
wherever, 129
whether, 148, 263, 281, 322
whether or not, 322
whew, 152
which, 38, 42, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 139, 157,
  166, 168, 189, 194, 318–19
whichever, 55, 187
while, 133, 148, 322
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>whitewash</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whither</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whoever</td>
<td>38, 50, 55–56, 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whoever’s</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who is</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whom</td>
<td>38, 51, 52, 55, 139, 187, 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whomever</td>
<td>38, 55–56, 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who’re</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who’s</td>
<td>48, 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whose</td>
<td>48, 51, 52, 55, 187, 189, 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whosever</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>why</td>
<td>129, 131–32, 148, 149, 152, 157, 187, 189, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>83, 96, 123, 124, 170, 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will have</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will not</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willy-nilly</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>win</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wince</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wind</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with</td>
<td>140, 149–50, 247, 264, 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with a view to</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withdraw</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withhold</td>
<td>81, 319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without</td>
<td>140, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without regard to</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with reference to</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with regard to</td>
<td>140, 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with respect to</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withstand</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the view of</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wizard</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
<td>26, 284, 288, 326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(wo)man</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wonder</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>won’t</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workers’ compensation; workmen’s compensation</td>
<td>322–23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workroom</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worm</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worse</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worthy</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would</td>
<td>124, 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wouldn’t</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would’ve</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrack</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrangle</td>
<td>323, 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wreck</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wreaked</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrest</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wring</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>81, 163, 257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong</td>
<td>67, 129, 323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrongful</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrought</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yearn</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>132, 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet</td>
<td>129, 147, 241, 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yield</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>37, 38, 42, 43, 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>47, 48, 59, 323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you’re</td>
<td>48, 323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours</td>
<td>47, 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourself; yourselves</td>
<td>48, 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zeal</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zealous</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zeros</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zigzag</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### General Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aarts, Bas, 5n21, 327n5, 497</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abbreviation, 61, 62, 218–19, 388–89, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ABC’s of Languages and Linguistics, The</em> (Hayes), 18n46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ablaut, 73, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>About Language</em> (W. Roberts &amp; Turgeon, eds.), 494</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years</em> (Sandburg), 6n24, 6n25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrams, M. H., 504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute construction, 192, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstract noun, 19, 23, 449</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Abstract of the First Principles of English Grammar, An</em> (Hutchins), 16n26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accent, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptability, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accidence, 213, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accidence, The</em> (Devis), 16n21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accidence Will Happen</em> (Kamm), 42n3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative case, 30, 413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative function, 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acronym, 62, 218–19, 388, 401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action verb, 483, 484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active voice, 85, 86, 89, 90–92, 97–98, 145, 184, 210–11, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additive coordinating conjunction, 147, 421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address, punctuating, 349</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adfix, 214, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectival, 141, 165, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective, 58–70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute, 66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb, distinguished from, 65, 128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement with noun, 59, 407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articles functioning as, 61–63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositive, 64, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attribute, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attributive, 58, 64, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>be</em>-verb as part of, 112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>central, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common, 66, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparative, 66–67, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound, 60, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound modifier, 62–63, 69, 402, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinate, 69, 348, 356, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangling participle, 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date functioning as, 10, 63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 58, 402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definitive, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degrees, 66–68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative, 59, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive, 31, 58, 63, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distributive, 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double comparative, 67, 418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double superlative, 67, 478</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclamatory, 152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functioning as other parts of speech, 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gradable, 66–68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite, 22, 60, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interrogative, 59, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irregular, 67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limiting, 47, 58, 61–63, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linking verb with, 64–65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misused, 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noncomparable, 67–68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun functioning as, 33–34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeric, 58–59, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other parts of speech functioning as, 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle, distinguished from, 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peripheral, 403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic comparative, 66, 133, 418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic superlative, 66, 134, 478</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal, 60, 64, 69–70, 375–76, 385, 404, 457</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place names functioning as, 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position, 64–65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive, 66, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive, 59, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive functioning as, 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive with, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postpositive, 64, 199, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicate, 58, 64–65, 181, 186, 202, 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicative, 58, 461</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective (cont.)</td>
<td>defined, 127, 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositive, 402</td>
<td>degree, of, 131, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronominal, 60, 404</td>
<td>degrees, 133–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun with, 64</td>
<td>double, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper, 60, 404</td>
<td>exclamatory, 132, 152, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punctuating, 63, 69–70</td>
<td>flat, 128–29, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifying, 60, 403</td>
<td>focusing, 137–38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifying, 58</td>
<td>functions, 127, 135–36, 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantitative, 58–59</td>
<td>independent, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative, 52, 60, 404</td>
<td>intensifying, 127, 441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative pronoun functioning as, 52</td>
<td>interrogative, 131–32, 149, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple, 405</td>
<td>intransitive verb with, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjective, 404</td>
<td>introductory, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffixes, 58, 65, 66–67</td>
<td>irregular, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superlative, 66–67, 405</td>
<td>linking verb with, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthetic comparative, 66, 418</td>
<td>location, of, 130–31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthetic superlative, 66, 478</td>
<td>locative, 130–31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>types, 58–60, 68–70</td>
<td>manner, of, 130, 131, 204, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbal, 403</td>
<td>modal, 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb functioning as, 85</td>
<td>modifying nonverb, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective clause, 187, 414</td>
<td>modifying sentence, 127, 192, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective cluster, 134, 405</td>
<td>negating, 169, 171, 172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective–noun agreement, 59, 407</td>
<td>negative, 83, 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective phrase, 64, 171, 379, 457</td>
<td>noncomparable, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective pronoun, 42, 404</td>
<td>noun functioning as, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjunct, 58, 127, 163, 405</td>
<td>number, of, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adler, Mortimer, 317, 494</td>
<td>numeric, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adnoun, 70, 405</td>
<td>parallel pairs, 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced English Grammar, An (Kittredge &amp; Farley), 3n10, 497</td>
<td>particle, 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Lessons in English Grammar (Maxwell), 2n8</td>
<td>periphrastic comparative, 133, 418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb, 127–38</td>
<td>periphrastic superlative, 134, 478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective, distinguished from, 65, 128</td>
<td>phrasal, 130, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affirmative, 132</td>
<td>place, of, 130–31, 174–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auxiliary verb with, 135</td>
<td>position in sentence, 134–38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-verb with, 135</td>
<td>positive, 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cause, of, 131</td>
<td>prepositional, 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparative, 133</td>
<td>prepositional phrase, replacing, 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound, 130, 405</td>
<td>preposition functioning as, 82, 128, 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction, distinguished from, 149</td>
<td>reason, of, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction functioning as, 149</td>
<td>relative, 132, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunctive, 131, 133, 151, 406</td>
<td>sentence, 127, 192, 406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connective, 133, 406</td>
<td>standard, 128–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequence, of, 131</td>
<td>suffixes, 128, 131, 133–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequential, 131</td>
<td>superlative, 133–34, 477–78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthetic comparative, 133, 418</td>
<td>synthetic superlative, 134, 478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there as, 174–75
time, of, 130
transitional, 406
types, 130–33
verb functioning as, 85
verb phrase, within, 83, 135–36
adverb clause, 414
adverbial, 406, 407
identifying as sentence element, 164
infinitive with, 85, 135
linking verb with, 81–82
position in verb phrase, 135
prepositional phrase functioning as, 71, 130, 164, 204
suffix, 128
transformational grammar, 203–5
adverbial clause, 136–37, 165, 166, 188, 414
adverbial conjunction, 148–49, 406
adverbial noun, 407
adverbial objective, 34, 136, 407
adverbial phrase, 68, 131, 136, 141, 457
adverb phrase, 457
adversative clause, 147, 414, 421
adversative conjunction, 137, 147, 150, 421
affirmative adverb, 132
affixation, 214–15, 407
derivational, 215, 407
inflectional, 215, 407
negation, 169, 172
See also affix; infix; prefix; suffix
agent, 407
agentless passive, 455
agent noun, 32–33, 449
agglutination, 216, 407
agreement, 407
adjective–noun, 59, 407
pronoun–antecedent, 20, 21, 38–42, 44, 52, 408
subject–verb, 20, 95, 115–17, 118–20, 121, 408
See also concord
Aiken, Janet Rankin, 3
Aitchison, James, 18n48
Alcott, Louisa May, 370
Alexander, Caleb, 16
Alexander, Christopher, 396
Alexander, Henry, 289, 494, 501
Alford, Henry, 392
Algeo, John, 502
Allen, Harold Byron, vii, 491, 492, 501
Allen, Robert L., 7n27
Allende, Isabel, 358, 380
alliteration, 408
alphabetism, 441
Alston, R. C., 500
alternative question, 157, 466
Altick, Richard D., 397
Alvarez, Julia, 392
ambient it, 174
ambiguity, 33–34, 36, 53, 59, 84, 89, 137–38, 141, 168, 171, 173, 207–10, 408
ambisyllabic, 408
ambitransitive verb, 72, 484
Ambrose, Stephen, 366
amelioration, 408
American Grammar (J. Brown), 17
American Grammar, The (Ross), 17
American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, The, 225, 503
Americanism, 408
American Language, The (Mencken), 502
American Usage and Style (Copperud), 498
ampersand, 348
analytic comparative, 418
analytic language, 157, 160, 408
Analyzing Grammar (Kroeger), 18n46
anaphora, 36, 408
anaphoric ellipsis, 167–68
anaphoric pronoun, 36, 464
anaptyxis, 430
Anaya, Rudolfo, 388
Anderson, Wallace L., 281, 493
Angelou, Maya, 366
Anglo-Saxon, 453
animate noun, 449
Annotated Bibliography of 19th-Century Grammars of English, An (Görlach), 500
anomalous verb, 485
antecedent, 36–40, 49–50, 52, 53, 54, 118–19, 325, 327, 409
agreement with pronoun, 20, 21, 38–42, 44, 52, 408
Anthology of Errors, An (Whyte), 251, 493
anticipatory it, 174
anticipatory reference, 37, 414  
anticipatory subject, 119, 475  
antonym, 409  
binary, 409  
gradable, 409  
apphaeresis, 217, 409  
aphesis, 409  
apocopation, 409  
apocope, 217, 409  
apodosis, 166, 409  
apostrophe, 380–81  
contractions, 48, 380  
defined, 380  
genitive, 23, 31–32, 50 (see also apostrophe: possessive)  
obligatory, 381  
plurals, 25, 381  
possessive, 23, 31–32, 47–48, 50, 380  
s, with, 25, 381  
uses and misuses, 380–81  
aposition, 33, 409  
apositional compound, 419  
apositional phrase, 409–10  
appositive  
close, 410  
defined, 33, 192, 409–10  
diagramming, 192  
essential, 410  
gerund phrase functioning as, 88  
loose, 410  
nonessential, 410  
nonrestrictive, 33, 410  
placement in sentence, 64  
pronouns, with, 38, 41  
punctuation of, 33, 348, 355  
restrictive, 33, 355, 410  
appositive adjective, 64, 402  
appositive clause, 166, 414  
appositive phrase, 192, 457  
appreciation, 408  
“Approaching Usage in the Classroom” (Higgins), vii, 491  
archaism, 410  
Ars Grammatica (Donatus), 13  
article, 61–63  
choosing which to use, 62  
coordinate nouns with, 62  
defined, 61, 410  
definite, 61–63, 116, 198, 325, 410  
demonstrative value of, 62–63  
definite, 20–21, 22, 61–62, 198, 228, 325, 410  
omitted, 63  
pronoun substitute, 63  
proper name with, 61  
zero, 63, 410  
Art of Nonfiction, The (Rand), vii, 491  
Art of Plain Talk, The (Flesch), 502  
Ash, John, 15n14  
aspect, 94–95, 410  
continuous, 94–95, 411  
imperfect, 94–95, 411  
perfect, 94–95, 411 (see also perfect tense)  
progressive, 94–95, 97–98, 411, 481 (see also progressive tense)  
asserting verb, 485  
assertive, 425  
assimilation, 411  
Associated Press Guide to Punctuation, The (Capon), 504  
Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, The, 31, 502  
assonance, 411  
asterisk, 411  
asyndetic coordination, 424  
asyndeton, 411  
attribute adjective, 404  
attribute complement, 419  
attribute noun, 450, 461  
attribute pronoun, 45, 461, 464  
attributive, 411  
attributive adjective, 58, 64, 402  
attributive noun, 33–34, 449  
Auchincloss, Louis, 388  
Auerbach, Erich, 383  
Aurelius, Marcus, 258, 493  
Austen, Jane, 387  
“Authority and American Usage” (D. Wallace), 231, 493  
Armstrong, Karen, 377
auxiliary verb, 121–26
  adverb with, 135
  contractions, 83–84, 169–70
  defined, 83, 121, 411–12
  dummy, 125, 412
  empty, 412
  interrogative sentence, in, 83
  modal (see modal auxiliary verb)
  not with, 169–70
  parallelism, 177
  semi-auxiliary, 412
  transformational grammar, 201–2
  verb phrase, in, 83–84, 135
Ayto, John, 503

Babel, Isaac, 388, 495
Bach, Emmon, 498
back-formation, 217, 412
backshifting, 98–99, 166, 412
bad grammar, 14, 258, 435–36
Baker, Sheridan, 175, 492, 504
Balch, William S., 17
Balick, Chris, 504
Baldridge, Letitia, 395
bare infinitive, 189–90, 440
Barker, Isaac, 14n8
Barnet, Sylvan, 504
Barnhart, Robert K., 503
Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology, The
  (Barnhart, ed.), 503
Barrie, J. M., 371
Bartley, Robert L., 384
Barzun, Jacques, 370
base, 474
Bateson, F. W., 347
Bauer, Harry C., 382
Bauer, Laurie, 18n52
Baugh, Albert C., 501
Beatty, Jerome Jr., 384
being verb, 485
Belloc, Hilaire, 361
Bellow, Saul, 388
Beneath the Crust of Words (Foley), 159, 492
Benedict, Stewart, 497
Berger, John, 367
Berman, Morton, 504
Bernstein, Theodore M., 498

Bett, Henry, 304, 315, 494
Between You and Me (M. Norris), 499
be-verb
  adjective or noun, as part of, 112
  adverbs with, 135
  cleft sentence, in, 178–79
  conjugation, 112–15
  contracted, 84
  defined, 81, 483
  passive voice, 90–91, 98, 207, 211
  progressive aspect, 91–92, 98
  subjective complement, 163, 186
  transformational grammar, 201, 202, 207, 211
  whiz-deletion, 90–91
See also linking verb
bias-free language, 324–28
  gender-neutral language, 44, 47, 278, 324–28
  labels, 328
  personal characteristics, 328
  problematic suffixes, 327–28
  pronouns, 324–27
  traits, 328
  types of bias, 324
  writer's credibility, 324, 328
Biber, Douglas, 245n1, 497
Bierce, Ambrose, 387
binary antonyms, 409
Bingham, Caleb, 16
Black, Max, 226, 493
blend, 489
Boardman, Phillip C., 495
Bolton, W. F., 82, 491
Bono (Paul David Hewson), 383
Booth, Wayne C., ii, 182, 492
borrowing, 412
Bosworth, Sheila, 375
bounded noun, 449
bound morpheme, 214, 447
Bowles, Paul, 380
brackets, 390–91
citation, 391
defined, 390
ellipsis dots, displacing, 391
other punctuation, with, 389, 390, 391
parentheses, within, 390
brackets (cont.)
   quotations, in, 390
Bradbury, Ray, 349
Braddock, Richard Reed, 500
Bradley, Henry, 283, 313, 493, 494
Brain Droppings (Carlin), 288, 493
branching diagram, 482
Brief Grammar of Modern Written English, A
   (Gray), 18n42
Briticism, Britishism, 413
Brittain, Robert, 504
broad construction, 413
broad reference, 37, 413
Brogan, T. V. F., 505
Brown, Goold, 2, 497
Brown, James, 17
Brustein, Robert, 388
Bryant, Margaret M., 501
Buckley, William F., 370
bullets, 177–78, 394–95
Bunyan, John, 313
Burchfield, Robert W., 1n1, 5, 18n49, 498, 501, 503
Burgess, Anthony, 365
Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 370
Burnham, James, 362
Burr, Aaron, 17
Burton, William, 504
Burton, Richard, 142, 492
Bushnell, Candace, 392
Butler, Noble, 17n41
Cable, Thomas, 501, 507
calque, 218, 444
Cambieri, Giulia, 384
Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, The
   (Crystal), 501
Cambridge Grammar of the English Language, The
   (Huddleston & Pullum), 8n29,
   18n47, 245n2, 497
Cambridge Guide to English Usage, The
   (Peters), 499
Candelaria, Frederick, 492
capitalization, 19–20, 43, 60, 153, 364
Capon, Rene J., 504
cardinal number, 58–59, 198, 451
Careful Writer, The (Bernstein), 498
Carey, G. V., 504
Carlin, George, 288, 493
Carnegie, Dale, 387
Carnes, Mark, 2n2, 367
Caro, Robert A., 383
Carr, Jean Ferguson, 500
Carr, Stephen L., 500
case, 29–32
   accusative, 30, 413
   common, 29–30, 413
   defined, 23, 29, 41, 413
   genitive (see genitive)
   inflection, 23
   nominative, 29–30, 41–42, 43, 44–45, 413
   noun, 23, 29–32
   objective, 41–42, 43, 143, 413
   oblique, 413
   possessive (see possessive)
   pronoun, 23, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44–45, 52–53, 143, 164
   subjective, 413
See also function
catachresis, 223, 292, 414
cataphora, 37, 414
cataphoric ellipsis, 167–68
Cathcart, Thomas, 389
Cather, Willa, 365
Cecil, Henry, 366
central adjective, 402
Chalker, Sylvia, 497
Chandler, Raymond, 351, 370
changes in meaning. See meaning, changes in
Chatting About English (Jowett), 97, 135, 492
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 32, 313
Chayefsky, Paddy, 387
Cheever, Susan, 370
Chicago Manual of Style, The, 10–11, 366,
   502, 507
Chomsky, Noam, 4, 195
Christian, Darrell, 502
Christie, Agatha, 363
Chubb, Percival, 3n14, 500
Churchill, Winston, 142, 182, 357
Circles of Gomer, The (R. Jones), 16n20
clang association, 414
Clark, John, 14
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark, Kenneth</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class dialect</td>
<td>4, 257, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clausal</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clause</td>
<td>165–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>187, 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbial</td>
<td>136–37, 165, 166, 188, 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adversative</td>
<td>147, 414, 421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apodosis</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>166, 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comment</td>
<td>414–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparative</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complement</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complex sentence</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound-complex sentence</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concessive</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>166, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmation</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
<td>165–66, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinate</td>
<td>159, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>165, 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>90, 133, 136, 159, 165, 194, 358, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagramming</td>
<td>187–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellipsis with</td>
<td>167–68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elliptical</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embedded</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essential</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finite</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund</td>
<td>191–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hypothetical conditional</td>
<td>99, 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>52, 89–90, 133, 136, 159, 165, 183, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limiting</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main</td>
<td>132, 166–68, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matrix</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonessential</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonlimiting</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonrestrictive</td>
<td>187, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>188–89, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protasis</td>
<td>166, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative</td>
<td>52–54, 165–66, 168–69, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remote relative</td>
<td>53–54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restrictive</td>
<td>187, 355, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentential relative</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple sentence</td>
<td>159, 472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>178–79, 417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantative</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that-clause</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>types of</td>
<td>165–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whiz-deletion</td>
<td>91, 165–66, 168–69, 179, 488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleft sentence</td>
<td>178–80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-verb in</td>
<td>178–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>178–79, 470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functions</td>
<td>179–80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>179, 471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative pronoun</td>
<td>178–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>types</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whiz-deletion</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton, Bill</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clipped form</td>
<td>217, 417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clipping</td>
<td>217, 417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clitic</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close appositive</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed syllable</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed word class</td>
<td>74, 489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coar, Thomas</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobbett, William</td>
<td>43, 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coetzee, J. M.</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognate</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognate object</td>
<td>71, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen, Cathy J.</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cohesion</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collective noun</td>
<td>19, 20–21, 22, 39, 116, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collocation</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colon</td>
<td>361–64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalization with</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citations</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linking clauses or phrases</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists</td>
<td>361–62, 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quotation</td>
<td>362–63, 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quotation marks, with</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salutation</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbian Accidence, The (Gurney)</td>
<td>16n32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comly, John</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comma</td>
<td>347–56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addresses</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
comma (cont.)
  adjectives, 69, 356
  adverb, 352
  ampersand, 348
  appositive, 33, 348
  compound predicate, 352–53
  dates, 63, 349
  defined, 347
  direct question, 350
  independent clauses, 347, 353
  interjections, 152–53
  introductions, 347
  lists, 350, 358
  misused, 351–56
  nonrestrictive element, 348, 351
  numbers, 349
  parenthesis, 368
  place-names, 60
  quotation, 349, 352
  quotation marks, with, 384
  restrictive phrase, 355
  salutation, 351, 363
  semicolon, displaced by, 359, 360
  sentence-starting conjunction, 354
  serial, 348
  speech, direct and indirect, 349
  splice, 281, 353, 417
  subject and verb, 351
  subordinate clause, 347
  suffixes following names, 356
  transitions, 347
  verb and object, 351–52
  vocative, 350
Commager, Henry Steele, 348
command, 92, 158, 428
comma splice, 281, 353, 417
comment clause, 414–15
common adjective, 66, 402
common case, 29–30, 413
common gender, 40, 433–34
common noun, 19, 20, 24, 449
Common-School Grammar of the English Language, A (Kerl), 2n7
Commonsense Grammar (Aiken), 3n12
comparative, 418
  analytic, 418
  double, 67, 418
  periphrastic, 66, 133, 418
  suffix, 215
  synthetic, 66, 133, 418
  comparative adjective, 66–67, 402
  comparative adverb, 133
  comparative clause, 415
  comparison, 67, 133–34, 136–37, 147, 148, 216, 418
“Compendious English Grammar, A” (Dyche), 15n10
complement
  attribute, 419
  defined, 418
  diagramming, 185, 186
  factitive, 419
  identifying in sentence, 163–64
  inner, 164, 418
  object, 419
  objective, 85, 88, 163–64, 185, 419
  objective attribute, 419
  outer, 164, 419
  predicate, 85, 419
  subjective, 81, 88, 162, 163–64, 183, 184, 186, 419
  that-complement, 419
complementary infinitive, 85, 440
complementary object, 419
complement clause, 415
Complete Plain Words, The (E. Gowers), 502
complete predicate, 84, 162, 461
completer, 418
complete sentence, 470
complete subject, 162, 475
complete verb, 84, 483
Complete Works of Isaac Babel, The (Constantine, trans.), 495
complex preposition, 140–41, 462
complex sentence, 159, 165, 194, 470
compositional compound word, 215–16
Composition in the University (Crowley), 500
Composition—Rhetoric (Connors), 500
compound, 215–16, 217, 419–20
  appositional, 419
  compositional, 215–16
  conjunction, 146, 421
  endocentric, 419
  exocentric, 420
indefinite pronoun, 56
neoclassical, 420
noncompositional, 215–16
compound adjective, 60, 403
compound adverb, 130, 405
compound-complex sentence, 159, 194, 470
compounding, 215–16, 420
compound modifier, 62–63, 69, 402, 404
compound noun, 20, 26–27, 31, 69, 199, 376, 449
compound object, 41, 452
compound personal pronoun, 48–49, 465
compound predicate, 159, 352–53, 461
compound preposition, 139–40, 462
compound pronoun, 48–49, 55, 464
compound relative pronoun, 55
compound subject, 41, 117–18, 120, 475
compound tense, 97, 480
compound word. See compound
Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, A (Quirk), 18n50, 498
concessive clause, 415
Concise Oxford Dictionary, The, 503
Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, The (Hoad, ed.), 503
Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, The (Baldick), 504
concord, 407
notional, 21, 116, 479
proximity, of, 432
See also agreement
concrete noun, 19, 22–23, 449
conditional clause, 166, 415
conditional sentence, 166, 470
confirmation clause, 467
conjugation, 421
progressive, 91–92
to be, of, 112–15
to call, of, 99–105
to hide, of, 105–11
conjunction, 146–51
additive coordinating, 147, 421
adverb, distinguished from, 149
adverbial, 148–49, 406
adversative, 137, 147, 150, 421
beginning sentence with, 150–51
compound, 146, 421

contrast
contrast, 146, 151, 169, 347, 421–22
copulative, 147, 421
correlating, 421
correlative, 146–47, 171, 176, 193, 421
defined, 146, 421–22
diagramming, 193
disguised, 149
disjunctive, 117, 118, 146, 147, 151, 421
expletive, 149
final, 147, 421–22
half, 406
illative, 406
illative coordinating, 147, 421–22
interrogative adverbial, 149
negation, 169, 171
number of verb, 151
parallelism, 146–47, 176
participial preposition, distinguished from, 149
participle functioning as, 149
phrasal, 146, 422
pronoun with, 146
relative adverbial, 149
separative coordinating, 147, 421
simple, 146, 422
subordinating, 141, 146–48, 161, 165, 187, 188, 194, 243, 422
conjunctive adverb, 131, 133, 151, 406
conjunctive compound subject, 117–18
conjunctive phrase, 148
connecting verb, 81–82, 485
connective, 120, 146, 165–66, 422
connective adverb, 133, 406
Connors, Robert J., 500
connotation, 422
Conrad, Susan, 497
consequent, 409
consequential adverb, 131
Consider the Lobster and Other Essays (D. Wallace), 493
consonance, 422
consonant, 422
Constantine, Peter W., 495
constituent, 161–62, 422
defined, 422
constituent (cont.)
  immediate, 161–62, 422–23
  sentence element, 161–62
constructio ad sensum, 479
construction, 423
contact clause, 165–66, 415
Contemporary Rhetoric (Winterowd), 383, 492, 495
content word, 61, 98, 489
continuous aspect, 94–95, 411
continuous tense, 94, 97–98, 481
contraction, 48, 83, 84, 170, 380, 423
contrasting coordinating conjunction, 147, 421
conversion, 33–35, 70, 82, 216, 423
coordinate, 332, 421
coordinate adjective, 69, 348, 356, 403
coordinate clause, 159, 415
coordinated pronouns, 245
coordinate noun, 62
coordinate objects, 452
coordinate subjects, 475
coordinate verbs, 159, 483
coordinating conjunction, 146, 147, 151, 169, 347, 421–22
coordination, 175–76, 357, 423–24
  asyndetic, 424
  correlative, 424
  polysyndetic, 424
  syndetic, 424
cordinator, 421
Copeland, Rita, 13n2, 14n3, 491, 500
Copperud, Roy H., 498
copula, 81, 485
copular, 424
copular verb, 485
copulative conjunction, 147, 421
copulative verb, 485
correlating conjunctions, 421
correlative, 182, 266, 424
correlative conjunctions, 146–47, 171, 176, 193, 421
correlative coordination, 424
countable noun, 22–23, 449–50
count noun, 19, 20, 22–23, 28, 57, 449–50
Cousins, Norman, 369
Coward, Noel, 351
Craftsmanship in Writing (Pink), 302, 494
Crane, Hart, 348
Crane, Stephen, 347
Crenshaw, Dave, 389
Crombie, Alexander, 16
Cronin, Helena, 375
Crowley, Sharon, 500
Crystal, David, 375
Crowley, Sharon, 497, 501
Cudddon, J. A., 504
Curme, George O., 3, 497
Dalton-Puffer, Christiane, 500
dangler, 65, 85–86, 89–90, 141, 242, 424–25
dangling modifier, 424–25
dashes, 64, 152–53, 318, 353, 358, 361, 369–74, 377, 378, 392, 393, 402. See also em-dash; en-dash
date
  functioning as descriptive adjective, 10, 63
  punctuating, 63, 349, 392
Davies, Hugh Sykes, 345n1
Dawson, Nelson L., 380
DeBoar, John J., 500
de Botton, Alain, 390
decimal point, 388, 389
declarative, 157, 179, 388, 425
declarative sentence, 157, 179, 388, 470
declarative yes–no question, 157, 466
declension, 9, 23, 238, 282, 425
deep structure, 205, 209–10, 474
defective, 122–23, 425
defective verb, 122, 483–84
deferred preposition, 462
deferred subject, 475
definite article, 61–63, 116, 198, 325, 410
definiteness, 425
definite noun, 450
definitive adjective, 403
degree, 425
  adjectives, of, 66–68
  adverbs, of, 133–34
  comparative (see comparative)
  positive (see positive)
  superlative (see superlative)
degree adverb, 131, 406
deoitc pronoun, 49
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deixis</td>
<td>98, 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed subject</td>
<td>119, 475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative</td>
<td>62–63, 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative adjective</td>
<td>59, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative pronoun</td>
<td>37, 42, 49–50, 198, 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denominalized verb</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denominal verb</td>
<td>34, 217, 484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denotation</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dental preterite</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deontic</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependent clause</td>
<td>90, 133, 136, 159, 165, 194, 358, 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derivation</td>
<td>214, 426, 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derivational affix</td>
<td>215, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derivational suffix</td>
<td>215, 477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive adjective</td>
<td>31, 58, 63, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive grammar</td>
<td>196, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive possessive</td>
<td>30–31, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptivism</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determiner</td>
<td>19, 20, 22, 198–99, 426–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Tocqueville, Alexis</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Standard English 1300–1800, The (L. Wright, ed.)</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devious Derivations (Rawson)</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devis, Ellin</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diacritical mark</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diaeresis</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagramming sentences</td>
<td>181–94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositives</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefits and uses of</td>
<td>181–82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clauses</td>
<td>187–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complements</td>
<td>185, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunctions</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constituent elements and</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criticized</td>
<td>3, 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerunds</td>
<td>191–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how-to, traditional</td>
<td>183–94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitives</td>
<td>189–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modifiers</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objects</td>
<td>184–85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participles</td>
<td>190–91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicate</td>
<td>183, 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositional phrases</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbs</td>
<td>189–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialect</td>
<td>1, 223, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
<td>4, 257, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regional</td>
<td>223, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialectal speech</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickens, Charles</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson, Patric</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diction</td>
<td>207, 258, 393, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dictionaries</td>
<td>225, 443, 503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage, A (Bergen Evans &amp; C. Evans)</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of English Grammar (Aitchison)</td>
<td>18n48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Linguistics (Pei &amp; Gaynor)</td>
<td>18n46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, A (Quinn)</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Literary Terms, A (Barnet, Berman &amp; Burto)</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Modern English Usage, A (Fowler)</td>
<td>318, 462, 495, 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of True Etymologies (Room)</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Word Origins (Ayto)</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didion, Joan</td>
<td>205, 492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dieresis</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>differentiation</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digraph</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilworth, Thomas, 14n8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionysios Thrax</td>
<td>13–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diphthong</td>
<td>264, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct address</td>
<td>37–38, 92, 153, 192–93, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct discourse</td>
<td>98, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive</td>
<td>158, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct question</td>
<td>131, 350, 364, 386, 466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct speech</td>
<td>98, 349, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse</td>
<td>98, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct</td>
<td>98, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>98–99, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disjunctive</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disjunctive compound subject</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disjunctive conjunction</td>
<td>117, 118, 146, 147, 151, 421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dissimilation</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ditransitive verb</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobie, J. Frank</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donatus, Aelius</td>
<td>13–14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
double adverb, 129
double comparative, 67, 418
double genitive, 32, 460
double modal, 429
double negative, 132, 172–73, 429, 436
double possessive, 32, 47, 460
double subject, 475
double superlative, 67, 478
doublet, 429
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, 371
drift, 429
Dryden, John, 280
d-structure, 474
dummy auxiliary verb, 125, 412
dummy it, 174
dummy subject, 119
dummy word, 431
Duncan, Daniel, 14n8
Dyche, Thomas, 15
dynamic verb, 72–73, 483, 484
dysphemism, 429

Eagleson, Robert D., 40n2, 502
Early Modern English, 429
echo question, 429
echo utterance, 429
editorial we, 46
Ehrenreich, Barbara, 349
Elbow, Peter, 392
elements, grammatical. See grammatical elements
Elements of English Grammar, The (Ussher), 16n18
Elements of Style, The (Strunk & E. B. White), 31
Elephants of Style, The (Walsh), 499
Eliot, T. S., 365, 371, 495
elision, 10, 429
ellipsis, 167–68, 430
anaphoric, 167–68
cataphoric, 167–68
whiz-deletion, 91, 165–66, 168–69, 179, 488
ellipsis dots, 396–99
brackets, displaced by, 391
defined, 396, 430
form, 398

omissions, 397–98
quotations, 397–98, 399
signals, 396
elliptical clause, 415
Ellis, Havelock, 382
Ellison, Ralph, 347
Eloquent President, The (Ronald White), 6n26
embedded clause, 415
embedded question, 467
em-dash, 369–72
afterthoughts, 370
defined, 369
hyphen, displaced by, 378
insertions, 369
interruption, 152–53, 370–71
introducing list or specification, 370
no more than two in a sentence, 371
other punctuation, with, 372
setting off, 369–70
emphatic pronoun, 464–65
emphatic verb, 125, 484
empty auxiliary verb, 412
empty it, 174
enclitic, 430
Encyclopedia of English Grammar (Hall), 18n41
Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins, The (Hendrickson), 503
en-dash, 373–74, 393
endocentric compound, 419
English Accidence, Being the Grounds of Our Mother Tongue, The (Anonymous), 15n13
English for Pleasure (Strong), vii, 491, 502
English Grammar (Curme), 497
English Grammar (Gardiner), 16n31
English Grammar (Murray), 2
English Grammar, for Schools (Lindsay), 17n41
English Grammar, The (Jonson), 14n4, 14n5, 14n6, 15n13
English Grammar Adapted to Different Classes of Learners (Murray), 16n19
English Grammar in American Schools before 1850 (Lyman), 500
English Grammar in Familiar Lectures (Kirkham), 6
English Grammar Made Easy to the Teacher and Pupil (Comly), 16n34
English Grammars and English Grammar (R. Allen), 7n27
English Grammar Showing the Nature and Grounds of the English Language, An (Barker), 14n8
English Grammar Simplified (Fernald), 497
English Grammars Written in English (Alston), 500
“English Grammar Writing” (Linn), 5n21
English Grammatical Categories and the Tradition to 1800 (Michael), 500
English in Nineteenth-Century England (Görlich), 500
English Language, The (Burchfield), 501
English Language, The (Crystal), 501
English Language, The (L. Smith), 502
English Language Scholarship (Gneuss), 500
English Syntax (Curme), 497
English Transformational Grammar (Jacobs & Rosenbaum), 498
English Words and Their Background (McKnight), 501
Entick, John, 15
epenthesis, 217, 430
eponym, 20, 430
Epstein, Jacob, 359
Epstein, Joseph, 376
ergative verb, 72, 484
Essay Towards an English Grammar, An (Fell), 16n17
Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar, An (Greenwood), 14n7
essential appositive, 410
essential clause, 416
Essentials of English Grammar (Jespersen), 3n11, 497
Etymological Dictionary of Modern English Language, An (Weekley), 504
Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, An (Skeat), 504
etymological sense, 431
etymology, 431

Etymology and Syntax of the English Language, The (Crombie), 16n33
etymon, 431
euphemism, 431
euphony, 25, 151, 285, 329, 431
euphuism, 431
Evans, Bergen, 498
Evans, Bertrand, 3, 491
Evans, Cornelia, 498
Every-Day English (Richard White), 296, 494
Evolution of the English Language, The (McKnight), 502
exclamation, 7, 92, 132, 152, 158, 167
exclamation mark, 152, 157, 367, 368, 384, 387
exclamatory adverb, 132, 152, 406
exclamatory question, 158, 467
exclamatory sentence, 431
existential sentence, 471
exocentric compound, 420
Exodus 1–18 (Introduction) (Propp), 299, 494
expanded tense, 98, 480
expletive, 38, 46, 119, 149, 173–75, 178–79, 431
expletive conjunction, 149
expletive it, 38, 46, 173–74, 178–79
expletive pronoun, 38, 46
expletive there, 38, 119, 173–75
expressions of multitude, 20–21, 116
expressions of partition, 21–22
extraposition, 431
factitive complement, 419
factitive object, 419
factitive verb, 164, 484
Fadiman, Anne, 398
false attraction, 432
Farb, Peter, 225, 492
Farley, Frank Edgar, 3, 497
Farnsworth, Ward, 504
Farnsworth’s Classical English Rhetoric (Farnsworth), 504
Fadin, Konstantin, 267, 323, 493, 494
Fell, John, 16
feminine gender, 24, 40, 44, 47, 236, 256, 271, 327, 434
“Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses” (Twain), 262, 493
Fenn, Lady Eleanor, 16
Fernald, James C., 497
Fey, Tina, 363
figurative language, 432
figure of speech, 37, 44, 432
filler, 239, 432
final conjunction, 147, 421–22
Finegan, Edward, 497
finite clause, 416
finite verb, 41, 84, 85, 116, 162, 165, 484
First Lessons in English Grammar (Kerl), 2n7
Fisher, Anne, 15
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 396
flat adverb, 128–29, 406
Fleming, Ian, 351
Flesch, Rudolf, 502
Flexner, Stuart Berg, 501
Florey, Kitty Burns, 381
focusing adverb, 137–38
Foley, Louis, 159, 492
folk etymology, 432
Follett, Wilson, 265, 493, 498
form class, 455
formulaic subjunctive, 476
form word, 489
Forster, E. M., 363
Fowler, F. G., 499
Fowler, H. W., 318, 462, 495, 499
Fowler’s Modern English Usage, 225
fragment, 432–33
fragmentary sentence, 432–33
Francis, W. Nelson, 14, 491
Frazee, Bradford, 17n41
free morpheme, 214, 447
Friedrichsen, G. W. S., 503
Fries, Charles Carpenter, 3–4, 5
fronting, 442
Frye, Northrup, 504
full sentence, 471
full verb, 124–25, 485
function
  accusative, 30
  defined, 29, 433
  nominative, 29–30
  objective, 30
  subjective, 29–30
  functional morpheme, 489
  functional shift (variation), 70, 423, 433. See also conversion
  function word, 489
  fused participle, 88–89, 433
  future-perfect progressive, 98
  future-perfect tense, 86, 94, 97, 480
  future tense, 94, 96, 480
  Galanes, Philip, 380
  Gandhi, Mohandas K., 366–67
  Gardiner, Jane, 16
  Gardner, Erle Stanley, 348
  Gardner, John, 394
  Garner on Language and Writing, 170n1, 501
  Garner’s Dictionary of Legal Usage, 312n3, 499
  Garner’s Law of Loanwords, 433
  Garner’s Modern English Usage, 42, 225, 318n4, 499, 505
  Gaynor, Frank, 18n46
gender
  common, 40, 433–34
  defined, 24, 433–34
  determining, 44
  expressing, 44
  feminine, 24, 40, 44, 47, 236, 256, 271, 327, 434
  indefinite, 57, 434
  masculine, 24, 44, 46, 47, 324, 434
  neuter, 434
  noun, 24
  pronoun, 38, 40–41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 52, 57
  suffixes, 24, 326, 327–28
  gender neutrality, 44, 47, 278, 324–28
generalization, 434
generative grammar, 195
generative grammarians, 4
generative-transformational grammar, 195
generative-transformational theory, 195
generic, 19, 47, 57, 278, 324, 434
genitive
  apostrophe, 23, 31–32, 50
  case, 23, 30–32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>contrasted with possessive, 30–31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 30–31, 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive-possessive function, 30–31, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double, 32, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functions, 30–31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group, 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group and joint possessive, 32, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inflected, 23, 31–32, 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measure, of, 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>names, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of-form, 31–32, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>origin, of, 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partitive, 21–22, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postgenitive, 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositional phrase, replacing, 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns, 43, 44, 50, 54–55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See also possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genung, George Frederick, 137, 492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gershwin, Ira, 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund, 87–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangling, 89–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 87, 191–92, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagramming, 191–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functions, 35, 87–88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fused participle, 88–89, 433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitive substitute, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modifiers, 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object of, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle, distinguished from, 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present-perfect, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund clause, 191–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund phrase, 88, 191–92, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get-passive, 275, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gift of Tongues, The</em> (Schlauch), 257, 493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill, Brendan, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginsburg, Ruth Bader, 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glossary, 8, 10, 401–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Glossary of Grammatical, Rhetorical, and Other Language-Related Terms” (Garner), 505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Glossary of Literary Terms, A</em> (Abrams), 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gneuss, Helmut, 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg, Natalie, 376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, C. Edward, 497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Advice on Writing (Safire &amp; Safir, eds.), 371, 495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good English (Vallins), 351, 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good English and the Grammarians (Greenbaum), 242, 293, 493, 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good grammar, 4, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google ngrams, 8–10, 225–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon, Karen Elizabeth, 375, 495, 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorky, Maxim, 493, 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Görlach, Manfred, 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorrell, Robert M., 18n43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gowers, Ernest, 499, 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gowers, Rebecca, 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gradable, 66, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gradable adjective, 66–68, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gradable antonyms, 409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Graded Lessons in English</em> (Kellogg &amp; Reed), 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptability, 401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad, 14, 258, 435–36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>campaign against traditional, 3–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 1–2, 7, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive, 196, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good, 4, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>importance of, vii, 5–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguists’ views of, 4–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>popularity and decline, 2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prescriptive, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preventive, 40, 52, 121, 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transformational, 4, 195–211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage, contrasted with, 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar (Hurford), 7n28, 497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Grammar and Writing” (Evans), 3, 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Book for You and I (Oops, Me!), A (Good), 497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar of English Grammars (G. Brown), 2, 497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Index

Hermes, or A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Universal Grammar (J. Harris), 15n12
heteronym, 437
Higgins, V. Louise, vii, 491
Higher Lessons in English (Kellogg & Reed), 181
historical grammar, 436
historical-present tense, 95, 481
History of the English Language, A (Baugh & Cable), 501
History of the English Language (Lounsbury), 239, 493
Hitchens, Christopher, 364, 383
Hoad, T. F., 503
Hobbes, Thomas, 279, 363
Hobson, Thomas, 279
Hodges, C. Walter, 386
homograph, 437
homonym, 437
homophone, 437
“How to Read a Dictionary” (Adler), 317, 494
Huddleston, Rodney D., 8n29, 18n47, 245n2, 497
Hunter, Susan, 500
Hurford, James R., 7n28, 497
Hutchins, John, 16
Huxley, Aldous, 350, 365
hybrid, 437
hypallage, 438
hypercorrection, 238, 244, 438
hypernym, 478
hyphaeresis, 217, 438
hyphen, 375–79
accentuation, 377
adjective phrase, 379
compound nouns, 26, 376
defined, 375
em-dash, displacing, 378
en-dash, displacing, 373
fractions, 376
names, in, 377
noun phrases, 376
numbers, 377
phonetic uses, 377
phrasal adjectives, 60, 69–70, 375
phrasal verb, 82, 379
prefix, with, 378
proper names, 377
separation, 377
slash, displaced by, 393
suffix, with, 377–78
suspensive, 69, 376
hyponym, 438
hypotaxis, 438
Ibsen, Henrik, 363
idiolect, 438
idioms, prepositional, 329–44
illative conjunction, 406
illative coordinating conjunction, 147, 421–22
illeism, 438
illiteracy, 438
immediate constituent, 161–62, 422–23
imperative, 439
mood, 92, 158, 177, 325, 446
vocative, 439
imperative sentence, 158, 172, 471
imperfect aspect, 94–95, 411
impersonal pronoun, 464
impersonal sentence, 471
Improved Grammar of the English Language, An (Frazee), 17n41
Improved Grammar of the English Language, An (Webster), 17n37
inanimate noun, 450
inclusive we, 439
incomplete sentence, 471
indefinite adjective, 22, 60, 403
indefinite article, 20–21, 22, 61–62, 198, 228, 325, 410
indefinite gender, 57, 434
indefinite noun, 450
indefinite pronoun, 42, 46–47, 48–49, 56–57, 118, 197, 327, 464
independent adverb, 406
independent clause, 52, 89–90, 133, 136, 159, 165, 183, 416
independent element, 439
independent genitive, 460
independent possessive, 47, 460

559
indicative, 439
   mood, 92–93, 94, 447
indicator, 444–45
indirect discourse, 98–99, 428
indirect object, 161, 163, 185, 452
indirect question, 131, 148, 149, 386, 467
indirect speech, 98–99, 349, 428
infinitive, 84–86
   adverbal with, 85, 135
   bare, 189–90, 440
   complementary, 85, 440
   dangling, 85–86
   defined, 84–85, 440
   diagramming, 189–90
   gerund, substitute for, 87
   marked, 440
   object of, 452
   perfect, 440
   plain, 440
   present, 440
   pure, 440
   simple, 440
   split, 85, 135–36, 203, 440
   subject of, 476
   unmarked, 440
   uses of, 85
infinitive phrase, 85–86, 189–90, 458
infix, 214–15, 217, 441
infl ect, 441
infl ected genitive, 23, 31–32, 50
infl ected possessive, 31, 460
infl ection, 213, 441
   case, 23
   genitive, 23, 31–32, 50
   irregular verbs, 73–81, 441
   regular verbs, 73, 441
   syntax, contrasted with, 157, 160
   verb properties, reflecting, 90 (see also
      conjugation)
infl ectional aff ix, 215, 407
infl ectional morphology, 213, 401
infl ectional suffix, 215, 477
inflexion. See inflection
initialism, 218–19, 228, 441
inner complement, 164, 418
“In Praise of the Humble Comma” (Iyer), 345, 494
intensifier, 127, 441
intensifying adverb, 127, 441
intensifying pronoun, 464–65
interjection, 152–53, 158, 192, 387, 442
interrogative, 442
interrogative adjective, 59, 403
interrogative adverb, 131–32, 149, 406
interrogative marker, 444
interrogative pronoun, 38, 42, 51, 52–53, 189, 465
interrogative sentence, 55, 83–84, 157–58, 172, 206, 386, 471
interrupter, 152–53, 442
intonation, 138, 442
intonation pattern, 442
intransitive verb, 71–72, 81–82, 135, 202, 485
Introduction to Transformational Grammars,
   An (Bach), 498
introductory adverb, 406
introductory it, 174
introductory phrase, comma with, 347
Introductory Readings on Language
   (Anderson & Stageberg, eds.), 281, 493
Introductory Transformational Grammar, An
   (Liles), 498
intrusive r, 442
intrusive schwa, 442
invariable noun, 450
inversion, 29–30, 119, 157–58, 161, 442
Invisible Giants (Carnes, ed.), 2n2
Ironside, Elizabeth, 396
irregular, 442
irregular adjective, 67
irregular adverb, 134
irregular inflection, 441
irregular plural, 27–28, 458
irregular verb, 73–81, 86–87, 96, 485
irreversible binomial, 445
Iyer, Pico, 345, 494
Jacobs, Roderick A., 498
Jacobsen, Sally, 502
Jacoby, Susan, 383
Jain, Sanjay, 376
Jennings, Charles B., 494
Jespersen, Otto, 3, 314, 494, 497, 501
General Index

Johansson, Stig, 497
John of Salisbury, vii, 491
Johnson, Samuel, 363
joint possessive, 32, 460
Jones, Gloria, 502
Jones, Rowland, 16
Jonson, Ben, 14, 15
Jowett, W. P., 97, 135, 492
Joyce, James, 361

Kael, Pauline, 383
Kahneman, Daniel, 373
Kamm, Oliver, 8n29, 42n3
Kammen, Michael, 383
Kapp, Reginald O., 354, 494
Kastovsky, Dieter, 500
Kaufers, Walter V., 500
Kear, Graham C., 350
Kellogg, Brainerd, 181, 182, 207, 454, 468
Kennedy, David M., 349
Ker, W. P., 368
Kerl, Simon, 2
Kesey, Ken, 377
King, Lester S., 144, 492
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 350
King’s English, The (H. Fowler & F. Fowler), 499

Kirk, Russell, 382
Kirkham, Samuel, 6
Kittredge, George Lyman, 3, 497
Klein, Daniel, 389
Kline, Michael J., 349
Klopfner, Peter H., 350
Knight, Dame Laura, 358
Kolln, Martha, 18n50
Krapp, George Philip, 501
Kroeger, Paul, 18n46
Krutch, Joseph Wood, 375

Labyrinth of Language, The (Black), 226, 493
Laird, Charlton, 18n43, 495
Lamberts, J. J., 499
Landon, Brooks, 358
language, 443
Language (Trask), 96n4, 284, 493
Language Machine, The (R. Harris), 462, 495
Language of 1984, The (Bolton), 82, 491

Lanham, Richard A., 505
Lapsing into a Comma (Walsh), 499
Lauchman, Richard, 502
learned loanword, 444
Lectures on Language (Balch), 17n39
Leech, Geoffrey, 497
Legacy of Language, The (Boardman, ed.), 495
Legal Writing in Plain English (Garner), 312n3
Lehrer, Jonah, 389
Lemann, Thomas B., 373
Levine, Bruce, 364
Lewis, Anthony, 364
Lewis, C. S., 376
Lewis, Sinclair, 382
lexeme, 443
lexical, 445
lexical category, 455
lexical morpheme, 447, 489
lexical verb, 485, 486
lexicology, 443
lexicon, 443
lexis, 443
Life and Growth of Language, The (Whitney), 256, 493
ligature, 443
Liles, Bruce L., 498
limiting adjective, 47, 58, 61–63, 403
limiting clause, 416
Lincoln, Abraham, 6
“Lindley Murray” (Garner), 2n2
Lindsay, John, 17n41
linguistics, 443
Linguistics Reader, A (G. Wilson, ed.), 491, 493
Linguistics Student’s Handbook, The (Bauer), 18n52
linguists
structural, 4
views on grammar, 4–5
linking verb, 81–82, 485
adjective with, 64–65
adverb with, 135
adverbal with, 81–82
be-verb (see be-verb)
passive voice and, 81

561
linking verb (cont.)
  pronoun case, 45
Linn, Andrew, 5n21
list
  bullets, 177–78, 394–95
  parallelism, 177–78
Lively Art of Writing, The (Payne), 90, 492
Living Language, The (Morris, ed.), 492
Livingstone, Sir Richard, 357
Lloyd, Charles Allen, 150
loan translation, 218, 444
loanword, 444
  Garner’s Law of, 433
learned, 444
Loberger, Gordon J., 18n45
local possessive, 460
locative adverb, 130–31
London Review of Books (C. Ricks), 5n19
Long, Ralph Bernard, 18n44
long dash. See em-dash
Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber), 245n1, 497
long passive voice, 91, 145, 455
long syllable, 478
loose appositive, 410
Lounsbury, Thomas R., 239, 493
Lowth, Robert, 16
Lucas, F. L., 380
Lyman, Rollo LaVerne, 500
Macaulay, Thomas Babington, 351
Macdonald, Dwight, 373
Mack, Maynard, 397
Mackintosh, Duncan, 16
MacLeish, Archibald, 350, 390
macron, 444
Mailer, Norman, 376
main clause, 132, 166–68, 416
main verb, 97–98, 135, 181, 184, 189, 190, 485, 486
major sentence, 470
majuscule, 444
Making of English, The (Bradley), 283, 313, 493, 494
Making Sense of Grammar (Crystal), 497
malapropism, 444
Malmstrom, Jean, 498
mandative subjunctive, 476
manner adverb, 130, 131, 204, 406
Marciano, John Bemelmans, 380
Marckwardt, Albert H., 501
marked infinitive, 440
marker, 444–45
  plural, 444
  portion, 444
  singular, 445
Martin, Judith, 395
masculine gender, 24, 44, 46, 47, 324, 434
mass noun, 19, 20–21, 22–23, 28, 29, 116, 118, 450
Matchett, Alex, 384
material noun, 450
matrix clause, 416
Maugham, W. Somerset, 347
Maxwell, William H., 2
Mayhew, Robert, vii, 491
McAleer, Andrew, 366
McArthur, Tom, 501
McCullough, Donald, 380
McDavid, Raven I., Jr., 502
McGarry, D. D., 491
McGeachy, J. B., 389
McKnight, George H., 501, 502
McMahon, April, 5n21
McMurry, Larry, 370
meaning, changes in
  clang association, 414
  conversion, 33–35, 70, 82, 216, 423
  differentiation, 427
  drift, 429
  etymological sense, 431
  generalization, 434
  melioration, 445
  pejoration, 455–56
  semantic contamination, 469
Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric (Copeland & Sluiter, eds.), 13n2, 14n3, 491, 500
Meditations (Aurelius), 258, 493
melioration, 445
Mencken, H. L., 357, 502
Mentor Guide to Punctuation, The (Paxson), 504
Merriam-Webster New Book of Word Histories, The, 503
Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 225, 503
Merriam-Webster’s Concise Dictionary of English Usage, 499
Metalogicon of John of Salisbury, The (McGarry, trans.), 491
metaphor, 445
metathesis, 445
metonymy, 445
Michael, Ian, 17n40, 500, 501
Michener, James, 362
Middle English, 160, 172–73, 445
middle verb, 202–3, 485
Miller, Alex, 493, 494
Miller, B. D. H., 495
Miller, Helen Rand, 500
Miller, Henry, 369
Mind the Stop (Carey), 504
minor sentence, 471
Minthorn, David, 502
misplaced modifier, 89, 168, 446
Mitchell, Margaret, 348
Mitchell, Richard, 397
Mitford, Jessica, 389
Mitford, Nancy, 390
modal, 121, 412
modal adverb, 127
modal auxiliary verb, 121–24
  defined, 121, 412
double, 429
  periphrastic, 456
modal idiom, 445
modality, 446
modal tense, 481
mode, 92, 446
Modern American Usage (Follett), 265, 493, 498
Modern English, 38, 40, 143, 445
Modern English (Krapp), 501
Modern English and Its Heritage (Bryant), 501
Modern English Handbook (Gorrell & Laird), 18n43
Modern English in the Making (McKnight), 502
Modern English Syntax (Onions), 471, 495
Modern Linguistics (Simeon Potter), 215, 492
modificand, 445
modification structure, 474
modifier
  compound, 62–63, 69, 402, 404
dangling, 424–25
defined, 186, 446
diagramming, 186
gerund, 88
misplaced, 89, 168, 446
participle, 88–89
postpositive, 404
resumptive, 446
sentence, 197, 406
squinting, 446
summative, 446
transformational grammar, 199
Monaghan, Charles, 2n3
monophthong, 446
monotransitive verb, 485
mood, 92–94
  defined, 92, 446
expressing a state contrary to fact, 92–93, 94
expressing facts, 92
imperative, 92, 158, 177, 325, 446 (see also imperative)
indicative, 92–93, 94, 447 (see also indicative)
past-perfect subjunctive, 94
past-tense subjunctive, 93–94, 477
present-tense subjunctive, 93, 477
referring to past, 94
referring to present or future, 93
subjunctive, 92–94, 97, 447 (see also subjunctive)
morpheme, 213–15, 447
  bound, 214, 447
  free, 214, 447
functional, 489
grammatical, 447
lexical, 447, 489
morphology, 213–19, 447
  inflectional, 213, 401
Morris, Linda A., 492
Mother’s Grammar, The (Fenn), 16n25
Muir, Frank, 348
Mulroy, David, 5, 13n1, 408, 495, 501
multitude, expressions of, 20–21, 116
multiword verb, 486
Murray, Lindley, 2, 3, 16
Murrays of Murray Hill, The (Monaghan), 2n3
mutation plural, 459

Nabokov, Vladimir, 357
Nafisi, Azar, 388
Nash, Walter, 426, 495
negation, 169–73
  affixes, 169, 172
  conjunctions, 169, 171
  contractions, 170
  defined, 169, 447
  double negative, 132, 172–73, 429
  negating adverb, 169, 171, 172
  negating pronoun, 171
  neither, 172
  no, 172
  nor, 172
  not, 83, 169–71
  prefixes, 172
  statement, 172
  suffixes, 172
  types of, 169
  verb phrases, 83–84
  without plainly negative elements, 173
negative, 447
negative, double, 132, 172–73, 429, 436
negative adverb, 83, 132
negative cleft sentence, 179, 471
negative particle, 162, 169, 172, 173
negative question, 172, 467
neoclassical compound, 420
neologisms, 220, 447
neologizing, 447
neuter gender, 434
New English Grammar, A (Duncan), 14n8
New English Grammar, A (Sweet), 3n9
New Fowler’s Modern English Usage, The (Burchfield), 18n49, 498
New General English Dictionary, A, 15n10
New Guide to the English Tongue in Five Parts, A (Dilworth), 14n8
New Oxford American Dictionary, The, 503
New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, The, 503
New Well-Tempered Sentence, The (Gordon), 375, 495, 504
ngrams, 8–10, 225–27
Nicolson, Harold, 388
Nizer, Louis, 368
nominal, 448, 451
  predicate, 461
nominal clause, 416
nominal element, 451
nominalization, 144, 448, 451
nominal phrase, 458
nominative, 25, 29–30, 448
nominative absolute, 401
nominative case, 29–30, 41–42, 43, 44–45, 413
nominative function, 29–30
nominative of address, 488
nonaction verb, 487
noncomparable adjective, 67–68
noncomparable adverb, 134
noncompositional compound word, 215–16
noncount noun, 22, 450
nonessential appositive, 410
nonessential clause, 416
nonfinite verb, 86, 440, 485
nonlimiting clause, 416
nonreferential it, 174, 431
nonreferential there, 431
nonrestrictive, 448
nonrestrictive appositive, 33, 410
nonrestrictive clause, 187, 416
nonsentence, 448, 472
nonstandard, 67
Norris, Frank, 348
Norris, Mary, 499
“Notebook” (Fedin), 267, 323, 493, 494
notional accord, 116
notional concord, 21, 116, 479
notional passive, 449
notional verb, 486
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun, 19–35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abstract, 19, 23, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective functioning as, 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbal, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agent, 32–33, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement with adjective, 59, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animate, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositive, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attribute, 450, 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attributive, 33–34, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>be</em>-verb as part of, 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bounded, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case, 23, 29–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collective, 19, 20–21, 22, 39, 116, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common, 19, 20, 24, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound, 20, 26–27, 31, 69, 199, 376, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concrete, 19, 22–23, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contractions with, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinate, 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count, 19, 20, 22–23, 28, 57, 449–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>declension, 9, 23, 238, 282, 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 19, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definite, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclamatory, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functioning as adjective, 33–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functioning as adverb, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functioning as verb, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inanimate, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invariable, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mass, 19, 20–21, 22–23, 28, 29, 116, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multitude, 20–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominalization, 144, 448, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noncount, 22, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonnaturalized, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun element, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun-equivalent, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number, 23–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>of</em>-phrase, in, 21–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle functioning as (see gerund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partition, of, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partitive, 21–22, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person, 24–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural (see plurals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive, 30–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicate, 120, 450, 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper, 19–20, 25, 29, 31, 197, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>properties, 23–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipient, 32–33, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncountable, 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbal, 85, 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb functioning as, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zombie, 144, 448, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun adjunct, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun-banging, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun clause, 188–89, 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun cluster, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun element, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun-equivalent, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun group, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun indicator, 426–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun phrase, 64, 162, 184, 196, 197–200, 204, 205, 376, 378, 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number, 23–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cardinal, 58–59, 198, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun, 23–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordinal, 58–59, 131, 198, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural (see plurals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun, 38, 39, 42, 44, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb (see verb number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeral, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeral adjective, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeric adjective, 58–59, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeric adverb, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerical adjective, 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognate, 71, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complementary, 419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound, 41, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinate, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined, 163, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagramming, 184–85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct, 163, 184–85, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factitive, 419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund, of, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying in predicate, 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect, 161, 163, 185, 452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

565
object (cont.)
infinitive, of, 452
oblique, 139, 452
passive voice, role in, 184, 203
placement in sentence, 160–61
preposition, of, 30, 43, 44–45, 90, 139,
187, 204, 211, 452
object accusative, 452
object complement, 419
objective attribute, 419
objective case, 41–42, 43, 143, 413
objective complement, 85, 88, 163–64, 185,
419
objective function, 30
objective predicate, 419
objective pronoun, 43, 44–45
oblique case, 413
oblique object, 139, 452
O’Brian, Patrick, 349
Ocampo, Victoria, 350
O’Conner, Patricia T., 36, 491, 499
of-genitive, 31–32, 435
of-phrase, 21–22, 31, 116
O’Hara, John, 377
Old English, 75, 160, 453
Olson, Mancur, 392
O’Neill, Eugene, 348, 377
Onions, C. T., 471, 495, 503
onomatopoeia, 453
On the Art and Craft of Writing (Gorky et al.),
493, 494
Opdycke, John B., 497
open syllable, 478
open word class, 489
Orage, A. R., 348
oratio directa, 428
oratio obliqua, 428
oratio recta, 428
ordinal number, 58–59, 131, 198, 451
Origins (Partridge), 503
Origins and Development of the English Language, The (Pyles & Algeo), 502
orthoepery, 453
orthography, 453
orthology, 453
Orwell, George, 347, 398
Our Language (Simeon Potter), 5, 491, 502
outer complement, 164, 419
overgeneralization, 453
Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus, The, 503
Oxford Companion to English Literature, The (P. Harvey), 2n2
Oxford Companion to the English Language, The (McArthur, ed.), 501
Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar, The (Chalker & Weiner), 497
Oxford English Dictionary, The, 1, 5, 503
Oxford English Grammar, The (Greenbaum), 18n49, 497
Oxford Modern English Grammar (Aarts), 327n5, 497
Oxford University Press, 225
oxymoron, 453
Palmatier, Robert A., 498
paradigm, 454
parallelism, 175–78
adverb pairs, 176
auxiliary verbs, 177
conjunctions, 146–47, 176
defined, 175, 454
directives, 177
ellipsis, 167–68
listed items, 177–78
prepositional phrases, 176
parallel structure, 454
parataxis, 411
parentheses, 365–68
brackets within, 390
citation, 367
clarifying, 366–67
defined, 365
enclosing aside, 368
interjection, 152–53
introducing, 366–67
lists, 367–68
minimizing effect, 365
other punctuation, with, 367–68, 389, 390
setting off element, 365
traditional diagramming, use in, 192
transformational grammar, use in, 196, 200, 204
parenthetical element, 454. See also interrupter
Parkinson, C. Northcote, 366
parse, 454
partial conversion, 216
participial adjective, 65, 67, 68, 87, 295, 379, 403
participial phrase, 65, 87–90, 170, 190–91, 458
participial verb, 486
participle, 86–90
adjective, distinguished from, 65
alternative forms, 74
considered part of speech, 13, 15n10, 16, 17
dangling, 65, 89–90
defined, 86, 190–91, 454
diagramming, 190–91
forming, 86–87, 95–96, 215
functioning as adjective, 65, 67, 68, 87, 88–89, 295, 379, 403
functioning as conjunction, 149
functioning as noun (see gerund)
functioning as preposition, 141, 149
fused, 88–89, 433
gerund (see gerund)
gerund, distinguished from, 88
modifiers, 88–89
not with, 170
passive voice, in, 90–92, 207
past (see past participle)
perfect, 86, 97, 454
perfect aspect, forming, 97
perfect-progressive, 86
present (see present participle)
present-perfect, 454
progressive aspect, forming, 97–98
suffixes, 215
particle, 15n9, 15n11, 82–83, 127, 128, 184, 455
negative, 162, 169, 172, 173
particle adverb, 128
partition, expressions of, 21–22
partitive genitive, 21–22, 435
partitive noun, 21–22, 450
Partridge, Eric, 499, 503, 504
parts of speech, 13–153
approaches to classifying, 13–18
See also conversion; function
Parts of Speech and Accidence (Curme), 497
passive clause, 416
passive voice, 90–92, 455
agentless passive, 455
be-verbs and, 90–91, 98, 207, 211
dangler, producing, 89
get-passive, 275, 435
infinitive, followed by, 85
linking verbs and, 81
long, 91, 145, 455
notional passive, 449
participles, forming with, 90–92, 112, 207
progressive aspect, 98
short, 91, 455
subject and object, roles of, 184, 203
transformational grammar, 207, 210–11
transforming to/from active voice, 207
transitive vs. intransitive verbs, 202
truncated passive, 455
past participle
alternative forms, 74
defined, 86, 454
diagramming, 190–91
forming, 87, 95–96, 215
functioning as adjective, 68
ngrams and, 227
notional passive, 449
perfect aspect, forming, 97
progressive aspect, forming, 98
suffix, 215
past-perfect tense, 94, 97, 98, 481
past subjunctive, 93–94, 477
past tense, 73–74, 86, 93–96, 190, 481
patient, 452
Paxson, William C., 504
Payne, Lucille Vaughan, 90, 492
“Pedant, The” (Kamm), 8n29
Pei, Mario, 18n46
pejoration, 455–56
Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, The (Cuddon), 504
perfect aspect, 94–95, 411. See also perfect tense
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>perfect gerund</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect infinitive</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect participle</td>
<td>86, 97, 454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect tense</td>
<td>94–95, 97, 190, 480, 481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>period</td>
<td>384, 388–89, 396, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>period fault</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peripheral adjective</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrasis</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic comparative</td>
<td>66, 133, 418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic genitive</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic modal</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic possessive</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periphrastic superlative</td>
<td>66, 134, 478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins, Barbara M.</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins, George</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement, pronoun–antecedent</td>
<td>39–40, 52, 408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement, subject–verb</td>
<td>95, 116, 121, 408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>24–25, 456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect discourse, shifts in</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns</td>
<td>25–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns</td>
<td>38, 42–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall and will, with</td>
<td>96–97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transformational grammar</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbs</td>
<td>90, 95–96, 98, 115–16, 121, 456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal adjective</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal pronoun</td>
<td>38, 41, 42–49, 52, 121, 197, 325–26, 465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personification</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives on Style (Candelaria, ed.)</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peters, Pam</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroski, Henry</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phatic exchange</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Grammar, The (Jespersen)</td>
<td>3n11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Rhetoric, The (Richards)</td>
<td>1, 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phoneme</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal adjective</td>
<td>60, 64, 69–70, 375–76, 385, 404, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal adverb</td>
<td>130, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal conjunction</td>
<td>146, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal genitive</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal preposition</td>
<td>140–41, 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal prepositional verb</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal pronoun</td>
<td>36, 50, 465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrasal verb</td>
<td>82–84, 128, 142, 184, 379, 486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>64, 171, 379, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbal</td>
<td>68, 131, 136, 141, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositional</td>
<td>409–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>192, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunctive</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund</td>
<td>88, 191–92, 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitive</td>
<td>85–86, 189–90, 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>64, 162, 184, 196, 197–200, 204, 205, 376, 378, 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of-phrase</td>
<td>21–22, 31, 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participial</td>
<td>65, 87–90, 170, 190–91, 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositional (see prepositional phrase)</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>set</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantive</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase marker</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase-structure tree</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pied-piping</td>
<td>142, 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim’s Progress (Bunyan)</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink, M. Alderton</td>
<td>302, 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinneo, Timothy Stone</td>
<td>18n41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinneo’s Analytical Grammar of the English Language (Pinneo)</td>
<td>18n41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Grammar in Writing Instruction, The (Hunter &amp; R. Wallace, eds.)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plain infinitive</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Language (Steinberg, ed.)</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain, Rational Essay on English Grammar, A (Mackintosh)</td>
<td>16n29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Style (Lauchman)</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Writing Act of 2010</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plotkin, Fred</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural tense</td>
<td>97, 481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural indicator</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural marker</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurals</td>
<td>25–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apostrophes and</td>
<td>25, 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borrowed</td>
<td>27–28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound subject, in</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressions of multitude</td>
<td>20–21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
expressions of partition, 21–22
foreign (see plurals: borrowed)
forming, 25–29
genitive, 31
irregular, 27–28, 458
loanwords (see plurals: borrowed)
mutilation, 459
possessive, 31, 32
pronoun, 43, 46
proper noun, 25, 29
regular, 25–26, 459
singular sense, 28–29, 118
suffix, 215
umlaut, 459
uninflected, 459
weak, 459
zero, 459

Pocket Guide to Correct Punctuation, A (Brittain), 504
Poe, Edgar Allan, 364
“Poetry and Grammar” (Stein), 181, 492
point of view, 91, 459
polar question, 467
polysemous, 459
polysyndetic coordination, 424
polysyndeton, 459
Pooley, Robert C., 3n15, 501
portion indicator, 444
portion marker, 444
portmanteau word, 219, 489
positive, 459
positive adjective, 66, 404
positive adverb, 133
positive question, 172, 467
possessive
adjective position, 64
apostrophe, 23, 31–32, 47–48, 50, 380
case, 30–32, 41, 380, 413–14
contractions, compared with, 48, 84
dangling participle with, 65
defined, 30–31, 460
descriptive, 30–31, 460
double, 32, 47, 460
functioning as adjective, 37
fused participles and, 89
genitive, contrasted with, 30–31
group, 32, 460

indefinite pronouns, 57
independent, 47, 460
inflected, 31, 215, 460
joint, 32, 460
local, 460
noun, 30–32
periphrastic, 435
plural, 31, 32
reflexive pronouns, 48
relative pronouns, 55
singular, 31
suffix, 215
transformational grammar, 200
See also genitive
possessive adjective, 59, 404
possessive pronoun, 38, 47–48, 59, 63, 64, 143, 465
postgenitive, 460
postpositive, 460
postpositive adjective, 64, 199, 404
postpositive modifier, 404
potential tense, 481
Potter, Simeon, 5, 215, 491, 492, 502
Potter, Stephen, 397
Practical English Usage (Swan), 499
Practical Grammar of the English Language, A (Butler), 17n41
Practical Grammar of the English Language, A (T. Harvey), 2n6
Practical New Grammar, A (Fisher), 15n11
Practical Stylist, The (Baker), 175, 492
Practicing History (Tuchman), 165, 492
pragmatics, 461

predicate
complete, 84, 162, 461
components of, 161–64
compound, 159, 352–53, 461
defined, 30, 162, 184, 461
diagramming, 183, 184
effect of expletive on, 174
effect of prepositional phrase on, 142
identifying, 162
simple, 161–62, 200, 461
transformational grammar, 196–97, 200
predicate adjectival, 404
predicate adjective, 58, 64–65, 181, 186, 202, 404
predicate attribute, 404
predicate complement, 85, 419
predicate nominal, 461
predicate nominative, 30, 45, 181, 186, 202, 461
predicate noun, 120, 450, 461
predicate objective, 419
predicate pronoun, 450, 461
predicate substantive, 461
predicate verb, 486
predicating verb, 483
predication, 414
predicative, 58, 461
prefix, 172, 214, 216, 378, 461–62
Preminger, Alex, 505
preposition, 139–45
clashing, 142
complex, 140–41, 462
compound, 139–40, 462
defered, 462
defined, 139, 462
functioning as adverb, 82, 128, 143
functions, 139, 143
group, 462
noun conversion, omission for, 34
object of, 30, 43, 44–45, 90, 139, 187, 204, 211, 452
oblique object of, 139, 452 (see also preposition: object of)
other parts of speech, distinguished from, 143, 149
other parts of speech functioning as, 89, 143
participial, 141, 149
phrasal, 140–41, 462
phrasal verb, in, 82–83, 142 (see also particle)
placement, 139, 176
prepositional phrase (see prepositional phrase)
reducing use of, 144–45
sentence-ending, 142, 150
simple, 139–40, 462
stranded, 51, 142, 462
terminal, 142, 462
types, 139–41
prepositional adverb, 128. See also particle
prepositional idioms, 329–44
prepositional phrase, 141–45
controlling pronoun case, 43, 44–45, 143
defined, 141, 187, 458
diagramming, 187
elliptical, 142
functioning as adverbial, 71, 130, 164, 204
functions, 141
intransitive verb with, 71
object of, 30, 43, 44–45, 90, 139, 187, 204, 211, 452
parallelism, 176
passive voice, in, 91, 145, 211 (see also long passive voice)
phrasal verbs and, 82–83, 142 (see also particle)
placement, 141–42
reducing use of, 144–45
replacing, 130, 144–45
transformational grammar, 204
verb number, and, 118, 119, 120, 142
prepositional verb, 486
preposition-stranding, 142, 462
prepositive, 463
prepositive adjective, 402
prescriptive grammar, 436
prescriptivism, 463
Presentation of Technical Information, The (Kapp), 354, 494
present gerund, 435
present infinitive, 440
present participle
defined, 86, 454
diagramming, 190–91
forming, 86–87, 215
functioning as adjective, 68
gerund, distinguished from, 88–89, 191
progressive aspect, forming, 91–92, 97–98, 112
suffix, 215
present-perfect gerund, 435
present-perfect infinitive, 440
present-perfect participle, 454
present-perfect tense, 94, 95, 97, 481
present stem, 86, 440
present subjunctive, 93, 477
present tense, 93, 94, 95, 99, 481
preterit, preterite, 481
preventive grammar, 40, 52, 121, 227
Priestley, J. B., 376
Priestley, Joseph, 15, 17
primary stress, 474
primary verb, 486
principal clause, 416
principal part, 86, 464
principal verb, 83–84, 85, 86, 92, 112, 121, 125, 126, 135, 200, 201, 202–3, 486
principle of recoverability, 167, 467
Priscian, 14
Pritchett, V. S., 348
privative, 172, 464
Proffitt, Michael, 503
progressive aspect, 94–95, 97–98, 411. See also progressive tense
Progressive English Grammar, The (Weld), 2n5
progressive tense, 73, 94–95, 97–98, 191, 481
pronominal adjective, 60, 404
pronoun, 36–57
adjective, 42, 404
agreement with antecedent, 20, 21, 38–42, 44, 52, 408
anaphoric, 36, 464
antecedent of, 36–40, 49–50, 52, 53, 54, 118–19, 325, 327, 409
appositives, 38, 41
article as substitute for, 63
attribute, 45, 461, 464
capitalizing, 43
case, 23, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44–45, 52–53, 143, 164
classes, 42
colloquial objective, 45
 colloquial they, 38, 40, 47
comparative construction, in, 45
compound, 48–49, 55, 56, 464, 465
compound personal, 48–49, 465
compound relative, 55
correlation with, 84
coordinated, 245
defined, 36, 464
demonstrative, 37, 42, 49–50, 198, 464
distributive, 56
editorial we, 46
emphatic, 464–65
exclamatory, 152
expletive, 38, 46
feminine, 44, 47, 434
first-person, 37, 38, 43, 281
form, 42
functions, 42, 55–57
gender, 38, 40–41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 52, 57
gender-neutral language and, 44, 47, 278, 324–28
genitive, 43, 44, 50, 54–55
imperatives, 38, 92
impersonal, 464
indeterminate, 46
intensifying, 464–65
intensive, 48–49, 464–65
interrogative, 38, 42, 51, 52–53, 189, 465
linking verb, case after, 45
masculine, 44, 46, 47, 324, 434
misused, 41–42
negating, 171
neuter, 327, 434
nominative, 43, 44, 45
number, 38, 39, 42, 44, 52
objective, 43, 44–45
person, 38, 42–43
personal, 38, 41, 42–49, 52, 121, 197, 325–26, 465
phrasal, 36, 50, 465
plural, 43, 46
possessive, 38, 47–48, 59, 63, 64, 143, 465
predicate, 450, 461
prepositional phrase, in, 43, 44–45, 143
properties, 38–42
reciprocal, 42, 50, 465
referent, 51, 468
reflexive, 43, 48–49, 50, 465
relative, 38, 42, 52–56, 60, 118, 139, 165–66, 168, 179, 325, 465
resumptive, 465
second-person, 37, 38, 42, 43, 465
simple, 50, 466
singular they, 47
pronoun (cont.)
subjective, 461
third-person, 38, 42, 43, 44, 47, 327
traditional singular, 40
pronoun–antecedent agreement, 20, 21,
38–42, 44, 52, 408
pronunciation, 466
assimilation, 411
diphthong, 264, 428
dissimilation, 428
epenthesis, 217, 430
haplography, 436
hyphaeresis, 217, 438
intonation pattern, 442
intrusive r, 442
intrusive schwa, 442
metathesis, 445
orthoepery, 453
stress, 474
syllable, 478
synaeresis, 479
synaloepha, 479
syncopation, 217, 479
retarded, 466
spelling, 466
proper adjective, 60, 404
proper name, 26, 31, 60, 61, 70, 377, 450
proper noun, 19–20, 25, 29, 31, 197, 450
prop it, 174
Propp, William H. C., 299, 494
prosody, 466
protasis, 166, 415
Proulx, Annie, 375
pro-verb, 412
pseudo-transitive verb, 486
Pullum, Geoffrey K., 8n29, 18n47, 245n2,
497
*Punctuate It Right! (H. Shaw), 504
punctuation, 345–99
pure infinitive, 440
purism, 466
*Putting Words to Work (Teall), 279, 493
Pyles, Thomas, 502
Pynchon, Thomas, 370

Quack This Way, vi, 11n30
qualifying adjective, 60, 403
quantifying elements, 20–21
Queen, Ellery, 376
Quennell, Peter, 382
question
alternative, 157, 466
declarative yes–no, 157, 466
defined, 157, 466
direct, 131, 350, 364, 386, 466
echo, 429
ellipsis, 167
embedded, 467
exclamatory, 158, 467
indirect, 131, 148, 149, 386, 467
negative, 172, 467
polar, 467
positive, 172, 467
punctuating, 386
rhetorical, 158, 467
sentence pattern, 160, 161
tag, 157–58, 467
types of, 157–58
*wh- question, 157, 467
yes–no, 125, 157–58, 466, 467
question mark, 157, 367, 368, 372, 384, 386
Quinn, Edward, 505
Quirk, Randolph, 18n48, 18n50, 498
quotation
brackets in, 390
colon introducing, 362–63, 364
coma introducing, 349, 352
ellipsis dots indicating omission, 397–98,
399
indenting, 382
nonoriginal content, 390
omitted words, 397–98
parenthetical material, 390–91
punctuating, 352, 382, 387, 390, 397–98
quotation marks, 382–85
American style, 382, 384
British style, 382, 384
defined, 382
definitions, with, 382–83
idiomatic usage, 384
misplaced emphasis, 385
other punctuation, with, 384
phrasal adjectives, 385
quoted words, 382, 384
reference, 382–83
sarcasm, 385
"so-called," 383
title, 383

Radford, Andrew, 498
Rand, Ayn, vii, 347, 491
Randall, Henry S., 351
Random House Dictionary of the English Language, The, 225, 503
Ransom, John Crowe, 393
Rawson, Hugh, 503
Reader for Writers, A (Targ, ed.), 493
Readings in Applied English Linguistics (Allen, ed.), vii, 491, 492, 501
recipient noun, 32–33, 450
reciprocal pronoun, 42, 50, 465
recoverability, 167, 467
situational, 467
structural, 467
textual, 468
Redbook, The (Garner), vi, 362, 502
redundancy, 468
redundant subject, 475
reduplication, 218, 468
Reed, Alonzo, 181, 182, 207, 454, 468
Reed–Kellogg diagram, 181–94, 207, 468
referent, 51, 468
reflexive, 468
reflexive pronoun, 43, 48–49, 50, 465
reflexive verb, 486
regional dialect, 223, 427
register, 468
regular, 468
regular inflection, 441
regular plural, 25–26, 459
regular verb, 73–74, 86, 87, 95–96, 99–105, 486
“Relation of Linguistics to the Teaching of English, The” (P. Roberts), 263, 493
relative adjective, 52, 60, 404
relative adverb, 132, 406
relative clause, 52–54, 165–66, 168–69, 416
relative-clause reduction, 168–69. See also whiz-deletion
relative pronoun, 38, 42, 52–56, 60, 118, 139, 165–66, 168, 179, 325, 465
repetition, avoiding, 36, 125, 167
reported speech, 98–99, 124, 412
Research in Written Composition (Braddock), 500
restrictive, 469
restrictive appositive, 33, 355, 410
restrictive clause, 187, 355, 416
resumptive modifier, 446
resumptive pronoun, 465
retarded pronunciation, 466
retronym, 469
“Revolution in Grammar” (Francis), 14, 491
rhetorical question, 158, 467
“Rhetorical Stance, The” (Booth), 182, 492
Richards, I. A., 1, 491
Ricks, Christopher, 5, 392
Ricks, Thomas E., 384
Ritt, Nikolaus, 500
Roberts, Paul, 263, 493
Roberts, William H., 494
Robertson, James I., Jr., 363
Rogers, Will, 223
Rombauer, Irma S., 392
Room, Adrian, 504
Roosevelt, Theodore, 363
root, 84–85, 469
Rosenbaum, Peter S., 498
Ross, Robert, 17
Rossi-Wilcox, Susan M., 380
Rowan, Carl T., 349
Rowling, J. K., 376
Royster, Vermount, 383
Rudiments of English Grammar (Harrison), 16n22
Rudiments of English Grammar (Priestley), 15
run-on sentence, 417, 471–72
run-together sentence, 417
Sabin, William A., 502
Sackville-West, V., 357
Safir, Leonard, 371, 495
Safire, William, 371, 495
Salisbury, John of, vii, 491
salutation, 351, 359, 363
Sandburg, Carl, 6n24, 6n25, 350, 375
Schendl, Herbert, 500
The Chicago Guide to English Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation

Schlauch, Margaret, 257, 493
Schultz, Lucille M., 500
schwa, 469
  intrusive, 442
Scribes J. Legal Writing, 40n2
semantic contamination, 469
semantics, 469
semantic shift, 469
semi-auxiliary verb, 412
semicolon, 357–60
  comma, displacing, 359, 360
defined, 357
list, 358
old-fashioned style, 358–59
quotation marks, with, 384
salutation, misused in, 359
sentences, closely connected, 357
series, 358
sensory verb, 486–87
sentence
  basic SVO structure of, 160–61
cleft (see cleft sentence)
commands, 158, 167
complete, 470
complex, 159, 165, 194, 470
compound, 159, 193, 470
compound-complex, 159, 194, 470
conditional, 166, 470
collective elements (see constituent)
declarative, 157, 179, 388, 470
defined, 469–70
diagramming (see diagramming sentences)
directive, 158, 177, 428
elliptical, 71, 167
exclamatory, 431
existential, 471
fragmentary, 432–33
full, 471
identifying elements of, 162–64
imperative, 158, 172, 471
impersonal, 471
incomplete, 471
interrogative, 55, 83–84, 157–58, 172,
  206, 386, 471
inversion in, 157–58
major, 470
minor, 471
negation (see negation)
negative cleft, 179, 471
nonsentence, 448, 472
patterns, 160–64
placement of elements in, 160–61
run-on, 417, 471–72
run-together, 417
simple, 159, 472
transformational grammar, 196–97
verbless, 472
sentence adverb, 127, 192, 406
sentence fragment, 432–33
sentence modifier, 197, 406
sentence patterns, 160–64
sentences, diagramming. See diagramming sentences
sentential relative clause, 416
separative coordinating conjunction, 147, 421
sequence of tenses, 99, 472
set phrase, 458
Shakespeare, William, 245, 398
Shattuck, Roger, 347
Shaw, George Bernard, 348
Shaw, Harry, 504
Sheed, Wilfrid, 348
shift, 472
  functional, 423, 433
  semantic, 469
Short but Comprehensive Grammar, A
  (Staniford), 16n30
short dash. See en-dash
Short Introduction to English Grammar, A
  (Harrold), 16n24
Short Introduction to English Grammar, A
  (Lowth), 16n16
Short Introduction to English Grammar, A
  (Sledd), 18n51, 498
Short Introduction to English Usage, A
  (Lamberts), 499
sibilant, 25, 32, 48
simile, 472
Simon, John, 361
simple, 472
simple adjective, 405
simple adverb, 128–29, 203–4, 406
simple conjunction, 146, 422
simple infinitive, 440
simple noun, 450
simple past tense, 481
simple phrase, 457
simple predicate, 161–62, 200, 461
simple preposition, 139–40, 462
simple pronoun, 50, 466
simple sentence, 159, 472
simple statement, 470
simple subject, 161–62, 475–76
simple tense, 482
Simpson, John, 503
Singer, Isaac Bashevis, 370
singular, 473
singular indicator, 445
singular marker, 445
singular number, 451
"Singular Use of They, A" (Eagleson), 40n2
situational recoverability, 467
Sitwell, Sacheverell, 359
Skeat, Walter W., 504
Skinner, B. F., 393
slang, 70, 214, 217, 473
slash, 392–93
date, 392
defined, 392
other punctuation, displacing, 393
per, 393
separation, 392, 393
Sledd, James, 18n51, 195, 473, 492, 495, 498
Slim, Sir William, 380
Sluiter, Ineke, 13n2, 14n3, 491, 500
Smith, Barbara Herrnstein, 392
Smith, Hallett, 368
Smith, Logan Pearsall, 502
Snow, C. P., 361
social dialect, 427
solecism, 473
Some Secrets of Style (Bett), 304, 315, 494
“Something About Language and Social Class” (Sledd), 473, 495
Soukhanov, Anne H., 501
Sowell, Thomas, 366
Spark, Muriel, 361
Speaking Freely (Flexner & Soukhanov), 501
specialization, 473
speech
colloquial, 167
dialectal, 380
direct, 98, 349, 428
figure of, 37, 44, 432
indirect, 98–99, 349, 428
informal, 128
parts of (see parts of speech)
reported, 98–99, 124, 412
spelling, 473
spelling pronunciation, 466
spelling reform, 473
split infinitive, 85, 135–36, 440
Sprague, Kurth, 393
squinting construction, 446
squinting modifier, 446
s-structure, 475
Stageberg, Norman C., 281, 493
Standard English, 474. See also Standard Written English
Standard Written English, 4, 7, 8–10, 11, 28, 37, 42, 223, 225–27, 474
Staniford, Daniel, 16
Staniforth, Maxwell, 493
statement, 474
stative verb, 72–73, 487
Stauffer, Donald A., 384
Stein, Gertrude, 181, 492
Steinbeck, John, 370
Steinberg, Erwin R., 502
stem, 84, 86–87, 92, 95, 96, 112, 121, 122, 123, 124, 213, 214–15, 474
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 358
stranded preposition, 51, 142, 462
Street, Harry, 367
stress, 474
primary, 474
Strong, L. A. G., vii, 491, 502
strong verb, 73, 485
structural recoverability, 467
structure, 474
deep, 205, 209–10, 474
modification, 474
parallel, 454
subject
  agreement with verb, 20, 95, 115–17, 118–20, 121, 408
  anticipatory, 119, 475
  complete, 162, 475
  compound, 41, 117–18, 120, 475
  conjunctive compound, 117–18
  coordinate, 475
  deferred, 475
  defined, 184, 475
  delayed, 119, 475
  diagramming, 184
  disjunctive compound, 117
  double, 475
  dummy, 119
  functions, 162
  identifying in sentence, 162
  infinitive, of, 476
  passive voice, role in, 184–203
  placement in sentence, 160–61
  redundant, 475
  simple, 161–62, 475–76
  understood, 476
subject case, 413
subject clause, 178–79, 417
subjective complement, 419
subjective, 448
subjective adjective, 404
subjective case, 413
subjective complement, 81, 88, 162, 163–64, 183, 184, 186, 419
subjective function, 29–30
subjective noun, 461
subjective pronoun, 461
subject–verb agreement, 20, 95, 115–17, 118–20, 121, 408
subjunctive, 122, 476–77
  formulaic, 476
  mandative, 476
  mood, 92–94, 97, 447
  past, 93–94, 477
  past-perfect, 94

present, 93, 477
were-subjunctive, 477
subordinating conjunction, 141, 146–48, 161, 165, 187, 188, 194, 243, 422
subordination, 165, 477
upside-down, 477
subordinator, 422
substantive, 451
substantive clause, 416
substantive phrase, 458
Successful Writing (Hairston), 327, 494
suffix
  adjectives, 58, 65, 66–67
  adverbs, 128, 131, 133–34
  conversion, 216
  defined, 477
  derivational, 215, 477
  -ee/-er/or, 32
  -ever, 55
  gendered, 24, 326, 327–28
  inflectional, 215, 477
  -less/-like, 377–78
  names, following, 356
  negative, 172
  -self/-selves, 48
  suspensive hyphen, 376
  verbs, 73–74, 215
  word formation, 213, 214–15, 216
summative modifier, 446
Summerson, John, 369
superlative, 477–78
  double, 67, 478
  periphrastic, 66, 134, 478
  suffix, 215
  synthetic, 66, 134, 478
superlative adjective, 66–67, 405
superlative adverb, 133–34, 477–78
superordinate, 478
superstitions, 142, 150
suppletion, 478
surface structure, 205, 208–9, 475
suspended prepositional construction, 478
Sussman, Barry, 384
SVO sentence structure, 160–61
Swan, Michael, 499
Sweet, Henry, 3
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 369
syllable, 478
closed, 478
long, 478
open, 478
syllipsis, 479
Symbol, Status, and Personality (Hayakawa), 307, 494
syntactic strictures” (Sledd), 195, 492
Syntactic Structures (Chomsky), 4n18
syntax, 155–211
clause (see clause)
collective nouns, 19, 20–21, 22, 29, 39, 116, 449
definition (see coordination)
defined, 157, 480
directive, 157, 158, 177, 428
exclamation, 92, 132, 152, 157, 158, 167, 431
expression of multitude, 20–21
generally, 7
inflection, contrasted with, 157, 160
inverted, 30, 55–56, 119, 158
negation of (see negation)
parallelism (see parallelism)
question (see question)
sentence (see sentence)
sentence patterns, 160–64
word order, 160, 489
System of English Grammar, The (Long), 18n44
taboo, 480
tag question, 157–58, 467
Targ, William, 493
Taub-Dix, Bonnie, 350
tautology, 480
Teaching English Grammar (Pooley), 3n15, 501
Teaching of English from the Sixteenth Century to 1870, The (Michael), 17n40, 501
Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School, The (Chubb), 3n14, 500
Teaching of the English Language (Fries), 3–4
Teaching Secondary English (DeBoar, Kaufer & Helen Miller), 500
Teachout, Terry, 377
Teall, Edward N., 279, 493
Technique of Clear Writing, The (Gunning), 502
Téknē Grammatiké (or The Grammatical Art) (Dionysios Thrax), 13
tense, 94–115
compound, 97, 480
continuous, 94, 97–98, 481
definition, 94–95, 480
doubled consonants, 95–96
effects of backshifting, 98–99
expanded, 98, 480
forming, 95–98
future, 94, 96, 480
future-perfect, 86, 94, 97, 480
historical-present, 95, 481
imperfect, 94
modal, 481
past, 73–74, 86, 93–96, 190, 481
past indicative, 87, 95–96
past-perfect, 94, 97, 98, 481
past-progressive, 73, 98
perfect, 94–95, 97, 190, 480, 481
pluperfect, 97, 481
potential, 481
present, 93, 94, 95, 99, 481
present indicative, 95
tense (cont.)
  present-perfect, 94, 95, 97, 481
  present-progressive, 73, 98
  preterit, 481
  progressive, 73, 94–95, 97–98, 191, 481
  sequence of, 99, 472
  simple, 482
  suffixes, 215
terminal preposition, 142, 462
textual recoverability, 468
  that-clause, 417
  that-complement, 419
Thomas, Owen, 498
Thrax, Dionysios, 13–14
Thurber, James, 384
Times (London), 8n29, 389
timesis, 214–15, 217, 482
tone, 38, 130, 152, 158, 281, 322, 482
transformation, 205–7, 482
transformational-generative grammar, 195
transformational grammar, 4, 195–211
  active voice, 210–11
  adverbials, 203–5
  ambiguity, 208–10
  auxiliary, 201–2
  be-verb, 201, 202, 207, 211
  deep structure, 205, 209–10, 474
  defined, 4, 195
  determiners, 198–99
  lexical ambiguity, 207–8
  middle verb, 202–3
  modifier, 199
  noun phrase, 197–200
  number, 200
  passive voice, 207, 210–11
  person, 200
  possession, 200
  prearticle, 199
  predicate, 196–97, 200
  prepositional phrase, 204
  principal verb, 202–3
  rules of, 196–207
  sentence basics, 196–97
  surface structure, 205, 208–10, 474
  surface transformation, 205–7
  symbols for rules, 196
  terminology, 195
tree diagram, 195, 196, 200, 207, 209, 482
  verb phrase, 200–202
Transformational Grammar (Radford), 498
Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English (Thomas), 498
Transgrammar (Malmstrom & Weaver), 498
transitive, 71–72, 482
transitive verb, 30, 71–72, 85, 86, 90, 92,
  163, 164, 181, 202–3, 204, 486, 487
Trask, R. L., 96n4, 284, 493
Treatise on the Structure of the English Language, A (S. Greene), 18n41
truncated passive, 455
Tuchman, Barbara, 165, 381, 492
Turgenev, Ivan, 396
Turgeon, Gregoire, 494
Turkle, Sherry, 350
Turnell, Martin, 397
Twain, Mark, 262, 369, 493
umlaut, 482
umlaut plural, 459
Uncommon Tongue, An (Nash), 426, 495
uncountable noun, 450
Understanding English Grammar (Kolln), 18n50
understood subject, 476
ungrammatical, 482
uninflected plural, 459
University Grammar of English, A (Quirk & Greenbaum), 18n48
Unlocking the English Language (Burchfield),
  1n1, 5n20, 501
unmarked infinitive, 440
unmarked word, 483
Updike, John, 361
upside-down subordination, 477
usage, 221–344
  big data in assessing, 8–10, 225–27
  defined, 483
dictionaries and, 225
empiricism, 8–10, 225–27
good vs. common, 225
Google ngrams, 8–10, 225–27
grammar, contrasted with, 223
overview, 8
Usage and Abusage (Partridge), 499
Ussher, George Neville, 16

vagueness, 34, 91, 283, 284
Vallins, G. H., 351, 494
variant, 483
verb, 71–126
action, 483, 484
adjective functioning as, 70
agreement with subject, 20, 95, 115–17, 118–20, 121, 408
ambitransitive, 72, 484
anomalous, 485
asserting, 485
auxiliary (see auxiliary verb)
being, 485
be-verb (see be-verb)
complementary infinitive, 85, 440
complete, 84, 483
complete predication of, 485
conjugation (see conjugation)
connecting, 81–82, 485
contractions, 83, 84, 380, 423
coordinate, 159, 483
copula, 81–82, 485
copular, 485
copulative, 485
dangling gerund, 65, 89–90
dangling infinitive, 85–86
defective, 122, 483–84
defined, 483
denominal, 34, 217, 484
diagramming, 189–92
ditransitive, 484
dynamic, 72–73, 483, 484
emphatic, 125, 484
ergative, 72, 484
exclamatory, 152
factive, 164, 484
finite, 41, 84, 85, 116, 162, 165, 484
full, 124–25, 485
function, 71
functioning as other parts of speech, 85, 88

gerund (see gerund)
helping, 121, 411–12
identifying in predicate, 163
indefinite (see indefinite)
infinitive (see infinitive)
inflection, 73–81, 90, 441
intransitive, 71–72, 81–82, 135, 202, 485
irregular, 73–81, 86–87, 96, 485
lexical, 485, 486
linking (see linking verb)
main, 97–98, 135, 181, 184, 189, 190, 485, 486
middle, 202–3, 485
modal auxiliary (see modal auxiliary verb)
monotransitive, 485
mood (see mood)
multiword, 486
negating verb phrase, 83–84
nonaction, 487
noncount, 22, 450
nonfinite, 86, 440, 485
notional, 486
noun functioning as, 34
number (see verb number)
participial, 486
participle (see participle)
person, 90, 95–96, 98, 115–16, 121, 456
phrasal, 82–84, 128, 142, 184, 379, 486
phrasal prepositional, 486
placement in sentence, 160–61
predicate, 486
predicating, 483
prepositional, 486
primary, 486
principal, 83–84, 85, 86, 92, 112, 121, 125, 126, 135, 200, 201, 202–3, 486
properties, 90–121
pro-verb, 412
pseudo-transitive, 486
reflexive, 486
regular, 73–74, 86, 87, 95–96, 99–105, 486
root, 84–85, 469
sensory, 486–87
split infinitive, 85, 135–36, 203, 440
splitting verb phrase, 83–84, 135
stative, 72–73, 487
passive (see passive voice)
Volkmann, Chris, 396
Volkmann, Toren, 396
vowel, 26, 62, 67, 73, 95, 128, 217, 218, 228, 488
vulgarism, 488
Waite, Alice Vinton, 14n4
Wallace, David Foster, 11n30, 231, 375, 493
Wallace, Ray, 500
Wallraff, Barbara, 499
Walsh, Bill, 499
War Against Grammar, The (Mulroy), 5, 13n1, 408, 495, 501
Warfel, Harry C., 5
Waugh, Evelyn, 363, 390
weak plural, 459
weak verb, 73, 486
Weaver, Constance, 498
Webster, Noah, 17, 23, 491
Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language, 503
Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 225, 503
Webster’s New World English Grammar Handbook (Loberger & Welsh), 18n45
Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, 503
Weekley, Ernest, 504
Weigh the Word (Jennings et al., eds.), 494
Weiner, Edmund S. C., 497, 503
Weld, Allen Hayden, 2, 17n41
Weld’s English Grammar (Weld), 17n41
Wells, H. G., 373, 376
Welsh, Kate Shoup, 18n45
Welty, Eudora, 388
Wensberg, Erik, 498
were-subjunctive, 477
We Who Speak English (Lloyd), 150n5
Wharton, Edith, 361
What a Word! (Herbert), 285, 493
Whitcut, Janet, 499, 502
White, E. B., 31, 358, 363
White, Richard Grant, 296, 494
White, Ronald C., Jr., 6n26
White, Theodore H., 347
Whitman, Walt, 350

verb (cont.)
stem, 84, 86–87, 92, 95, 96, 112, 121, 122, 123, 124, 213, 214–15, 474
strong, 73, 485
suffixes, 73–74, 215
tense (see tense)
transitive, 30, 71–72, 85, 86, 90, 92, 163, 164, 181, 202–3, 204, 486, 487
voice (see voice)
weak, 73, 486
zombie nouns and, 144
verb–adverb combination, 216, 486
verbal, 88, 200–203, 206–7, 487
verb group, 88, 487
verbal adjective, 403
verbalist, 487
verbal noun, 85, 435
verbarian, 487
verb cluster, 458
verb group, 487
verbless sentence, 472
verb number, 115–21
agreement with subject, 115–17, 118–20, 121, 408
compound subjects, 117–18
connectives and conjunctions, 120, 121
determining, 118
effect of conjunction on, 151
expletive, with, 119
gerund, infinitive, or clause as subject, with, 117
inversion, 118
nouns with plural form but singular sense, 118
prepositional phrase and, 118, 119, 120, 142
verbomaniac, 488
Vidal, Gore, 384
virgule. See slash
vocabulary, 10, 160, 488
vocative, 192, 350, 488
vocative imperative, 439
voice, 90–92, 488
active, 85, 86, 89, 90–92, 97–98, 145, 184, 210–11, 402
Whitney, William Dwight, 256, 493
whiz-deletion, 91, 165–66, 168–69, 179, 488
Who Killed Grammar? (Warfel), 5
wh- question, 157, 467
Why Do You Talk like That? (Burton), 142, 492
"Why I Write" (Didion), 205, 492
Why Not Say It Clearly (King), 144, 492
Whyte, Adam Gowans, 251, 493
Wilde, Oscar, 348
Williams, T. Harry, 383
Williams, Tennessee, 350
Wills, Garry, 369
Wilson, Edmund, 369
Wilson, Graham, 491, 493
Winterowd, W. Ross, 383, 490, 493
Wiseman, Richard, 389
Woe Is I (O’Conner), 36, 491, 499
Wolfe, Tom, 396
Woodman, Richard, 382
Woodward, Bob, 384
Woolf, Virginia, 370, 389
Woollcott, Alexander, 350, 351
word
compound (see compound)
content, 61, 98, 489
defined, 488–89
dummy, 431
form, 489
function, 489
portmanteau, 219, 489
structure, 489
superordinate, 489
unmarked, 483
word class, 489
closed, 74, 489
open, 489
Word Court (Wallraff), 499
word formation, 213–19
acci
dence, 213, 401
acronyms, 218–19, 401
affixation (see affixation)
agglutination, 216, 407
aphaeresis, 217, 409
aphesis, 409
apocope, 217, 409
apothegm, 217
back-formations, 217, 412
changing part of speech, 216
clipping, 216–17, 417
compounding, 215–16, 420
defined, 213, 489
dissimilation, 428
elongation, 217
epen
thesis, 217, 430
hyphaeresis, 217, 438
infixes, 214–15, 217, 441
initialisms, 219, 441
loan translation, 218, 444
morphemes, 213–15, 447
morphology (see morphology)
neologisms, 219, 447
prefixes, 213–14, 461–62
reduplication, 218, 468
stem, 214, 215, 474
suffixes (see suffix)
syncope, 217, 479
tmesis, 214–15, 217, 482
word order, importance of, 160, 489
Word Play (Farb), 225, 492
word-stem, 474
Working Principles of Grammar, The (Genung), 137, 492
Wright, Laura, 501
Wright, Richard, 396
Writing in Plain English (Eagleson, G. Jones & Hassall), 502
Writing Well (D. Hall), 71, 491
Writing with Style (Trimble), 127, 492
Yes, I Could Care Less (Walsh), 499
yes–no question, 125, 157–58, 466, 467
You Have a Point There (Partridge), 504
Young Lady’s Accidence, The (Bingham), 16n23
Your Own Words (Wallraff), 499
Zandvoort, R. W., 498
zero article, 63, 410
zero derivation, 423
zero plural, 459
zeugma, 489
zombie noun, 144, 448, 451
Pronunciation Guide

ә for all the vowel sounds in burden, circus, function, putt
a as in fact, plat
ah as in balm, father
ahr as in bar, start
air as in flare, lair
aw as in law, paw
ay as in page, same
b as in balk, rob
ch as in chief, breach
d as in debt, docket
e as in leg, tenant
ee as in plea, legal
eer as in mere, tier
er as in merit, stationery
f as in father, off
g as in go, fog
h as in hearsay, hold
hw as in whereas, while
i as in risk, intent
i as in crime, idle
j as in jury, judge
k as in kidnap, flak
l as in lawyer, trial
m as in motion, malice
n as in notice, negate
n for a nasalized Francophone n (as in embonpoint)
ng as in long, ring
o as in contract, loss
oh as in oath, impose
oo as in rule, school
oor as in lure, tour
or as in board, court
ow as in allow, oust
oy as in join, ploy
p as in perjury, prize
r as in revolt, terror
s as in sanction, pace
sh as in sheriff, flash
t as in intent, term
th as in theory, theft
th as in there, whether
uu as in took, pull
uur as in insurance, plural
v as in vague, waiver
w as in warranty, willful
y as in year, yield
z as in zoning, maze
zh as in measure, vision