

## Learning the Parts of Speech

### Reading and Discussion

Sentences build paragraphs, paragraphs build chapters, and chapters build books. Well! You get the idea.

Sentences are powerful; they can lead to great ideas like the **Gettysburg Address**. Ten sentences that have been 'long remembered' despite Abraham Lincoln's prediction that the world would 'little note nor long remember.' Sentences can expand into books as long as an encyclopedia, or they can be as short as a famous one-liner, "It's Superman!"

When a builder begins a house, he starts with a foundation. Then he uses the right tools to build the house correctly. Each tool has a different job. The builder wouldn't use a hammer to paint the walls, or a paintbrush to pound in a nail. He knows how to use each tool to get the job done.

Sentences are built in much the same way. The foundations of sentence building are the eight parts of speech, which are also the tools needed to build a sentence correctly. When you understand these handy parts and each of the jobs they do in a sentence, your sentences will turn out right.

Let's take a look at the eight parts of speech and the jobs they do in a sentence.

1. **Nouns** are words that name any person, place, or thing. Just about any word you can name is a noun! Boy, dog, city, book, and hope are all nouns. There are more nouns in the English language than any other word. This part of speech is busy!

**Common nouns** are nouns that name anything or anyone.

**Proper nouns** name a specific person or place, like Davy Crockett or Paris.

**Concrete nouns** are names for things you can touch, taste, smell, see, or hear.

**Abstract nouns** are nouns that name emotions, ideas, feelings, and qualities.

2. **Pronouns** are words that take the place of a noun. They stand-in for nouns. Pronouns can do almost anything that a noun can do, and they come in handy by replacing nouns so that you don't have to keep repeating yourself. There are six kinds of pronouns: *personal, demonstrative, interrogative, indefinite, intensive and reflexive*.

Personal pronouns are the pronouns we use the most. These pronouns include words such as **I, me, she, he, and it**.

3. **Verbs** are the action words in a sentence. They show action or being. No sentence is complete without a verb. A sentence can be only one word long if that word is a verb.

Action verbs like **swim, shout, and skate** show physical action, but verbs can also show quieter actions like **think, dream, and read**.

There are eight forms of the verb **to be**, the most used verbs in the English language. They are: **am, are, be, being, been, is, was, and were**.

These verbs show a state of being and they are often used as helping or linking verbs.

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4. **Adjectives** are words that describe or modify nouns and pronouns. They can answer three questions about the words they modify: What kind? How many? and Which one? There are three kinds of adjectives.

1. *Demonstrative* adjectives tell us which one; for example: **this** balloon.
2. *Common* adjectives describe a noun or pronoun; for example: **blue** sky.
3. *Proper* adjectives are made from a proper noun; for example: **Swedish** meatballs.

5. **Adverbs** are words that tell more about or modify a verb, an adjective or adverb.

1. They describe verbs by answering the questions, How? When? Where?
2. They describe adjectives by answering the question, how?
3. They describe other adverbs by asking how or how much?

6. **Conjunctions** are words that join other words or phrases together. They are like sentence glue. There are four main kinds of conjunctions:

1. *Coordinating* conjunctions join words, phrases and sentences together.
2. *Subordinating* conjunctions join a dependent clause to an independent clause.
3. *Correlative* conjunctions are used in pairs, like either...or.
4. *Adverbial* conjunctions join clauses of equal value, like coordinating conjunctions.

7. **Prepositions** are words that show the relationship of one word in the sentence to another. They can tell us four things: location, direction, time, and relationship.

- **Prepositional phrases** are groups of two or more words that begin with a preposition and end with an object (noun or pronoun). Every preposition has an object. A prepositional phrase includes the preposition, the object of the preposition, and all the words in between.
- **Compound prepositions** are two or more words that work together like a one-word preposition. **In case of**, and **in between** are compound prepositions.

8. **Interjections** are words that show strong feeling or emotion. These powerful words usually begin a sentence. If they show strong emotion, they are set apart from the rest of the sentence by an exclamation point. For example:

- Wow! The rain is really coming down.

If the emotions are not as strong, the interjection is set apart by a comma. For example:

- Aw, the rain is really coming down.

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## Activities

**Activity A:** Name the eight parts of speech? Write them on the blank lines below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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## **Answer Key**

1. Nouns
2. Pronouns
3. Adjectives
4. Adverbs
5. Conjunctions
6. Prepositions
7. Interjections
8. Verbs