TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR REVIEW

I. Parts of Speech

Traditional grammar recognizes eight parts of speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing.</td>
<td><em>John</em> bought the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>A verb is a word which expresses action or state of being.</td>
<td><em>Ralph</em> hit the ball hard.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Janice</em> is pretty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>An adjective describes or modifies a noun.</td>
<td><em>The big, red</em> barn burned down yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>An adverb describes or modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb.</td>
<td><em>He quickly</em> left the room.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>She fell down</em> hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>A pronoun takes the place of a noun.</td>
<td><em>She</em> picked <em>someone</em> up today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>A conjunction connects words or groups of words.</td>
<td><em>Bob</em> and <em>Jerry</em> are going.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Either</em> Sam or <em>I</em> will win.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preposition</td>
<td>A preposition is a word that introduces a phrase showing a relation</td>
<td><em>The dog</em> with the shaggy coat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between the noun or pronoun in the phrase and some other word in the</td>
<td><em>He went</em> past the gate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sentence.</td>
<td><em>He gave the book</em> to her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interjection</td>
<td>An interjection is a word that expresses strong feeling.</td>
<td><em>Wow! Gee! Whew!</em> (and other four letter words.)</td>
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</table>
II. Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words that does not contain a subject and a verb in combination. Generally, a phrase is used in the sentence as a single part of speech. In this section we will be concerned with prepositional phrases, gerund phrases, participial phrases, and infinitive phrases.

Prepositional Phrases

The preposition is a single (usually small) word or a cluster of words that show relationship between the object of the preposition and some other word in the sentence. Some examples of single word prepositions: at, by, up, beneath, over, in, upon, to, under, of, throughout. Some phrasal prepositions: according to, in regard to, in spite of, by virtue of.

The prepositional phrase, the most common type of phrase in English, begins with a preposition and is followed by a noun or pronoun, called the object of the preposition, and any modifiers of the object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>preposition</th>
<th>modifiers</th>
<th>object of the preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>my shiny, black</td>
<td>purse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to</td>
<td>the fall 302</td>
<td>syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over</td>
<td>a deep</td>
<td>river</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Prepositional phrases function in the sentence like adjectives or adverbs. Note the following:

Much of his money was made in Europe. (The first phrase is used as an adjective to modify the pronoun much; the second is used as an adverb to modify made.)

The color of the car on the street clashes with my new suit. (Of the car is used as an adjective to modify the noun color; on the street is used as an adjective to modify the noun car; with my new suit is used as an adverb to modify the verb clashes.)

When discussing the function of a prepositional phrase, we say that it has either an Adjective Phrase (AdjP) function or an Adverbial Phrase (AdvP) function.

Verb Phrases: Three kinds of phrases make use of a verbal, a word formed from a verb but functioning like a different part of speech. There are three kinds of verbals: the gerund, the participle, and the infinitive.
Gerund Phrases

A gerund can be recognized by the ending -ing, either on a simple form (reading), or on an auxiliary (having read, being read, having been read). To be a gerund, one of these forms must be used as a noun within the sentence--as a subject, direct object, subject complement, object of the preposition, appositive, etc. Examples: Swimming is fun. He fears being failed.

A gerund phrase consists of the gerund plus its modifiers and/or complements. Note the following examples:

He enjoys walking to school at dawn.

He enjoys creating sentence diagrams.

He enjoyed being selected outstanding student of his class.

Studying English grammar demands most of my time.

He was accused of having not read the book.

My main activity is studying.

Remember, the gerund phrase can be used in a sentence where you would normally use a noun or noun phrase.

Participial Phrases

The participle is identical in form with the gerund forms (-ing ending); in addition, there is a past participle form (studied, broken) and a progressive form (having been studying). The difference between the gerund and the participle is in use, or how it functions within the sentence: the gerund is always used as a noun while the participle is used as an adjective modifier. Example: The injured bird clung to the swaying branch.

The participial phrase, consisting of the participle plus its modifiers and/or complements, can be used at the beginning of the sentence, at the end of the sentence, or within the sentence immediately following the noun it modifies. Examples:

Having once been a football coach, Bill could explain the play to us.

The police removed the man creating the disturbance.
Infinitive Phrases

An *infinitive* is a verbal consisting of the simple stem of the verb, generally preceded by *to* (which is called the *sign* of the infinitive). Examples: *to study, to have studied, to be studying, to be studied, to go, to dance*.

An *infinitive phrase* consists of an infinitive plus its modifiers and/or complements. Infinitive phrases may be used a nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. Note the following examples:

To leave the party early will be impossible. (noun subject)

I wanted *to give John a second chance*. (noun direct object)

The quiz *to be taken today* is not too difficult. (adjective modifier)

I am happy *to make your acquaintance*. (adverb modifier)

III. Clauses

A clause is a combination of words containing a subject and a verb. If the clause can stand by itself as a sentence, it is called an *independent clause*. If it cannot stand alone, it is called *dependent* (or subordinate) clause. We will be concerned here with several types of dependent clauses.

A dependent clause contains a subject and a verb, but it functions as a single part of speech (as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun) within the sentence. Note the following examples:

Mr. Jones announced *that he had resigned*. (noun direct object)

I must leave when the bell rings. (adverb)

When I will be leaving is not yet clear. (noun subject)

The test *that I just took* was easy. (adjective)

Noun Clauses

When a dependent clause is used as a noun it is called a noun clause. Most noun clauses are used as subjects, as direct objects, as subject complements, and as objects of prepositions. Note the following:

What he told us is very convincing. (subject)

He believes whatever is told to him. (direct object)
This is what he told me. (subject complement)

Give it to whoever opens the door. (object of the preposition)

The words that serve as subordinators of noun clauses are conjunctions (that, if, whether); pronouns (who, whom, what, which, whoever, whatever, whichever); adjectives (whose, which, what); and adverbs (when, where, why, how). The subordinating word always stands at or near the beginning of the clause. The conjunction that is quite commonly not expressed in a noun clause:

I hope (that) you are mistaken.

**Adjective Clauses**

An adjective clause modifies or limits or points out a noun or pronoun. The normal position for an adjective clause is immediately following the noun or pronoun it modifies:

He bought one of those houses that have just been built in Silverlake.

I like a man who has plenty of initiative.

The car is one that you can be proud to drive.

The subordinating words that connect adjective clauses to the words they modify are called relatives (hence these are often called relative clauses). The relative is a kind of substitute for the noun or pronoun being modified. Nearly all adjective clauses will use who, whom, that, which, whose, where, when, or why as subordinators.

**Adverbial Clauses**

An adverbial clause may come before, after, or in the interior of a main clause, but they are used like adverbs; they describe the action of the main clause by telling certain things about it. Like adverbs, adverbial clauses may modify verbs, adverbs, or adjectives. The use of adverbial clauses, together with some of their most common conjunctions are listed below:

Time (when, before, after, since, while, until, as)

You must not talk while you eat.

Manner (as, as if, as though)

They write as if they knew something.
Place (where, wherever)

We parted where the paths separated.

Result (that, so that)

He was so late that he might have missed the lecture.

Cause (because, since, as)

She quit school because her mother was ill.

Purpose (that, in order that)

They died that their countrymen might live.

Condition (if, unless, provided that, on condition that)

Stop me if you have heard this before.

Comparison (than, as)

Gold is heavier than iron (is).

Concession (although, though, even if)

I will trust him though he betray me.

IV. Sentences

Traditional grammarians classify sentences according to their structure (simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex) or according to their purpose (declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory).

Sentence Structure

When classified by structure, a sentence is defined by the number of clauses (dependent or independent) it contains.

A simple sentence has only one independent clause (Men must work. Men, women, and children attended the circus.)

A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses combined in one sentence. Note the punctuation in the following examples:
This is my story; I have nothing more to say.

I saw your new home yesterday; it certainly is beautiful.

The story was true, but nobody believed him.

A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause:

After I heard the concert, I realized it should have been heard by everyone in the class.

A compound-complex sentence is formed when a dependent clause is added to a compound sentence (two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause).

Tell me what you believe, and I will tell you who you are.

Sentence Purpose

Declarative sentences make statements (I went to the bank yesterday.), imperative sentences issue commands or requests (Go to the bank now.), interrogative sentences ask questions (Who went to the bank?), and exclamatory sentences make exclamations (What a stunning building for a bank!).

Problems in structuring sentences.

Fragments. To be a sentence, a group of words must contain at least one independent clause, otherwise one is left with a fragment.

Mary's dress with the beautiful belt and the subtle pattern. (Where's the verb?)

Batted into left field for a stand-up single. (Where's the subject?)

Comma splices (also called fused sentences or run-on sentences) occur when independent clauses are joined together without adequate punctuation or conjunctions. Revise with a semi-colon or a comma plus conjunction.

Power tends to corrupt absolute power corrupts absolutely. (fused, run-on)

Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely. (comma splice)
V. Verbs

Verbs are defined by traditional grammarians as words that "express action or state of being." Structural linguists prefer to define them as words that can undergo certain form changes, notably as words that can form a past tense and add -ing. All in all, verbs are the most versatile and complex category of words in English and in other languages as well. The use of verbals in phrases was discussed on page 4; the other forms and functions of verbs will be summarized here.

The so-called base form of the verb is the form which occurs with the word to, e.g., to walk, to write, to go, to be. For all verbs except the completely irregular verb to be, the base form also serves as the present tense form when the subject is I, you, we, they, or a plural noun. If the subject is he, she, it, or a singular noun, -s or -es is added. Examples:

(I, you, we, they, the men) walk, go, write
(he, she, it, a man) walks, goes, writes

The past tense of all regular verbs is formed by adding -d or -ed to the base, but there are 150 or so irregular verbs that form their past tense in other ways. Choice of subject makes no difference in the past tense form. Examples:

walked, rowed, hated, went, wrote, bought, drove, sang

Traditional grammar recognizes a future tense in English (which structural and transformational grammarians do not). This so-called future tense consists of the base form preceded by shall or will, e.g., shall/will go, will walk, will write.

The ending -ing is added to the base to form the present participle, and this form combines with a form of be to make the progressive tense. Examples:

Present Progressive: I am walking
                            you, we, they, the men are walking
                            he, she, it, a man is walking

Past Progressive: I, he, she, it, a man was walking
                            you, we, they, the men were walking

Future Progressive (any subject) will/shall be walking
For a native speaker of English, the past participle is best defined as the verb form used with have. This combination, a form of have plus the past participle, produces the perfect tenses. Examples:

Present Perfect: I, you, we, they, the men have gone
he, she, it, a man has gone

Past Perfect: (any subject) had gone

Future Perfect: (any subject) will/shall have gone

In all examples thus far that contain action verbs, the subject has been the doer of the action. In sentences containing a direct object (that is, the receiver of the action), it is possible to reverse this relationship and to put the doer in the predicate in a prepositional phrase with by or simply omit the doer. This kind of sentence is said to be in the passive voice. A verb that is not passive is said to be in the active voice. Examples:

Passive: The door was locked by the night watchman.

The door was locked.

This anthem was sung by the choir last week.

French is taught in our high school.

Active: The night watchman locked the door.

The choir sang this anthem last week.

(Someone) teaches French in our high school.

Observe that in the passive sentences above, the main verb is a past participle and is preceded by a form of be. The second and fourth examples illustrate another important feature of the passive: the option of omitting the doer of the action. (Statistics indicate how frequently we avail ourselves of this advantage; over three-fourths of the passives used have the doer omitted.)

We now have illustrated the future tense, the progressive tenses, the perfect tenses, and the passive. All these are alike in being compound or phrasal verbs; that is, they require a main verb preceded by an auxiliary or "helping" verb. It is customary to refer to this whole structure, auxiliary plus main verb, as "the verb" of the clause. It is obvious that more than one of these features may be present at the same time, producing more than one auxiliary in the verb.

Examples:

Future, passive: The top five entries will be published.
Present, perfect, passive: ...nor has any alternative course of action been proposed.

Past perfect, progressive: John had been expecting them.

Future, progressive: We'll be seeing you.

Other common auxiliaries are do (with does, did, doing, done) and the rest of the modals other than will and shall (may, can, must) with their past tense forms (would, should, might, and could). Examples:

Present, modal, passive: The Education Edition may be ordered...

Past, modal, perfect passive: Ten years ago that might have been considered carefully.

Past, do-form: Did you see Conrad today?

VI. Subject-Verb Agreement

It is important to remember that the verb agrees in number with its subject. Singular number means only one thing is talked about; plural number means that more than one thing is being talked about.

A source of confusion is that in the present tense the third person singular form (he sees) adds an -s to the base form of the verb to indicate the singular. In the third person plural form, there is no -s. Examples: He walks slowly. They walk slowly. He has traveled abroad. They have traveled abroad.

Note the following rules which govern areas of confusion over subject-verb agreement:

1. The number of the verb is not affected by material that comes between it and its subject. (The following pronouns are singular and must take singular verbs: either, neither, each, one, everybody, everyone, someone.) Examples:

One of the many suggestions was discussed.

Each of the plans has its virtues.

Everyone among the listeners was impressed.

Immediate settlement of our difficulties is vital.

Is either of the contestants now ready?
2. A verb agrees with its subject even when the subject follows the verb.

   There is a box of matches in the kitchen.

   There seems to be little time left.

   There seem to be too many men on the field.

3. Compound subjects joined by and take a plural verb, unless the subjects are thought of as being a single thing.

   Every man and every woman is asked to help. (i.e., everyone)

   The sum and substance of his argument is peace.

4. Singular subjects joined by or or nor take singular verbs.

   Either a raincoat or an umbrella is advisable.

   Neither he nor his assistant is ever on time.

(If the subjects joined by or or nor differ in number, the verb agrees with the subject nearer to it. E.g., Neither the mother nor the two boys were sick.)

5. Plural nouns of amount, distance, etc., when they are used as singular units of measurement, take singular verbs.

   A hundred dollars was once paid for a single tulip bulb.

   Seven years in prison was the penalty that he had to pay.

6. A collective noun is considered singular when the group is regarded as a unit; it is plural when the individuals of the group are referred to.

   The audience was very enthusiastic tonight.

   All during the last act, the audience were leaving their seats.
EXERCISES:

In the following, decide which of the verbs within parentheses is the correct one:

1. Although not one of my relatives (was, were) at the wedding, neither Leota nor her mother (was, were) surprised.

2. There (is, are) few ceremonies as interesting to women as a wedding, although both the ring and the ceremony (implies, imply) bondage.

3. The cost of some weddings (is, are) so high that one of the parents I know (has, have) offered the bride four thousand dollars to elope.

4. If the list of guests (is, are) very long, the bill for refreshments (is, are) bound to be more than most fathers could afford.

VII. Problems with Reference of Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that substitutes for a noun; in a sentence, the word for which the pronoun stands is called its antecedent. Problems occur when 1) the reference to the antecedent is not clear, and 2) when there is a lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent.

Clearness of reference

Pronouns should have definite antecedents and should be placed as near their antecedents as possible. The reader or listener should not have to manufacture an antecedent if the sentence clearly calls for one. Examples:

Unclear: A strange car followed us closely, and he kept blinking his lights at us.

Clear: A strange car followed us closely, and the driver kept blinking his lights at us.

A pronoun should not appear to refer to either of two antecedents. Example:

Unclear: Helen told Janet that she was getting fat.

The pronouns this, that, and which may be used to refer to an idea expressed in a preceding clause or sentence, but only when the meaning is immediately clear. Examples:

Unclear: Only twenty people attended the lecture, which was due to poor publicity.

Clear: Because of poor publicity, only twenty people attended the lecture.
Unclear: Good writers usually have large vocabularies, and this is why I get poor grades on my themes.

Clear: I get poor grades on my themes because I have an inadequate vocabulary; good writers usually have large vocabularies.

**Agreement of pronoun and antecedent:**

Pronouns should agree with their antecedents in number and person. A singular antecedent is logically referred to by a singular pronoun; a plural antecedent logically takes a plural pronoun. The pronouns *one, everyone, someone, no one, anyone, anybody, everybody, somebody, nobody, each, either, and neither* are usually felt to be singular; hence nouns which are their antecedents should be singular. Which of the following sentences have faulty pronoun usage?

1. Everybody has *his* faults and *his* virtues.
2. England expects every man to do *their* duty.
3. A person soon becomes popular if *they* show a friendly attitude.
4. Everyone has *their* own idea of what duty is.
5. Both she and her daughter have changed the color of *their* hair.
6. Either Tom or Floyd will bring *his* camera.
7. Every man and woman must do *his* share of the work.

**VIII. Dangling Modifiers**

A modifier is said to dangle when it is not associated with or attached to the word it is meant to modify. Ordinarily, that word should be plainly stated in the sentence and placed near enough to the phrase modifier so that the reader immediately associates the phrase with the word. If the word is missing, or hidden somewhere in the sentence, the reader tends to associate the phrase with some other word.

Three types of danglers are of greatest concern: the verbal phrase, the elliptical clause, and the phrase of result ending a sentence.
Verbal Phrase

1. The most common type of dangler is the participial phrase beginning a sentence. Note the following:

   Stepping into the boat, my camera dropped into the water.

   Burned to a cinder, I could not eat the toast.

   To correct: Change verb phrase to a clause, or change subject to the agent of the action of the participle.

2. Another common type of dangler is the verbal that follows a preposition. Note the following:

   After driving all day, the motel was a welcome sight.

   Upon graduating from high school, my father let me work in his office.

   To correct: Change the verb phrase to a clause, or change subject to the agent of the action of the participle.

3. Occasionally, an infinitive phrase will dangle:

   To enter the contest, a box top must be sent in with your slogan.

   To catch these trout, the bait must imitate their natural food.

   To correct: Change the subject to the agent of the infinitive.

Elliptical Clause:

4. An elliptical clause is one in which some grammatically necessary words are not stated but understood. The clause becomes a dangler when the understood subject of the clause is different from the subject of the main clause:

   When ten years old, my father sold his farm and moved to L.A.

   While combing my hair this morning, a man's face appeared at the window.

   To correct: Change the phrase to a clause.
Dangling Phrase of Result:

5. The dangling phrase of result is usually found at the end of the sentence:

   The air was hot and muggy, thus causing me to sleep poorly.

   I earned eight hundred dollars last summer, thus giving me enough for school.

To correct: Change the statement to a *because* clause.

Courtesy of Dr. Robert Noreen’s website