

Master English Grammar

Unlock the secrets to English grammar with a guide designed for learners and educators alike. Covering key grammatical concepts such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, conditionals, adjectives, and more, this resource breaks down complex topics into simple, actionable explanations. Learn how to identify and use grammatical elements like noun phrases, verb forms, collocations, and prepositions to communicate effectively and confidently in English.

Perfect for teaching or self-study, this guide ensures a clear understanding of grammar rules and terminology. Whether you're a beginner aiming to strengthen your foundation or an advanced learner refining your skills, this is your go-to resource for mastering English grammar.

Key grammatical terminology

<p>Noun</p>	<p>The name of (or way of referring to) a person, thing, place, quality, concept, etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Countable (or unit) noun: a noun that we can count <i>one book, two books, twenty sheep.</i> ● Uncountable (or mass) noun: a noun that is thought of as a single mass that cannot be counted <i>rice, paper, air.</i> But we can count (a) subdivisions or containers – even if they are not stated <i>two grains of rice, five bags of rice, three teas, four sugars</i> (b) types <i>twenty cheeses.</i>
<p>Noun phrase</p>	<p>A number of words that act as a noun and could be substituted by a pronoun. <u>The man I met at the cafe</u> is going to phone me tonight. The underlined words are a noun phrase which could be substituted by <i>he</i>. Strictly speaking, a noun is a one-word noun phrase!</p>
<p>Pronoun</p>	<p>A word that can replace a noun or noun phrase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subject pronouns: <i>I, you, he, she, it, we, they</i> ● Object pronouns: <i>me, you, her, him, it, us, them</i> ● Possessive pronouns: <i>mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs</i> ● Reflexive pronouns: <i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, oneself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves</i> ● Indefinite pronouns: <i>somebody, anything, nobody, etc</i> ● Demonstrative pronouns: <i>this, that, these, those</i> ● Question pronouns: <i>who, which, what, whose, (whom), whoever, whichever, whatever</i> ● Relative pronouns: <i>that, who, which, what, whom, whoever, whosoever, whomever, whomsoever, whatever</i>
<p>Verb</p>	<p>Verbs describe actions, processes or states. They take different forms with regard to tense (present, past), aspect (progressive, perfect), person (first, second, third), number (singular, plural) and voice (active, passive).</p>
<p>Types of verb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Main verb describes the action or state <i>play, kick, walk, wish, think.</i> ● Auxiliary verb the ‘helping’ verb that goes together with a main verb to help make the tense or structure <i>am, was, have, did.</i> ● Modal verb an auxiliary verb that adds a functional meaning to the main verb (advice, obligation, permission, etc) <i>you can play, we must decide, you could ask, they should leave.</i> Modal verbs don’t have aspect and don’t change for person. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action verb (also called dynamic verb or active verb) describes actions or events <i>run, break, cook, notice.</i> ● State verb (also called stative verb) describes an ongoing state or condition, <i>be, think, love.</i> State verbs are not usually used in progressive (-ing) tenses.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflexive verb has a reflexive pronoun. The subject and object of the verb are the same <i>I cut myself shaving.</i> ● Multi-word verb a general term for phrasal verb, prepositional verb and phrasal-prepositional verb. It is made up of two or three words that act as if they were a single verb <i>get over, make do with, look after.</i> ● Intransitive verb has a subject but no direct object ie whatever is being done is not being done <u>to</u> anyone or anything. <i>She walks for half an hour every morning.</i> (The walking happens but is not being done to something.) ● Transitive verb has a subject and one (or more) objects. ● A direct object is the person or thing that is directly affected by the action of the verb ie the verb is done <u>to</u> them. <i>He hit his boss.</i> (The action is done to the boss.) ● In the sentence <i>She gave me some cash</i> the direct object is <i>some cash</i> – the thing immediately affected by the action of giving. <i>Me</i> is the ‘indirect object’ – it tells us who is receiving the direct object.
Verb phrase	<p>A sequence of words (including the main verb, auxiliary verbs and / or particles) that act as a verb. In these sentences the underlined words are verb phrases: <i>I'm <u>going to swim</u>.</i> <i>Next June we <u>will have been living</u> here for ten years.</i> <i>She <u>ought to be able to guess</u> the answer.</i></p> <p>Confusingly, there are different definitions of the term verb phrase but this seems to be the most widely accepted one.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Base form or Bare infinitive the basic form of the verb, without endings or <i>to</i>; <i>run, go, take, cook, wash, be, break, fly.</i> Typically column 1 (of 3) in a coursebook verb table. ● Present participle the <i>-ing</i> form of a verb <i>running, going, taking, cooking, washing, being, breaking, flying.</i> Typically not listed in a coursebook verb table (but easy enough to make from column 1). The <i>gerund</i> has the same form – but refers to the noun: <i>Swimming is my favourite sport.</i> ● Past form the form of a verb used in the past simple tense <i>ran, went, cooked, washed, was / were, went, broke, flew.</i> Typically column 2 (of 3) in a coursebook verb table. ● Past participle the form of a verb used when making perfect tenses and passives <i>run, gone, cooked, washed, been, broken, flown.</i> Typically column 3 (of 3) in a coursebook verb table.

<p>Conditional</p>	<p>Conditionals express what happens if something else happens. Coursebooks often focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First conditional a real-world condition that is normal, possible or likely to be fulfilled <i>If I go to Kansas, I'll buy it for you.</i> ● Second conditional an imagined condition that is unlikely or impossible to be fulfilled <i>If I went to the moon, I'd buy it for you.</i> ● Third conditional a speculation about how past events might have been different <i>If I had gone to Kansas, I'd have bought it for you.</i> ● Zero conditional statements about truths, regular situations, rules, laws, natural phenomenon etc <i>If you heat ice, it melts.</i>
<p>Adjective</p>	<p>A word which describes or tells us more about a noun <i>green, tall, bad.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comparative adjective compares things <i>greener, taller, worse.</i> ● Superlative adjective states that something is most or least <i>greenest, tallest, worst.</i>
<p>Adverb</p>	<p>A word which tells us more about a verb, adjective or adverb. Also something of a 'dustbin' class of grammar for all the awkward words we have trouble classifying. Although widely taught at lower levels, they may be classified under other headings eg time expressions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adverb of manner tells us how something is done <i>slowly, well.</i> ● Adverb of time tells us when something happens <i>tomorrow, soon.</i> ● Adverb of frequency tells us how often something is done <i>usually, never.</i> ● Adverb of place tells us where something happens <i>outside, upstairs.</i> ● Sentence adverb used for modifying a whole clause or sentence, perhaps commenting on what is said <i>honestly, obviously.</i> ● Adverbial a number of words that act as an adverb. <i>She walked <u>with great difficulty</u> ('with great difficulty' tells us how she walked).</i>
<p>Preposition</p>	<p>A word or words that help us understand the relationships between things in terms of place, movement, time or ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preposition of place <i>above, against, across, at, behind, below, beneath, between, by, in, next to, on, on top of, outside, over, underneath, upon</i> ● Preposition of movement <i>across, along, around, between, over, past, through, to, under</i> ● Preposition of time <i>at, on, in, for, since</i> ● Preposition showing relationship between ideas <i>despite, except, owing to</i>

Collocation	<p>Words that have a tendency to co-occur (ie be found together). For example, many nouns, verbs and adjectives have a strong link to a specific preposition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noun + preposition <i>love of, success in</i> ● Adjective + preposition <i>interested in, scared of</i> ● Verb + preposition <i>search for, argue about</i>
Determiner	<p>A word that helps clarify what a noun refers to. This category includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Article <i>a / an, the</i> ● Quantifier <i>some, all, few, each, any, no</i> ● Demonstrative <i>these, that</i> ● Number <i>seven, a hundred</i> ● Possessive adjective <i>I, my, your, his, her, its, our, their</i>
Conjunction	<p>A word that connects two words, clauses or sentences together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinating conjunction (<i>and, but, or, so, yet, for</i>) joins words, phrases and clauses together. ● Subordinating conjunction (<i>because, although, if, since, as</i> etc) is used to open a new dependent clause and helps to show the relationship between the clauses. <p>Conjunctions can work as part of a pair <i>neither red nor white wine, both Jürgen and me.</i></p>
Subject and object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subject the person or thing that does the action of the verb. ● Direct object the person or thing the action of a verb is done to. ● Indirect object the person or thing that receives or is affected by the direct object. <p><i>She gave him a karate chop to the neck. She is the subject (because she did the action). A karate chop is the direct object (because it is the thing given). Him is the indirect object (because he was affected by the karate chop).</i></p>