

# Glossary

## active

In an active clause or active sentence, the grammatical subject is the person or thing that performs the action given in the verb (e.g. Dan wrote the book). Compare **PASSIVE**.

## adjective

A word that describes a noun (e.g. an *interesting* book) or a pronoun (e.g. a *red* one). **Gradable adjectives** can be used to say that a person or thing has more or less of this quality (e.g. She's very *happy*), while **non-gradable adjectives** can't (e.g. It's *impossible*. We can't say 'It's very impossible'). **Classifying adjectives** say that something is of a particular type (e.g. *atomic*, *initial*). **Emphasising adjectives** stress how strongly we feel about something (e.g. *complete* nonsense). **Qualitative adjectives** say what qualities a person or thing has (e.g. *big*, *rich*). See also **grading ADVERBS** and **non-grading ADVERBS**.

## adjective phrase

A group of words where the main word is an adjective (e.g. it's *extremely important*; it wasn't *strong enough*).

## adverb

A word that describes or gives more information (when, how, where, etc.) about a verb (e.g. He ran *quickly*), adjective (e.g. an *extremely* expensive car), another adverb (e.g. She did it *very* easily), or phrase (e.g. They live *just* across the road.). Types of adverb include: **adverbs of manner** (e.g. *slowly*, *violently*) which we use to say how something is done; **connecting adverbs** (e.g. *consequently*, *similarly*); **time adverbs** (e.g. *tomorrow*, *already*); **place adverbs** (e.g. *upstairs*, *outside*); **direction adverbs** (e.g. *backwards*, *through*); **comment adverbs** (e.g. *apparently*, *personally*) which we use to make a comment on what we are saying; **viewpoint adverbs** (e.g. *financially*, *politically*) which we use to make clear from what point of view we are speaking; **adverbs of indefinite frequency** (e.g. *always*, *never*); **degree adverbs** (e.g. *completely*, *quite*) which give information about the extent or degree of something; **focus adverbs** (e.g. *just*, *even*) which we use to focus on a particular word or phrase. **Grading adverbs** (e.g. *extremely*, *very*) are used with **gradable ADJECTIVES**. **Non-grading adverbs** (e.g. *completely*, *mainly*) are used with **non-gradable ADJECTIVES**.

## adverbial

A word or group of words that says when, how, where, etc. something happens. They may consist of an **ADVERB** (e.g. *quietly*), a **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** (e.g. *through the door*), a **NOUN PHRASE** (e.g. *next week*), or an **ADVERBIAL CLAUSE** (e.g. *after she left*).

## adverbial clause

A type of **subordinate** CLAUSE that says when, how, where, etc. something happens (e.g. *Before I went to school this morning*, I did my homework).

## affirmative sentence

A statement (i.e. not a question) that is positive, not negative.

## agent

The person or thing that performs the action described in a verb. Usually it is the subject in an active clause and comes after 'by ...' in a passive clause.

## article

The word *the* is the **definite article** and the word *a* (*an* before vowels) is the **indefinite article**. When there is no article before a noun we refer to this as the **zero article**.

## auxiliary verbs

The verbs *be*, *have* and *do* when they are used with a main verb to form questions, negatives, tenses, passive forms, etc. **MODAL VERBS** are also auxiliary verbs.

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### clause

A group of words that contains a verb. A clause may be a complete sentence or a part of a sentence. A **main clause** can exist as a separate sentence, while a **subordinate clause** cannot (e.g. *If I see Matt at work* [= subordinate clause], *I'll invite him over this evening* [= main clause]). Types of clause include: **to-infinitive clause** (e.g. *To become a doctor* takes years of study); **present participle(-ing) clause** (e.g. *Feeling hungry*, I went into the kitchen); **past participle (-ed) clause** (e.g. *Built during the 1970s*, the building is now in need of repair); **being + past participle (-ed) clause** (e.g. *Being unemployed*, Tom had a lot of time on his hands); **having + past participle (-ed) clause** (e.g. *Having seen the doctor*, I went straight home). See also **CONDITIONAL CLAUSE**, **RELATIVE CLAUSE**.

### cleft sentence

A sentence in which focus is given to either the subject or object using a pattern beginning 'It ...' (e.g. It was my brother who lent me the money) or 'What ...' (e.g. What you need is a holiday).

### complement

A word or phrase that follows a **LINKING VERB** and describes the **SUBJECT** (e.g. Linda is a *lawyer*) or **OBJECT** (e.g. I found the food *inedible*). A complement may also be an **ADVERBIAL** or **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** which completes the meaning of a verb. Some verbs need a complement (e.g. The disease originated *in Britain*; 'The disease originated' would be incomplete).

### compound

A **compound noun** consists of two or more words together used as a noun (e.g. a *language school*). A **compound adjective** consists of two or more words together used as an adjective (e.g. They were *well-behaved*).

### conditional

A **conditional clause** usually starts with 'if', but other patterns are possible (e.g. *Had it not rained*, Spain would have won). A **conditional sentence** contains a conditional clause. A distinction can be made between **real conditionals**, which suggest that the situation is or was true, or may have been or may become true (e.g. If she makes a promise, she keeps it) and **unreal conditionals**, which suggest that the situation is imaginary or untrue (e.g. If you had asked me, I would have helped).

### conjunction

A word such as *and*, *but*, *if*, *while*, *after*, *because* which connects words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence. Compare **SENTENCE CONNECTOR**.

### countable

A **countable noun** can be both singular and plural (e.g. *cup / cups*). An **uncountable noun** doesn't have a plural form (e.g. *electricity*, but not 'electricities').

### determiner

A word that goes in front of a noun to identify what the noun refers to (e.g. *this*, *some*, *the*, *a / an*, *each*, *all*, *my*). **Possessive determiners** (also called **possessive adjectives**) are words such as *my*, *your* and *their*.

### direct speech

Speech that is written using the exact words of the speaker, without any changes. Compare **REPORTED SPEECH**.

### imperative

An **imperative clause** uses the **bare INFINITIVE** form of a verb for such things as giving orders and making suggestions (e.g. *Go to bed!*).

### infinitive

The form of a verb that usually goes after 'to'. The form can be either the **to-infinitive** (e.g. *to sing*, *to eat*) or the **bare infinitive** (e.g. *sing*, *eat*).

### intransitive verb

A verb that doesn't take an object (e.g. She *smiled*). Compare **TRANSITIVE VERB**.

**inversion**

Changing the usual word order so that the verb comes before the subject (e.g. *Up went the balloon*).

**linking verb**

A verb (e.g. *be, become, appear*) that connects a SUBJECT with its COMPLEMENT.

**modal verbs**

A group of verbs (*can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, would*) that give information about such things as possibility, necessity, and obligation. **Semi-modal verbs** (*used to, need, dare, had better, have (got) to, be able to*) have similar meanings to modal verbs.

**non-affirmative**

Referring to a lack of positive, affirmative meaning; for example, in most questions and negatives. However, questions which expect a positive reply are affirmative. The terms 'non-assertive' and 'assertive' are sometimes used for 'non-affirmative' and 'affirmative'.

**noun**

A word that refers to a person, place, thing, quality, etc. A **collective noun** refers to a group of people or things (e.g. *audience, crowd, herd*). See also COUNTABLE NOUN.

**noun phrase**

A group of words where the main word is a noun (e.g. *I've been talking to the woman across the road; We spoke to several small children*).

**object**

The **direct object** is the person or thing affected by the action of the verb (e.g. *I put the book [= direct object] back on the shelf*). The **indirect object** is the person or thing who benefits from the action or who receives something (e.g. *I gave my mother [= indirect object] some flowers [= direct object]*). Compare SUBJECT.

**participle**

The **present participle** is the **-ing form** of a verb (e.g. *walking, singing, eating*) used, for example, in continuous tenses. The **past participle** is the **-ed form** of a verb (e.g. *walked, sang, eaten*) used, for example, in perfect tenses. A **participle adjective** is one formed from the present or past participle of a verb (e.g. *the candidates applying, a broken plate*). A **participle clause** has a present participle or past participle verb form (e.g. *Feeling unwell, he went to bed; The person appointed to the post will have a difficult job to do*).

**particle**

An adverb or preposition that follows a verb in **TWO-WORD VERBS** and **THREE-WORD VERBS** (e.g. *What time did you get in? [in = adverb]; I flicked through the magazine [through = preposition]; She looks up to her mother [up = adverb, to = preposition]*).

**passive**

In a passive clause or passive sentence, the grammatical subject is the person or thing that experiences the effect of the action given in the verb (e.g. *The book was written by Dan*). Compare ACTIVE.

**performative**

A performative is a verb which states the action that is performed when a speaker uses the verb (e.g. *I promise I'll do it tomorrow; I apologise*).

**phrasal verb**

A verb together with a following adverb and / or a preposition that has a single meaning (e.g. *set off, look up to*). Compare 'I ran across Tanya at the concert' (= met unexpectedly; a phrasal verb) and 'She ran across the road' (= a PREPOSITIONAL VERB).

**possessive**

The possessive form of a noun ends in either **-s** (e.g. *Marta's car*) or **-s'** (e.g. *the girls' changing room*).

**preposition**

A word such as *in, on, or by* that comes before a noun, pronoun, noun phrase or **-ing form** (e.g. *in March, above my uncle's head, by investing*).



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### prepositional phrase

A group of words that consists of a **PREPOSITION** and its **prepositional object** (a noun, pronoun, noun phrase or **-ing** form) (e.g. *behind our house, across it*).

### prepositional verb

A verb and a following preposition (e.g. *believe in, consist of, look after*). Compare **PHRASAL VERB**.

### pronoun

A word that is used instead of a noun or noun phrase. Pronouns include **personal pronouns** (e.g. *I, she, me*), **reflexive pronouns** (e.g. *myself, herself*), **possessive pronouns** (e.g. *mine, yours*), and **RELATIVE PRONOUNS** (e.g. *who, which*).

### quantifier

A word or phrase that goes before a noun or noun phrase to talk about the quantity of something (e.g. *a little water, many of the women in the room*).

### question

A **wh-question** begins with a **WH-WORD** (e.g. *Where are you going?*). A **yes / no question** is one that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' (e.g. *Do you like coffee?*). An **echo question** repeats part of a previous utterance and asks for a repetition of all or part of it (e.g. 'I'm moving to Alaska.' 'You're moving where?'). We can ask an **indirect question** by putting it into a **subordinate CLAUSE** beginning with a **WH-WORD** or with *if* or *whether* (e.g. *Can you tell me where you live?*).

### relative clause

A kind of **subordinate CLAUSE** that describes a noun that comes before it in a **main CLAUSE**. A **defining relative clause** says which person or thing is being talked about (e.g. *A friend who lives in London is getting married*). A **non-defining relative clause** gives more information about the noun (e.g. *My bicycle, which I've left outside your house, is over 20 years old*). A **nominal relative clause** begins with a **WH-WORD** or *whatever, whenever*, etc. and functions as a **NOUN PHRASE** in a sentence (e.g. *What I need now is a long, hot bath*). A **reduced relative clause** usually begins with an **-ing** (present participle) or **-ed** (past participle) form and has a similar meaning to a relative clause (e.g. *I met the people living in our old house [= ... who live in our old house], The new rules only affect people born before 1960 [= ... who were born before 1960]*).

### relative pronoun

A pronoun such as *who, which, or that* which is used at the beginning of a relative clause.

### relative word

Words including **RELATIVE PRONOUNS** and others (e.g. *whereby, why*) that can begin a **RELATIVE CLAUSE**.

### reported speech

Speech that is reported without using the exact words of the speaker. Sometimes called 'indirect speech'.

### reporting clause & reported clause

A statement that reports what people think or say is often divided into a **reporting clause** and a **reported clause** (e.g. *She said [= reporting clause] that the building was unsafe [= reported clause]*).

### reporting verb

A verb used in a **REPORTING CLAUSE** that describes what people say or think (e.g. *ask, claim, say*).

### sentence connector

A word or phrase that shows a connection between two separate sentences (e.g. *My car isn't very comfortable. However, it's very cheap to run.; The house is large and has a beautiful garden. What's more, it's very close to the station.*). Compare **CONJUNCTION**.

### state verb

A verb that is used to describe a state (e.g. *believe, think*) rather than an action.

### subject

The person or thing that does the action of the verb (e.g. *Luca went home*). Compare **OBJECT**.

**subjunctive**

The subjunctive is a set of verb forms used mainly in rather formal English to talk about possibilities rather than facts. The **present subjunctive** uses the base form of the verb (e.g. We suggest that she *leave* immediately) and the **past subjunctive** uses *were* (e.g. If I *were* you, I'd go home now).

**transitive verb**

A verb that takes an object (e.g. She *was holding* a bunch of flowers). Compare INTRANSITIVE VERB.

**two-word verbs & three-word verbs**

Verbs that are commonly used with a particular PARTICLE (adverb or preposition) are referred to here as **two-word verbs** (e.g. She *looked after* her elderly parents). Verbs that are commonly used with two particular particles (adverb + preposition) are referred to here as **three-word verbs** (e.g. He *looked up to* his older brothers). See also PREPOSITIONAL VERB and PHRASAL VERB.

**verb**

A **finite verb** has a tense (e.g. She *waited*; She *is waiting* for you). **Non-finite** verb forms are INFINITIVE (e.g. He came *to see* me) and PARTICIPLE forms (e.g. *Shouting* loudly, I was able to make myself heard; *Built* in 2011, the tower is still the tallest construction in Europe).

**verb phrase**

A group of words consisting of one or more verbs (e.g. *gives, is giving, has been giving*).

**wh-words**

A group of words (*who, whom, whose, where, when, why, how*) that are used in **wh-QUESTIONS**.

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