

3. Style

A. Basic Outline of English Grammar

The following is a check list of grammatical terms ordered according to their relationships to each other as wholes and parts. The outline offers a structure through which students may build a systematic understanding of sentences. *The Harbrace Handbook* explains in detail the meaning and usage of each term. Following this list is an exercise that reinforces the construction of sentences.

1. Sentence categories:

A. According to structure

Simple	<i>The girls went shopping.</i>
Compound	<i>The girls went shopping, but the boys stayed home.</i>
Complex	<i>Because the girls went shopping, the boys stayed home.</i>
Compound/complex	<i>Because the girls went shopping and the boys stayed home, Jill was alone.</i>

B. According to purpose

Declarative	<i>Sentence reflects actuality; it declares something.</i>
Imperative	<i>Sentence demands potential action, not an actuality.</i>
Interrogative	<i>Sentence asks a question.</i>
Exclamatory	<i>Sentence shows strong emotional response (exclamation point, instead of a period or question mark).</i>

C. According to style

Cumulative	<i>Main clause first, followed by subordinating clauses: Jill was alone because the girls went shopping and the boys stayed home.</i>
Periodic	<i>An accumulation of clauses or phrases that builds up to the main clause: With the girls shopping and the boys staying home, alone was Jill.</i>

2. Verbs (the most important word in the sentence)

A. Finite Verbs

Linking	<i>the verbs “to be,” “to become,” “to feel, smell, taste”; a noun or pronoun after a linking verb is called a <u>predicate nominative</u>; an adjective after a linking verb is called a <u>predicate adjective</u></i>
Action	<i>any other verb; a noun or pronoun after an action verb is called a <u>direct object</u></i>
Person	<i>first person = I; we second person = you third person = he, she, it; they</i>
Number	<i>singular/plural</i>
Tense	<i>time of action of the verb [six tenses in English]</i>

Voice	<i>the relation of the subject of the verb to the action which the verb expresses [active or passive]</i>
Intransitive	<i>verb does not take a direct object; verb can be followed by a prepositional phrase [verb is active voice only]</i>
Transitive	<i>verb is followed by a direct object</i>
Active	<i>subject of the verb is perpetrator of the action: Joe hits Jim</i>
Passive	<i>subject of the verb is victim of the action: Jim is hit by Joe</i>
	<i>NB: every tense of a transitive verb has both an active form and a passive form</i>
Mood	<i>the Mood expresses the manner in which the action of the verb is conceived</i>
Indicative	<i>Direct assertion or question: The exam is tomorrow.</i>
Imperative	<i>Demand for potential action: Take the test tomorrow.</i>
Subjunctive	<i>assertion of possibility, wish, desire, doubt, fear, etc.: I fear (hope, pray, wish, doubt, etc.) the test be tomorrow.</i> <i>The subjunctive is being leveled out of English by the use of noun clauses after verbs of wishing, fearing, etc. Contrary-to-fact conditions still retain the subjunctive: If I were you, I would take the test. "I were" is not the usual conjugation of first person singular.</i>

B. Verbals	<i>words that combine characteristics of verbs with those of nouns or adjectives</i>
Gerunds	<i>verbal nouns [-...ing with no auxiliary verb]</i>
Infinitives	<i>verbal nouns [to+verb base]</i>
Participles	<i>verbal adjectives [present tense = -ing with no auxiliary verb; past tense = having +...ed]</i>

3. Nouns (second most important word in a sentence) and Pronouns

Gender	<i>masculine [he], feminine [she], neuter [it]</i>		
Number	<i>singular/plural</i>		
Case	<i>subject</i>	<i>book/books</i>	<i>who/who</i>
	<i>possessive</i>	<i>book's/books'</i>	<i>whose/whose</i>
	<i>object</i>	<i>book/books</i>	<i>whom/whom</i>

NB: there are seven separate categories of pronouns in English, each of which is declined: personal, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, indefinite, possessive, reflexive

Referent agreement *pronouns refer to antecedents, the nouns for which the pronouns are standing in; clarity demands that the reference is to the correct noun: The books were standing on the shelf, which needed sorting. [What exactly needed sorting?] The books, which needed sorting, were standing on the shelf.*

4. Adjectives and Adverbs

Function

*Adjectives describe nouns and pronouns; they answer the questions: who/whom/whose, what/which
Adverbs qualify the verb; they answer the questions when/where/why/how?*

Degree

Adjective/Adverb

Positive degree

quick/quickly

Comparative degree

quicker/more quickly

Superlative degree

quickest/most quickly

5. Phrases

groups of words having neither subjects nor predicates

Verb

Martha [was] well [turned out.]

Noun

Gerund

[Gathering leaves in the fall] is a chore.

Infinitive

[To gather leaves] is a chore.

Appositive

Her work, [a collection of leaves,] was finished.

Absolute

Absolute phrases have no grammatical connection to the main clause of the sentence: [With the leaves gathered,] Jill took a break.

Prepositional

Adjective

The books [with the blue covers] are old. [Which books?]

Adverb

The horses jumped [with great energy.] [How?]

Participial

[Gathering leaves for some time,] Jill was tired.

6. Clauses

a group of words which contain a subject and a predicate

Independent

The simple sentence is an independent clause.

(coordinating conjunctions)

Two or more independent clauses (simple sentences) are joined by “and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet.”

Dependent

A clause which cannot stand by itself as an independent sentence. The clause will be introduced by a conjunction which will

(subordinating conjunctions)

indicate its type and function in the sentence.

Noun	<i>[That Jill raked up the leaves] is news.</i>
Adjective	<i>Jill, [who raked the leaves,] fell asleep. The leaves, [which Jill raked,] have been taken away. Jill, [whose only desire was to avoid raking leaves,] ran away.</i>
Adverb	
Time	<i>[While Jill raked the leaves,] the girls went shopping. (Other conjunctions: as, when)</i>
Causality	<i>[Because Jill raked the leaves,] the boys did not have to do it. (Other conjunctions: since)</i>
Concession and contrast	<i>[Although Jill raked the leaves,] she did not like doing it. (Other conjunctions: even though)</i>
Condition	<i>[If Jill could get away with it,] she would not rake the leaves. (Other conjunctions: whether)</i>
Purpose	<i>Jill raked the leaves [in order to make some money.] (Purpose clause shows the reason for the action of the main clause.)</i>
Place	<i>Jill did not care [where the leaves were piled.]</i>
Result	<i>Jill was [so] tired [that she could not finish raking the leaves.] (Result clause shows outcome of the main clause; note that “so,” “such,” in the main clause introduces the result clause.)</i>
General possibility	<i>[However hard she tried,] Jill could not rake up all the leaves. (Other conjunctions: whosoever, whenever)</i>
Comparison	<i>Jill raked the leaves [better than anyone had raked them.] (Other conjunctions: any comparative term with than)</i>