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ABSTRACT

This unit of study introduces high-ability junior high school students to the aspect of grammar which is usually missing from technically oriented studies of grammar, namely, the wonder and pleasure of grammar or grammar appreciation. It presents grammar as a powerful way for one's mind to make ideas out of language, and a way of inspecting one's own ideas. Many of the facts and concepts of grammar are mentioned to give students a concrete sense of what grammar is and how its elements operate, with the goal of creating an enlightened enthusiasm for the study of ideas in language. There is no strict series of assignments or procedures. The primary activity is for the student to read and to think. The role of the teacher is to act as an encouraging and appreciative mentor, in a manner that is more artistic than methodic. The unit recommends that, after the student completes a reading session, the student and teacher come together and talk about the elements of grammar. Sections of the unit of study address: ideas, language, and grammar; the sentence; clauses; parts of speech; parts of the sentence; and phrases. A grammar pretest and posttest are provided. (JDD)

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Inspecting Our Own Ideal

A Grammar Self-Study Program for High Ability Students

A Grammar Unit for Grades 7-8

by

Michael Clay Thompson

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Inspecting Our Own Ideas
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by Michael C. Thompson

Teacher Instructions

This grammar study, although it does explore numerous technical details of grammar, is not designed to teach technical details. Rather, the primary purpose of the study is to introduce students to the aspect of grammar which is usually missing from all of the technically oriented studies of grammar which are so abundant, namely, the wonder and pleasure of grammar.

In order to accomplish this deeper purpose, many of the facts and concepts of grammar must be mentioned, since in discussing the power of grammar we must give students some concrete sense of what grammar is, and some sense of how its elements operate to accomplish their deeper purposes.

But the object of attention, which I want to bring to sharpest focus in the middle of my lens, is that grammar is lovely, and exciting, and irresistible, and that it takes very little imagination to demonstrate these qualities. I am aware that popular misconceptions exist about grammar being an arid and uninteresting subject, but these are unenlightened and uninformed prejudices which are easily discarded, or in the case of the youngest students, easily prevented.

And so the goal of the study is to create an enlightened enthusiasm for the study of ideas in language; it is not to construct a stern gauntlet of terms to be memorized. The goal is to bring students' attention to the most introspective and human aspects of grammar.

Accordingly, the process of study itself must be human, pleasant, and flexible. There is no strict series of assignments or procedures. The primary activity is for the student to read and to think. The role of the teacher is to act as an encouraging and appreciative mentor for the student, by studying the unit and viewing it in its best light, by introducing the grammar study to the student warmly and optimistically, by working closely with the student in frequent conversation to build comprehension and appreciation. All of this should be accomplished in a manner that I can only describe as more artistic than methodic.

As a practical procedure, look through the unit with the student, and agree upon an appropriate place to stop the first reading session, based on the length of time available in your own circumstances and on the student's abilities. Allow the student to read, think, and make notes if appropriate. When the student is ready, come together and talk, with as much mutual enjoyment as possible, about the elements of grammar included in the reading. Review any written exercises that the student has done. Then agree on the extent of the next reading, and continue in this fashion. It will be important, at the end of the unit, to have a summary conversation which extracts all of the best ideas which have been gained.

As a professional educator, you should not hesitate to use this study as a flexible resource which you can supplement with your own creativity; the only danger would be to bury the positive spirit of the unit in a well intentioned but counterproductive series of technical exercises. There will be plenty of time for such activities in the students' lives--the purpose of this unit is grammar appreciation.

Inspecting Our Own Ideas
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Student Instructions

As you begin to read this short study of grammar and to think about the ideas you will find here, you should know that there is one important purpose for what you are doing. It is not to learn a large number of facts, or to memorize terms, or to score points. Lots of grammar books can help you learn facts and terms. This study is different. Its purpose is to show you the deeper meaning of grammar that is usually missing from the grammar fact books—the part that many people never understand.

What is this deeper meaning?

It is that grammar is a kind of magic lens, a secret thinking method we can use to peek inside our own minds and to detect the designs of our own ideas.

Using grammar this way, we can learn about ourselves, learn about what makes us human, learn about why some ideas are clear and others are confused, learn about beautiful ways to share our thoughts with other people.

In order to make the most of what you will read, you should understand from the beginning that even though there will be facts and details to learn, the facts are not the point. The point is the point. And so as you read, do what the coaches always tell you: keep your eye on the ball.

Do not forget that you are concentrating on the deep thinking, the deep meaning, the ability to appreciate the real power of grammar.

The best way to do this is to begin by previewing the study with your teacher. Look over it together, and agree on how much you should read in your first session. Then go read, and think, and reread. Make notes on your ideas and on the questions you have that the reading doesn't answer. Then meet with your teacher to talk about what you have learned and to look over any of the written exercises you may have done. Keep working in this way until you have read the entire grammar study, and can discuss it completely with your teacher or other students, depending upon your class situation.

Remember that grammar is a kind of higher order thinking, like logic or mathematics. Grammar can show us secrets that no other thinking method can show us. If you read and think carefully, you will never forget that grammar is a wonderful tool for the mind.

Grammar Pre-Test - Grades 7-8

50 Questions, 2 Points Each

Fill in the Blank

1. A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate is called a _____.
2. The noun or pronoun that the sentence is about is called the _____.
3. The part of the sentence that says something about the subject is called the _____.
4. How many kinds of words are there in our language? _____.
5. A word that names a person, place, or thing is called a _____.
6. A word that modifies a noun or pronoun is called an _____.
7. A word that shows action is called a _____.
8. A word that joins two words into a pair is called a _____.
9. A word that shows emotion is called an _____.
10. A word group acting as a single part of speech is a _____.
11. An -ing noun made out of a verb is called a _____.
12. An adjective made out of a verb is called a _____.
13. The words *a, an,* and *the* are called the _____.
14. In a sentence, each group of words with its own subject and predicate is a _____.
15. A sentence which contains two independent clauses is called a _____ sentence.

Underline the Subjects of These Sentences

16. The engineer designed a building.
17. Leonardo painted a beautiful painting.
18. Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly.
19. The explorer Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean.
20. Caesar and his Roman legions defeated the Gauls in France.

Circle the Correct Answer

21. In the sentence "The engineer designed a building" the word *engineer* is a

    a. noun b. pronoun c. adjective d. adverb

22. In the sentence "The engineer designed a building" the word *designed* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

23. In the sentence "The engineer designed a building" the word *a* is a

    a. conjunction b. adverb c. preposition d. adjective

24. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *and* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

25. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *yes* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

26. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *quickly* is a

    a. adjective b. adverb c. interjection d. conjunction

27. In the sentence "Caesar defeated the Gauls in France" the word *in* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

28. In the sentence "Caesar defeated the Gauls in France" the word *defeated* is a

    a. verb b. conjunction c. preposition d. adverb

29. In the sentence "Leonardo painted a beautiful painting" the word *beautiful* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

30. In the sentence "Leonardo painted a beautiful painting" the word *painting* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

For the following sentence, answer the questions below.

As we watched, the cracked bone sailed slowly over the cratered lunar landscape.

31. The sentence structure is
    a. simple
    b. compound
    c. complex
    d. none of the above

32. The sentence contains
    a. one prepositional phrase
    b. two prepositional phrases
    c. three prepositional phrases
    d. no prepositional phrase

33. The word *cracked* is
    a. an appositive
    b. a gerund
    c. a participle
    d. an infinitive

34. The word *we* is a
    a. first person singular subject pronoun
    b. second person singular subject pronoun
    c. first person plural subject pronoun
    d. third person plural subject pronoun

35. The word *landscape* is a
    a. object of preposition
    b. direct object
    c. subject complement
    d. indirect object

36. The sentence contains
    a. one clause
    b. two clauses
    c. three clauses
    d. no clauses

37. The word *slowly* is a
    a. noun
    b. pronoun
    c. adjective
    d. adverb

38. The word *over* is a
    a. adverb
    b. adjective
    c. interjection
    d. preposition

39. The word *the* is a
    a. direct object
    b. definite article
    c. indefinite article
    d. indirect object

40. The words *As we watched* are a
    a. dependent clause
    b. independent clause
    c. appositive phrase
    d. none of the above

41. The second verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. action, past tense, active voice
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
    d. linking, past tense

42. The first verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. linking, present tense
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
    d. action, past tense, active voice

43. The word *As* is a
    a. subordinating conjunction
    b. coordinating conjunction
    c. correlative conjunction
    d. interjection

44-50. Describe, in your own words, why grammar is important.

Grammar Pre-Test - Grades 7-8

50 Questions, 2 Points Each

Fill in the Blank

1. A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate is called a **sentence or clause.**
2. The noun or pronoun that the sentence is about is called the **subject or simple subject.**
3. The part of the sentence that says something about the subject is called the **predicate.**
4. How many kinds of words are there in our language? **eight**
5. A word that names a person, place, or thing is called a **noun.**
6. A word that modifies a noun or pronoun is called an **adjective.**
7. A word that shows action is called a **verb.**
8. A word that joins two words into a pair is called a **conjunction.**
9. A word that shows emotion is called an **interjection.**
10. A word group acting as a single part of speech is a **phrase.**
11. An -ing noun made out of a verb is called a **gerund.**
12. An adjective made out of a verb is called a **participle.**
13. The words *a, an,* and *the* are called the **articles.**
14. In a sentence, each group of words with its own subject and predicate is a **clause.**
15. A sentence which contains two independent clauses is called a **compound** sentence.

Underline the Subjects of These Sentences

16. <u>The engineer</u> designed a building.
17. <u>Leonardo</u> painted a beautiful painting.
18. Yes, <u>the boy and the girl</u> became friends quickly.
19. <u>The explorer Balboa</u> discovered the Pacific Ocean.
20. <u>Caesar and his Roman legions</u> defeated the Gauls in France.

Circle the Correct Answer

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    a. noun b. **verb** c. adjective d. adverb

23. In the sentence "The engineer designed a building" the word *a* is an

    a. conjunction b. adverb c. preposition d. **adjective**

24. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *and* is a

    a. **conjunction** b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

25. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *yes* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. **interjection** d. adverb

26. In the sentence "Yes, the boy and the girl became friends quickly" the word *quickly* is a

    a. adjective b. **adverb** c. interjection d. conjunction

27. In the sentence "Caesar defeated the Gauls in France" the word *in* is a

    a. conjunction b. **preposition** c. interjection d. adverb

28. In the sentence "Caesar defeated the Gauls in France" the word *defeated* is a

    a. **verb** b. conjunction c. preposition d. adverb

29. In the sentence "Leonardo painted a beautiful painting" the word *beautiful* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. **adjective** d. adverb

30. In the sentence "Leonardo painted a beautiful painting" the word *painting* is a

    a. **noun** b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

For the following sentence, answer the questions below.

As we watched, the cracked bone sailed slowly over the cratered lunar landscape.

31. The sentence structure is
    a. simple
    b. compound
    c. **complex**
    d. none of the above

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    c. **a participle**
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    c. subject complement
    d. indirect object

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    a. one clause
    b. **two clauses**
    c. three clauses
    d. no clauses

37. The word *slowly* is a
    a. noun
    b. pronoun
    c. adjective
    d. **adverb**

38. The word *over* is a
    a. adverb
    b. adjective
    c. interjection
    d. **preposition**

39. The word *the* is a
    a. direct object
    b. **definite article**
    c. indefinite article
    d. indirect object

40. The words *As we watched* are a
    a. **dependent clause**
    b. independent clause
    c. appositive phrase
    d. none of the above

41. The second verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. **action, past tense, active voice**
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
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42. The first verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. linking, present tense
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
    d. **action, past tense, active voice**

43. The word *As* is a
    a. **subordinating conjunction**
    b. coordinating conjunction
    c. correlative conjunction
    d. interjection

44-50. Describe, in your own words, why grammar is important.

1. Ideas, Language, and Grammar

How do we talk to each other?
How do we write to each other?
How do we read what someone else has written?

We use **language**. Language is our way of putting words together to make our **ideas**.

Any time we use words to **say something about something**, that is an idea!

We have to **say something . . . about something.**

In other words, an idea is made of **two parts**. One part is **what we are talking about**, and the other part is **what we are saying** about it.

We might say something about ourselves. Or we might say something about an object, such as a distant spiral galaxy in deep space, or a glowing hologram, or a thundering Triceratops. We might say something about a wizened old wizard's grizzled countenance. If we did that, we might say, "The wizened old wizard's grizzled countenance grinned out at us from under his hat."

Do you see the two parts of that idea?

What we are talking about:

The wizened old wizard's grizzled countenance

What we are saying about it:

grinned out at us from under his hat.

In this idea, we are using words in language to make an idea about a wizard's countenance.

Of course, it helps to know that *wizened* means wrinkled and withered, that *grizzled* means gray, and that a *countenance* is a person's personality as seen in his or her face. In other words, a wizened old wizard's grizzled countenance is a wrinkled, gray-haired wizard's face. We see such a wizard, named Gandalf, in J.R.R. Tolkien's famous books, *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Ring* series.

But back to language and ideas. Another idea could be, "This is my letter to the world." In this idea, we are saying something about something. Part one: we are talking about *this*. Part two: what are we saying about *this*? That it is our letter to the world. Of course, this idea comes from a very famous poem by Emily Dickinson, one of America's very greatest poets. And when she said

"This is my letter to the world," she was referring to her own poem. But Emily Dickinson never achieved fame during her lifetime, and she led a lonely life. Her poem continues: This is my letter to the world / That never wrote to me.

So, ideas have two parts.

But guess what? We have a very special way to study ideas that we make out of words in language. This special way to study language is called **grammar.** That's right, grammar. You have studied grammar before, I know, but did you ever think of grammar as a way of thinking?

Grammar is a way of thinking about language.

Using grammar, we can inspect one of our own language ideas, and see how it is made! We can do important things with grammar. We can find an idea's two parts, and we can find all of the groups of words in the idea, and we can even look at each word by itself and see what it does to make the idea work. We can study the invisible architecture of ideas. This helps us to understand ourselves, and to understand how we think! In the pages that follow, you will learn some advanced ideas about grammar, and about how grammar helps us to understand our own ideas.

REVIEW: Let's look again at the ideas we have discussed. Think carefully about each of these points:

language: our way of putting words together to make our ideas

idea: a two-part thought about something

the two parts of an idea: what we are talking about, and what we are saying about it

grammar: a special way of thinking about language

2. Sentence—Subject and Predicate

In grammar, we have a special word to describe an idea that is made of two parts. This special word is ***sentence.*** A sentence is an idea. We sometimes say that a sentence is a **complete thought**, but this is just a different way of saying the same thing—that a sentence is an idea.

You have undoubtedly studied the sentence before, but in this discussion we are going to examine the sentence in some new ways that you may never have considered. You will see that the sentence is far more important than you may have realized.

You may not know that our English word *sentence* comes from a very old word, *sententia*, which was a Latin word used thousands of years ago by the ancient Romans. To the Romans, the word *sententia* meant "way of thinking." We will see that many of the words used in grammar have very logical meanings that are based on ancient Latin or Greek words.

Now, we learned that a sentence is an idea that is complete. But what makes a sentence's idea complete?

It is complete because it has **both** of the two parts that it needs to make sense to someone. Until it has both of these two important parts, it is not finished, not complete.

Let's think about this more deeply. If I wish to understand you, then there are two things that I need to know:

I need to know **what you are talking about.**

and

I need to know **what you are saying about it.**

If I do know these two things, then I can understand you. But if I do not know what you are talking about, or if I do not know what you trying to say about it, then I will not understand you.

Grammar gives us names for these two parts of the sentence. The usual first part of the sentence, what it is about, is called the **subject**. The second part of the sentence, what we are saying about the subject, is called the **predicate**. Of course, there are times when the normal order of the sentence is disturbed, and the predicate comes before the subject, but we will not focus on that for the moment. Let's look at some examples of sentences:

Subject (What the idea is about)	**Predicate (What we are saying about the subject)**
Thoreau	went to the woods to live deliberately.
Time	is the stream I go a-fishin in.
Our life	is frittered away by detail.
This	is my letter to the world.
Nobody	ever helps me into carriages.
(You)	Look at my arm!.
The woods	are lovely, dark and deep.
My little horse	gives his harness bells a shake.
Whoso	would be a man, must be a nonconformist.
It	is I, Hamlet the Dane.
I	am.

Notice that a sentence does not have to be long. Sometimes a sentence only has two words in it. "Pterodactyls landed" is a sentence. Even though it is short, it has a subject, *Pterodactyls*, and a predicate, *landed*.

(Do you know what **pterodactyls** were? They were flying dinosaurs that had wings of skin, and that became extinct at the end of the Mesozoic era. In Arizona, fossil pterodactyls have been found that had 40-foot wingspans. They are called *pterodactyls* because they had clawed fingers in the middle of their wings, and so their scientific name comes from the ancient Greek *pter*, which means wing, and *dactyl*, which means finger. A second question: do you know what the **Mesozoic** era was? Well, *meso* means middle, and *zo* means animal. The Mesozoic era was a geologic era in the earth's history that occurred after the Paleozoic era and before the Cenozoic era, from 230,000,000 years ago until 65,000,000 years ago. The Mesozoic era featured the rise and fall of the dinosaurs, the appearance of birds, grasses, and flowering plants. Now, if you are really adventurous, you will go look up the Paleozoic era, and see what happened then!)

Notice that a subject or a predicate by itself is not an idea; it is only a **fragment**, or piece, of an idea. A **sentence fragment** is an incomplete piece of a sentence; it only makes an incomplete thought. A sentence fragment needs to be finished, just like the subjects and predicates above needed to be finished.

Now, why is all of this so important? Because by using grammar to examine the way we communicate in language, we have noticed something really amazing. In our speech and writing, we say millions of things in millions of ways, and you would expect that in all of this multitudinous expression, there would be a very large number of basic forms to use for expressing our ideas. But this is not the case. At the core of our millions of expressions, there is an astonishing simplicity: the subject/predicate pair. When we exclaim, or make earnest declarations, or ask questions, or tell jokes, or profess our love, or express our anger, or confess our sadness, we always use the same secret, magical formula: the subject/predicate pair.

This simple, two-part architecture is the hidden form that underpins every idea we utter.

If you spend two hours on the phone with your friend, and each of you utters 2,000 ideas to the other, all 4,000 of your ideas will have been expressed by means of the same silent structure, the subject/predicate pair.

Why?

Because human language has evolved to accommodate the needs of the human mind. And the mind needs the two-part structure. The simplicity. A-B. 1-2. Computers operate on what is called **binary code**, and communicate all of their programs by means of 1's or 0's, ones or zeros. The human mind is that way.

It wants to know, about all groups of words, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ABOUT IT?

What is the subject?

What is the predicate?

Understanding this gives us great insight into all forms of clear communication, because this subject/predicate law must be applied not only to the sentence but to all levels of communication. **For your sentence**, what are you talking about, and what are you saying about it? **For your**

paragraph, what are you talking about, and what are you saying about it? **For your essay**, what are you talking about, and what are you saying about it? For any level of communication whatsoever, what is your subject, and what is your predicate?

Now we can understand why English teachers spend so much time helping you to write clear sentences, helping you to write organized paragraphs with topic sentences, and helping you to write essays that have clear central ideas.

Concealed in the sentence, like a prehistoric insect trapped in amber, is a model of the mind. This model is a double question:

What is your subject?/What are you predicating?

REVIEW: Now, let's look again at the new ideas we have learned about language and sentences.

Our way of putting words together to make our ideas is called **language.**

A two-part thought about something is called an **idea.**

What we are talking about, and what we are saying about it are the **two parts of an idea.**

A special way of thinking about language is called **grammar.**

In grammar, we call a two-part idea a **sentence.**

The two parts of the sentence are called the **subject** and the **predicate.**

What the sentence is about is called the **subject.**

What we are saying about the subject is called the **predicate.**

A piece of a sentence that is not complete yet is only a **fragment.**

A sentence is a **model of the mind.**

A Vocabulary Note: The word **subject** contains two ancient Latin word pieces, or stems, that we see in many words, **sub**, and **ject**. The stem **sub** means "under," and we see **sub** in words such as **submarine** and **submerge**. The stem **ject** means "throw," and we see **ject** in words such as **eject** and **dejected**. So the word **subject** actually contains a picture: the **subject** of a sentence is the part that is "thrown down" for discussion. Look up some of the following example words in your dictionary, carefully study their etymologies, and see if you can understand *why* they mean what they mean:

stem	**meaning**	**example words**
sub	under	submarine, submerge, subdue, subtract, subside, subordinate
ject	throw	reject, dejected, interject, eject, conjecture, project, adjective

3. Clauses: the Sentences within Sentences.

There is another surprising fact about the way we make our ideas into sentences. Many of the sentences that we use are just like the ones we studied above. They have a subject, and then a predicate, and then the sentence ends. But sometimes our ideas get so connected that we like to join simple ideas together into a longer, more complicated idea. In other words, sometimes, we join related sentences together into a longer, more complicated sentence. For example,

We might have these two sentences:

Congress passed the bill. The president signed it into law.

Each of these sentences has its own subject and predicate. But since these two sentences describe something that happened in a connected event, we can connect the sentences together into a longer sentence:

Congress passed the bill, and the president signed it into law.

Now the two short sentences make one long sentence, and it has one subject and predicate, followed by a second subject and predicate, all in one sentence!

Congress (subject) passed the bill (predicate), **and** the president (subject) signed it into law (predicate).

When we join little sentences this way into a longer sentence of subject/predicate chains, we call each little subject/predicate group a **clause**.

Congress passed the bill (first clause), **and** the president signed it into law (second clause).

When there is only one subject/predicate set in the sentence, we say that the sentence has **one clause**.

Our word ***clause*** comes from the ancient Latin word *claudere* which meant "to close" to the Romans. This makes sense even now, because a clause is a group of words in which an idea gets opened, and closed. The idea is opened when we introduce a subject, and then it is closed when we provide the predicate. In a long sentence made of many clauses, we open and close a number of related ideas in a row. Let's look at some examples of clauses in sentences. Notice that each clause has its own subject and its own predicate:

Clauses in Sentences

1. Our forefathers (subject) brought forth upon this continent a new nation. (predicate)

a one-clause sentence

2. I (subj.) will arise (predicate), and I (subj.) will go now (predicate).

first clause | second clause

a two-clause sentence

3. Robert Frost (subject) has miles to go (predicate) before he (subject) sleeps (predicate).

first clause | second clause

a two-clause sentence

4. When the attack (subject) finally begins (predicate), you (subj.) sneak up quietly (predicate), and the gang (subject) will throw balloons (predicate).

first clause | second clause | third clause

a three-clause sentence

See? We can make long sentences out of any number of related ideas!

But why is it important to know this?

By using grammar to inspect our own ideas, we have discovered that our brains can understand ideas and the relationships between different ideas so well and so quickly that we can connect these ideas into sentences of related clauses faster than we can even speak. We can do it without even knowing we are doing it, and before we even have a name for it. It is only now, when we use grammar to inspect our ideas, that we begin to realize what powerful things our minds are. The grammar of clauses shows us how our minds build beautiful structures of ideas.

Of course, not all clauses are the same. They are all alike because they all have their own subjects and predicates, but some clauses make sense all by themselves, whereas other clauses only make sense if they are connected to other clauses. For example, in the sentence, "As Michelangelo painted the fresco on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, the paint dripped into his eyes" there are two clauses. The first clause is "As Michelangelo painted the fresco on the Sistine Chapel ceiling," and the second clause is "the paint dripped into his eyes." Notice that each clause has its own subject and predicate. But also notice that the two clauses are different. The second clause in the sentence would make sense as a sentence by itself:

The paint dripped into his eyes.

The second clause, by itself, is not a complete idea:

As Michelangelo painted the fresco on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

The Sistine Chapel ceiling, by the way, is one of the great works of art of all time. The Sistine Chapel is the principal chapel in the Vatican in Rome. It was built by Pope Sixtus IV, and it contains Michelangelo's (1475-1564) famous fresco of scenes from the Bible, which Michelangelo painted upside down from scaffolding. You will appreciate how difficult this was when you realize that fresco paintings are painted on wet plaster, and have to be completed before the plaster dries; Michelangelo had to apply wet plaster to the ceiling as he lay face up on a scaffold high above the floor, and then paint quickly so the paint would soak in. Only much later could he get down from the scaffolding and look up to see how his work looked from a distance. Time, bad restorations, and pollution have damaged the fresco, and a 1980s restoration which made the colors of the ceiling much brighter and more vivid than they have been for years has been very controversial because many people preferred the aged look of browns and gray tones which the painting had acquired over the years. The story of Michelangelo's ordeal in painting the ceiling is one of the most interesting stories in history, and you would really enjoy reading about it.

But back to clauses. As usual, grammar assigns logical names to these two kinds of clauses. Clauses which are independent, and can stand alone as sentences by themselves, are called **independent clauses**, and clauses which depend on being connected to other clauses in order to have their ideas completed are called **dependent clauses**.

Based on the number and type of clauses a sentence contains, it is classified into a type of **sentence structure**. A **simple sentence** is a simple one that only has one independent clause. A **compound sentence** is compounded of two or more independent clauses. And a **complex sentence** is a complex one that has both an independent clause and a dependent clause, in either

order. Here are some examples of clauses from Henry David Thoreau's writings:

Simple: This world is a place of business.
Compound: Things do not change; we change.
Complex: I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately.

Here are some examples from a speech by Sojourner Truth:

Simple: Look at my arm!
Compound: Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, and ain't I a woman?
Complex: When I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me.

Are you beginning to appreciate how fast and wonderful your brain is, that it can handle these complicated forms of ideas so effortlessly?

We have looked at sentence **structures**, but sentences also have **purposes**. Once again, these are so well named that they almost define themselves. **Declarative sentences** declare things; in other words they make statements. "I love the ocean" is a declarative sentence. **Imperative sentences** are imperious, like emperors; they give commands. "Bring me an ocean" is an imperative sentence, though a foolish one. Notice that in an imperative sentence, the subject is not expressed, but is only understood: (You) bring me an ocean. **Interrogative sentences** interrogate; they ask questions. "Where is the ocean?" is an interrogative sentence. And **exclamatory sentences** exclaim, or cry out. "Here comes the ocean!" is an exclamatory sentence.

Declarative sentences declare.
Imperative sentences are imperious.
Interrogative sentences interrogate.
Exclamatory sentences exclaim.

It's easy to remember the sentence purposes.

4. Parts of Speech: the Kinds of Words

No matter how many clauses a sentence contains, one thing you have noticed about all ideas or sentences: every sentence is made of **words**. There are many thousands of words in our language. In fact, there are far more words than anyone could ever learn!

But just imagine that you traveled to a land far, far away.

(One faraway land is Nepal, near Tibet in the continent of Asia, where Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, is. Mount Everest is 29,028 feet high, and it is in the Himalayan mountain range. It is so high that it has only been climbed a few times. Nepal's high-altitude capital is Katmandu. There is a wonderful novel you will want to read one day, *Lost Horizon*, written by James Hilton in 1933, that depicts Nepal under the fictitious name of "Shangri-La.")

Now, just imagine that you travel to a land far, far away, and the gray-bearded King of the land says, "You may have all of the treasures in my kingdom if you can tell me how many kinds of words there are." The king then looks down to the green valleys far, far below, and an icy wind comes down from the frozen peaks above, and blows through your hair.

What would you say? There are thousands and thousands of words in the dictionary. Are there thousands of kinds of words? Are there hundreds of kinds of words?

Well, you are in luck, because when you set off on your adventure one day, you will be prepared with the knowledge that there are only eight kinds of words! Just imagine! All of those words in the dictionary can be put into only eight piles, and the eight different kinds of words are easy to learn. We call the eight kinds of words the eight **parts of speech** because all of our speech can be *parted* into only eight piles of words.

The eight parts of speech are the *noun*, *pronoun*, *adjective*, *verb*, *adverb*, *preposition*, *conjunction*, and *interjection*. Let's look at them closely:

The Parts of Speech

Part of Speech	Function	Examples
noun (n.)	**name of something**	***Mary, dog, garden, sound***

A noun is the name of a person, *Picasso*, or the name of a place, *Amsterdam*, or the name of a thing, *aurora*. The sentence *The wind in the willows whispered in the leaves* has three nouns: wind, willows, and leaves. Nouns give us names for things!

Nouns can be **singular**, like *dog*, or **plural**, like *dogs*. **Proper nouns**, like *Istanbul*, are capitalized, but **common nouns**, like *boot*, are not capitalized.

pronoun (pron.) **replaces a noun** ***I, she, him, it, them***

A pronoun is a short word that replaces a usually longer noun so that we can speak faster. For example, instead of always saying a person's name, such as *Abraham Lincoln* in a sentence, we can say *he*. In the sentence "*He was born in a log cabin in Illinois*" the nouns *Abraham Lincoln* have been replaced by the short pronoun *he*. Pronouns make language fast!

Two common kinds of pronouns are the **subject pronouns**:
I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they
and the **object pronouns**:
me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them.
These two kinds of pronouns are so important that you must have them **memorized**. (I'm serious!) You will see why later.

In discussing pronouns, we classify them according to **person**. Here is how the classification scheme works for the subject pronouns:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	**I**	**we**
Second Person	**you**	**you**
Third Person	**he she it**	**they**

Notice that the third person singular pronouns are also divided into the three **genders**: masculine, feminine, and neuter.

We have learned that every sentence has a subject and a predicate. And every subject contains either a noun or a pronoun. This noun or pronoun that the sentence is about is sometimes called the **simple subject**. The **complete subject** is the noun and all of the accompanying words.

adjective (adj.) **modifies a noun or pronoun** ***red, tall, fast, good, the***

To modify is to *change*. An adjective is a word that changes the meaning of a noun or pronoun. For example, for the noun *tree*, we can change it by saying *tall* tree, or *Christmas* tree, or *cherry* tree, and each of these different adjectives changes (we sometimes say *modifies*) the noun and gives us a different picture in our minds. Another example: the noun *garden* could be modified by either the adjective *flower* or the adjective *secret*. We could talk about a *flower* garden, but we could use a different adjective and talk about a *secret* garden instead, and that would modify the idea. Some adjectives are the opposites of one another: a *fast* car is the opposite of a *slow* car.

The most common adjectives are the three little words *a*, *an*, and *the*. These three adjectives are called the **articles**. The word

the is called the **definite article**, and the words *a* and *an* are called the **indefinite articles**.

Notice that the noun, pronoun, and adjective go together, work together. The nouns name things, the pronouns replace the nouns, and the adjectives modify either nouns or pronouns. You could say that the noun, with its supporting pronouns and adjectives, forms a little noun system, like the sun with its planets.

verb (v.) **an action or linking word** ***jumps, fell, is***

Every sentence contains a verb, which is sometimes called the **simple predicate**. The **complete predicate** is the verb and all of its accompanying words that say something about the subject.

There are two kinds of verbs:

Action verbs show action; they show people and things doing things. Look at the action verbs in these sentences: The dog *barked*. The tall man *grinned*. My best friend *reads* lots of books. We *drove* to Florida. Mary *opened* her brown eyes.

Linking verbs are equals words; they show that two things are the same. For example, in the sentence "Siegfried *is* a good student," the verb *is* means that Siegfried and the good student are the same person. Siegfried IS the good student.

Action: Michelangelo *ran* after the ball.
Linking: Michelangelo *is* good at soccer.

Action: Donatello *drew* a sketch.
Linking: Donatello *is* a genius.

Action: Raphael *plays* baseball in the spring.
Linking: Raphael *is* a pitcher on the baseball team.

My favorite linking verb sentence is by the poet Marianne Moore, who said that poems *are* imaginary gardens with real toads in them. Don't you like that idea?

Parts of the Sentence: We have learned about two parts of the sentence already, the **simple subject** and the **simple predicate**, or verb. Well, there are two other parts of the sentence you can identify if you know what kind of verb you have. When an action verb sentence shows the subject doing something **to something**, as in the sentence "The dog bit the mailman," we call the noun or pronoun that receives the action a **direct object**. But when a linking verb sentence shows that the subject is **equal to** something else, as in the sentence "The dog is a poodle," we call the noun or pronoun that is linked to the subject a **subject complement**.

Direct Object: Achilles grabbed the **warrior**.
Subject Complement: Achilles was a **warrior**.

Notice that the only way to tell whether the second noun in these sentences is a direct object or a subject complement is to look at the verb. If a sentence contains an action verb, it might have a direct object, but if the sentence contains a linking verb, it might have a subject complement. This is a very advanced grammar idea, and it gives us deep insight into the way we form our own ideas.

Verb Tense: Another very important fact: verbs change, according to the *time* they are describing. The basic form of the verb is called the **infinitive form**, because it is not limited or finite in time. The infinitive always begins with the word *to*, and we refer to verbs such as *to fly, to do, to go*, and so forth. The time-limited forms of the verb are called the verb **tenses**. The three most familiar verb tenses are the **present tense**, the **past tense**, and the **future tense**. The verb *to believe*, for example, takes these forms:

Present tense: I *believe* that it is true.
Past tense: I *believed* that it is true.
Future tense: I *will believe* that it is true.

There are also three other tenses, called the **perfect** tenses. These are named after the Latin word *perficere*, which means "finished." The perfect tenses show action that is finished by using a helping verb:

Present perfect tense: I *have believed* that it is true.
Past perfect tense: I *had believed* that it is true.
Future perfect tense: I *will have believed* that it is true.

In addition to tense, verbs also have **voice**, either **active voice** or **passive voice**. Verbs can be voiced in a way that portrays the subject as active, or they can be voiced in a way that portrays the subject as passive. For example, the verb *to strike* can be voiced in these ways:

Active voice: The meteor *struck* the ship.
Passive voice: The ship *was struck* by the meteor.

Notice that in both sentences, the verb is *to strike*, and in both sentences the tense is past tense. The only difference is the voicing of the verb to indicate the active or passive nature of the subject.

adverb (adv.) **modifies a verb, adj., or adv.** ***quickly, slowly, well***

An adverb is a word that modifies or changes the meaning of a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

Adverb modifies verb: I swam *quickly.*
Adverb modifies adverb: I swam *very* quickly.
Adverb modifies adjective: I saw a *very* red star.

Before you continue reading, study these three examples very carefully, and make sure you understand every part of speech in these three sentences.

Notice that many adverbs end in *ly*, such as *quickly*, *slowly*, *loudly*, *nearly*, *badly*, and *hungrily*.

The verb and adverb form a little system together. Just as the noun is often accompanied by an adjective, the verb is often accompanied by an adverb that gives it new meaning.

Just as adjectives help us adjust the meanings of nouns when the nouns are not quite what we mean, adverbs help us adjust the meanings of verbs. Adjectives and adverbs are **modifiers** that help us adjust the meanings of nouns and verbs.

preposition (prep.) shows relationship *in, on, beside, after*

A preposition is a word that shows how two things are **related** to each other in space, direction, or time. Space examples: The dog was *on* the dock. The book is *in* the drawer. The boy was *inside* the secret garden. The garden was *behind* the wall. Direction examples: The money is *for* you. The boat moved *toward* the dock. Time examples: The movie is *after* the news. My birthday is *before* yours. She got sick *during* the game. Prepositions are little words, but they are very important because they show where everything is in space and time. They give language its physics. Prepositions let us make ideas that show how the world is arranged!

Another interesting fact about prepositions is that they are always found in word groups, such as ***in** the box*, ***on** the dock*, ***under** the bed*, ***around** the world*, and ***over** the rainbow*. These word groups always begin with prepositions, and they are called **prepositional phrases**.

In fact, the word *preposition* is made of the Latin *pre*, which means *before*, and the word *position*. A preposition is called a preposition because its **position is always before** the other words in the prepositional phrase! It has the pre-position.

In a prepositional phrase such as *on the dock*, *over the rainbow*, *for her*, or *in the beginning*, we call the noun or pronoun which the preposition is relating to something, the **object of preposition**.

We will study phrases more below, but now we can note that prepositional phrases serve as modifiers. A prepositional phrase

will either act like an adjective, or it will act like an adverb. In the sentence, "The dog on the dock barked," the prepositional phrase *on the dock* acts as an adjective to modify the noun *dog*.

conjunction (conj.) joins words ***and, or, but, so, yet***

A conjunction is a word that joins two other words together into a pair. **Michael *and* David** ate many hot dogs. By using the conjunction *and*, we can join the two nouns *Michael* and *David* together, so we can talk about them both at once, as a pair. We can use a conjunction to join two pronouns: Give the lithograph to him *or* her. If we want to, we can even use a conjunction to join two verbs: Mary thought *and* wondered. We can use a conjunction to join two adverbs: He spoke quickly *but* confidently. Or we can use a conjunction to join two adjectives: The wall was high *and* dark. Conjunctions let us join things into pairs!

Would you like one more very interesting example? You can even use a conjunction to join two **groups of words** together! For example, you can use a conjunction to join two prepositional phrases together: The albatross flew **over the ship *and* around the mast**.

There are different kinds of conjunctions. **Coordinating conjunctions** (The complete list of coordinating conjunctions is *and, but, or, nor, for, so*, and *yet*) are used to join things of equal value, such as the two names in a compound subject: "Brutus *and* Cassius plotted against Caesar." The **subordinating conjunctions** (such as *if, as, since, when, because*) are used to join things of unequal value, such as the major and minor ideas in this complex sentence: "I will go if you want me to." **Correlative conjunctions** are the conjunctions made of more than one word, such as *either/or*, and *neither/nor*.

interjection (interj.) shows emotion ***Oh, wow, yes, no, well***

Interjections do not do anything special, such as join words, or modify words, or replace words. All they do is show emotion. If we say, "*Wow*, you look nice!" the word *wow* just shows happiness or excitement. The most common interjections are the words *yes* and *no*. Another very common interjection is the word *oh*: *Oh, yes*, I like interjections. Do you?

A Vocabulary Note: The word **preposition** contains two ancient Latin word pieces, or stems, that we see in many words, **pre**, and **pos**. The stem **pre** means "before," and we see **pre** in words such as **predict** and **prepare**. The stem **pos** means "put," and we see **pos** in words such as **position** and **depose**. So the word **preposition** contains a picture: the **preposition** is the part that is "put before" the other words in the phrase. The word **conjunction** also contains stems which appear in many other words: **con** and **junct**. The stem **con** means "together," and the stem **junct** means "join." In the words **adverb** and **adjective** we see the stem **ad** which means "to," and the word **pronoun** contains the stem **pro** which means "for" or sometimes "forward." The word **infinitive** contains the stems **in** which means "not" in some words and "in" in others, and **fin** which means "limit." Look up some of the following example words in your dictionary, and see if you can understand why they mean what they mean:

stem	**meaning**	**example words**
pre	before	predict, prepare, preliminary, preschool, preface, premonition
pos	put	position, depose, interpose, suppose, deposit, repose, appositive
con	together	conjunction, contact, connect, contiguous, contract, converge
junct	join	juncture, disjunction, injunction, adjunct, conjunction
ad	to	adjective, adverb, adherent, adjacent, adapt, admit
pro	for or forward	pronoun, propel, prophet, proponent, prominent, promote
in	not	infinite, indefinite, invalid, incomplete, ineligible, insane
in	in	inside, insert, inquest, inroad, inoculate, innard, innovate
fin	limit	infinitive, infinite, define, confine, finite, finitude, refine

Now, you know that the stem **ject** means "throw." But in the word **object** we also see the stem **ob**, which means "toward" or "about." We see the stem **ob** in many words: *object*, *obstacle*, *obdurate*, *oblique*, *obloquy*, *objurgate*, and *obscure*, for example. Use your dictionary to look up the full etymology of the word **object**, and see if you can understand why we call objects *objects*. Then answer this question: *How are direct objects in sentences similar to objects on the ground?*

REVIEW: Let's look again at what the eight kinds of words do. Study the parts of speech until you have their functions memorized. Make sure that you can remember some examples of each one.

noun	name of something	Mike, dog, tree, sound
	The *boy* listened to the *music* of *Verdi*.	
pronoun	replaces a noun	I, she, him, it, them
	She and *I* saw *him* and *her* at the Museum of Modern Art.	
adjective	modifies a noun or pronoun	red, tall, fast, good, the
	Isaac Newton, *a famous* mathematician, discovered *the natural* law.	
verb	an action or equals word	jumps, fell, is
	I *lost* the Byron poem yesterday, but I *have* it now.	
adverb	modifies a verb	quickly, slowly, well
	The pianist played her Chopin solo *beautifully*.	
preposition	shows relationship	in, on, beside, after
	The government is *of* the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people.	
conjunction	joins words	and, or, but
	I saw the doctor, *and* she gave me some medicine.	
interjection	shows emotion	Oh, wow, yes, no, well
	Oh, yes, I always vote in the elections.	

Examples. Now let's look at some sentences, and inspect the parts of speech in each one. We will use a little arrow, like this —>, to show what noun an adjective modifies, or to show what verb an adverb modifies.

1. adj. —> n. v. adj.—> n
   The architect designed a bridge.
   subject predicate

Notice that the noun *bridge* is a direct object of the action verb *designed*.

2. n. adv.—> v. adj.—> n.
   Michelangelo carefully painted the ceiling.
   subject predicate

Notice that the noun *ceiling* is a direct object of the action verb *painted*.

3. interj. pron. conj. pron. v. n.
   Yes, you and I are friends.
   subject predicate

Notice that the noun *friends* is a subject complement of the linking verb *are*.

4. n. v. prep. adj.—> n.
   Magellan sailed around the planet.
   subject predicate

5. n conj. pron. n. prep. n. v.
   Alexander and his army of Macedonians won.
   subject predicate

Now, notice some very interesting things about the grammar of these sentences:

- The subject can be one word or many words.
- The predicate can be one word or many words.
- The main word of the subject is always a noun or pronoun.
- The main word of the predicate is always a verb.
- A sentence always contains a noun or pronoun and a verb.

You try it. Here are some more sentences. Study each one carefully, and imitate the five examples above by writing the abbreviation for the part of speech above each word, and by underlining the subject and predicate of each sentence. Identify any direct objects or subject complements you see.

1. **The scientist used a microscope.**

2. **Rembrandt slowly painted the canvas.**

3. **Yes, he and she were members.**

4. **De Soto floated down the Mississippi.**

5. **Spartacus and his force of gladiators lost.**

Check your answers from the answer key on the next page.

A Vocabulary Note: The stem **micro** in the word *microscope* means "small." If you know that, then you know part of the meaning of many words. To illustrate this point, look at some of the words that contain the stem **micro**:

> microline, microbe, microcephaly, microfiche, microbar, microcyte, microcosm, micrococcus, microfarad, microphyte, microlith, microgram, micrometer, Micronesia, micron, microspore, microwave, microsome, microsecond, microscope, micronucleus, microorganism, microphone, micrography, microgram, microseism, microtome

Look up some of the **micro** words that you do not know, and see what they mean.

Answer Key:

1. adj. —> n. v. adj.—> n
   The scientist used a microscope.
   subject predicate

   The noun *microscope* is a direct object.

2. n. adv.—> v. adj.—> n.
   Rembrandt slowly painted the canvas.
   subject predicate

   The noun *canvas* is a direct object.

3. interj. pron. conj. pron. v. n.
   Yes, he and she were members.
   subject predicate

   The noun *members* is a subject complement.

4. n. v. prep. adj.—> n.
   De Soto floated down the Mississippi
   subject predicate

5. n conj. pron. n. prep. n. v.
   Spartacus and his force of gladiators lost.
   subject predicate

(I know, you want to know who Rembrandt, De Soto, and Spartacus were. Well, Rembrandt van Rijn was a Dutch master painter who was born in 1606 and died in 1609. Rembrandt did a self-portrait that is one of the most striking and penetrating in the history of art. Hernando De Soto was a courageous Spanish explorer, born about 1500, who is credited with discovering the Mississippi River, although the American Indians had actually discovered it long, long before any Europeans arrived in the New World. Spartacus was a proud Thracian slave in the Roman Empire who became a gladiator and who led a slave revolt against Rome. Spartacus and his men were annihilated in 71 B.C.)

Now, think about this: One day, long, long ago, some human being uttered the first word. And language began. Over a period of time, human beings developed language, and more and more parts of speech were created, until there were eight. Use your common sense and imagination to guess what you think was probably the part of speech of the first words ever used. Think about it, and then write down your guess, and the reason you think it is probable. The part of speech of the first word was:

5. Parts of the Sentence: Inside the Predicate

When we began this discussion of grammar, we saw that we express our ideas in language by using sentences made of two main parts, the subject and the predicate. In discussing the parts of speech, we saw that there are other parts of the sentence, such as the direct object and subject complement. Now it is time to review these terms and to elaborate on the ideas which we briefly touched on earlier. The **complete subject** may contain many words, but it will always include the **simple subject**, which is the noun or pronoun that the sentence is about. The **complete predicate** may also contain many words, but it will contain the **simple predicate**, which is the verb. So far, this seems simple:

adj.	adj.	n.	v.	adv.	prep.	adj.	adj.	n.
Three	blind	mice	ran	away	into	the	tall	grass.
		subj.	pred.					

complete subject — complete predicate

But actually, there are a few more details to explain, because as we have seen the predicate can contain several different kinds of special parts.

Sometimes, the predicate is very simple. A sentence might only have a noun and either an action or a linking verb. In fact, there is a famous sentence which illustrates this point, by the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes was trying to prove that he positively *knew* that he existed, which sounds easy to do, but is actually quite difficult. Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." In this sentence, we have a first person singular subject pronoun *I* followed by the simple action verb predicate *think*, and we later have the same pronoun again, followed by the simple linking verb predicate *am*.

But what if Descartes had said, "I think thoughts, therefore I am a person"? How would we describe the nouns *thoughts* and *person*, since neither one is the subject of a verb?

Here is how: When an action verb clause shows the subject doing something **to something**, as in the sentence "The dog bit the mailman," we call the noun or pronoun that receives the action a **direct object**. But when a linking verb clause shows that the subject is **equal to or the same as** something else, as in the sentence "The dog is a poodle," we call the noun or pronoun that is linked to the subject a **subject complement**.

Direct Object: Achilles grabbed the **warrior**.
Subject Complement: Achilles was a **warrior**.

Notice that the only way to tell whether the second noun in these sentences is a direct object or a subject complement is to look at the *verb*. If a sentence contains an action verb, it might have a direct object, but if the sentence contains a linking verb, it might have a subject complement. This is a very advanced grammar idea, and it gives us deep insight into the way we form our own ideas.

Let's test your understanding. In the sentence, "Harlow Shapley, the great astronomer, saw the Andromeda galaxy," is *galaxy* a direct object or a subject complement? If your answer equals the

seventeenth and eighteenth words in the preceding paragraph, you are right.

But what about this sentence: "Blaise Pascal was a French mathematician." Is the word *mathematician* a direct object or a subject complement? The answer is equal to the final words of the paragraph above that begins with the words, "Here is how."

Direct object or subject complement? It is all based on the *verb*. But notice the logic of these terms. The direct object IS directly affected by the verb, whereas the subject complement DOES complement (which means complete) our knowledge of the subject. Like so many terms in grammar, these terms are very easy to remember, because they are almost self-defining.

Now, are you ready to be trapped? Ok, try this sentence: "Odysseus gave the Cyclops a sore eye." The tricky question is, what is the word *Cyclops*? Is it the subject? The direct object? The subject complement? Well, the subject is the proper noun *Odysseus*, and the verb is a past tense action verb, *gave*, so we are looking for a direct object. But on close inspection, we see that the direct object is the common noun *eye*. The word *Cyclops* is what we call an **indirect object**. It is a noun or object pronoun, that is located between the action verb and the direct object, and that is only indirectly affected by the action. There must be a direct object in order to have an indirect object.

And so we find that there are two primary parts of the sentence, the subject and the predicate, but that inside the predicate we might, or might not, find a direct object, an indirect object, or a subject complement. Let's review these terms. Think very carefully about what you have learned:

complete subject: what the sentence is about

simple subject: the noun or pronoun that the sentence is about

complete predicate: what we say about the subject

simple predicate: the verb

direct object: the noun or object pronoun that receives the action of the action verb

indirect object: the noun or object pronoun that is located between the action verb and the direct object, and that is indirectly affected by the action

subject complement: the noun, subject pronoun, or adjective that is linked to the subject by a linking verb

If you have carefully followed the discussion so far, you are ready for the last step. You got a glimpse of it in the definitions you just read. Notice that a direct object must be a noun or *object* pronoun: I watched the composer, I watched *him*. A subject complement, on the other hand, must be a noun, *subject* pronoun, or even an adjective. Remember that the subject pronouns are *I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they*, and the object pronouns are *me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them*. Direct objects, as their name suggests, always use object pronouns, but subject complements, as their name suggests, always use subject pronouns. Examples:

Direct object: I saw him.
Subject complement: It was he.

Direct object: It hit me.
Subject complement: It is I.

Now you finally know enough to understand why I insisted earlier that you memorize the subject and object pronouns. Sentences contain parts called subjects (subject of verb and subject complement), and sentences contain parts called objects (direct object, indirect object, and object of preposition). Those called subjects always use subject pronouns, and those called objects always use object pronouns. Period. A subject is a subject, and an object is an object.

If you do not understand your grammar well enough to know the parts of the sentence and the difference between subject and object pronouns, you will never be able to speak or write correctly. Guessing will not get you through. Your ear will not get you through. You must know, based on whether the verb is action or linking, whether you have a subject complement or a direct object, and choose your pronouns accordingly. Examples:

Matching Pronouns to the Parts of the Sentence:

Subject: *He and I* saw the dog.
Direct object: The dog chased *him and me*.
Subject complement: The visitors were *he and I*.
Object of preposition: The money was for *her and me*.
Indirect object: The chief gave *him and me* a broken arrow.
Everything: He and I saw him and her, but she and I gave him and her a prize, and it was she and I who laughed last.

Now, return to the top of this section, and read it through again, very carefully, until you feel confident about identifying the parts of the sentence, and about choosing the correct pronouns for each part. Then choose the correct pronouns for the sentences below.

1. The postcard of Picasso's *Guernica* was sent to (he and I, him and me).
2. The debate was won by (she and I, her and me).
3. The discovery struck (she and I, her and me) with full force.
4. It was (her and me, she and I) who phoned.
5. (Him and me, he and I) arrived at the dock.
6. The professor gave (he and I, him and me) a book about Cervantes.
7. The present was for (she and I, her and me).
8. The conference audience applauded (she and I, her and me) loudly.
9. The winners of the competition were (him and me, he and I).
10. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos are the best music for (you and he, you and him).

Do you think that you made all of the choices correctly? Well, in every case, the correct answer was the second pair of pronouns. If you did not always select the second pair, then you need to go back and study the grammar of the sentence. Remember: the subject and object pronouns must be matched to the subject and object sentence parts. A direct object always uses object pronouns, and a subject complement always uses subject pronouns. The easy way to remember the pronoun rule is: A subject is a subject and an object is an object.

6. Phrases: The Clever Teamwork

We all know what teams are. Five players work together on a basketball team, and each player has his or her own part in executing a well-practiced play. Cheerleaders work together to make a single pyramid, with each cheerleader standing on the shoulders of two cheerleaders below. Lawyers can work as a team to win a single case. Computer programmers work in teams to write programs, with each programmer specializing in writing a different part of the computer code. Doctors work in teams, with anesthesiologists working alongside surgeons.

Well, by inspecting our own ideas with grammar, we have discovered a remarkable thing. Sometimes, a whole group of words will team together to imitate a single part of speech! A team of words acting as a single part of speech is called a **phrase**. We learned a bit about **prepositional phrases** when we studied the parts of speech, but now we are ready to learn more. Here is a more complete definition of the phrase: *a phrase is a group of words that acts as a single part of speech, and that does not contain a subject and its predicate*. For example, notice that a prepositional phrase can behave as though it were an adverb, modifying a verb:

An ordinary adverb: The penguin sat *there*.
A phrase: The penguin sat *on the iceberg*.

In each case, the verb *sat* is being modified by something, but in the first example the verb is being modified by a simple adverb, *there*, whereas in the second example, the verb is being modified by **a group of words, *on the iceberg*, acting as a team to make an adverb**. That is what phrases are: word groups imitating other parts of speech. It is interesting, by the way, to note that our English word *phrase* comes from a very ancient Greek word, *phrazein*, which meant "to speak."

A prepositional phrase can also act as an adjective:

An ordinary adjective: The **top** book is a classic.
A phrase: The book **on the top** is a classic.

There are different kinds of phrases. Let's look at some other phrases, and see some of the interesting forms that phrases can take in sentences. Remember to notice that the phrase never contains both a sentence's subject and its predicate, and that a sentence can contain more than one phrase, or no phrase at all. Here are some phrases:

Carmen, **my favorite opera**, is by the composer Bizet.

Not remembering names is my problem.

Birds fly **over the rainbow**.

I pledge allegiance **to the flag**.

The assault team climbed the north face **of Mount Everest**.

The problem's solution was very difficult, but we became determined. (no phrase!)

Magellan sailed **around the world**.

Newton loved **to study mathematics.**

The painting **on the museum's north wall** was painted **by the French painter Monet**.

Now, go back and look very carefully at the phrases you just read, and see if you can tell which ones are like most of the others, and which ones are different. What do you notice as you look at the nine different phrases?

The first thing you probably notice is that most of the phrases are prepositional phrases. There are six of them. They begin with prepositions and end with nouns which are the objects of the prepositions.

What about the others? The phrase *my favorite opera* contains no preposition. Neither does *not remembering names*. The phrase *to study mathematics* sounds like a prepositional phrase at first, but then you realize that this is the infinitive verb *to study*, rather than the preposition *to*. What are these other kinds of phrases called, and how do they work?

Well, there are several important kinds of phrases to know about:

> The **prepositional phrase** is the one we already know about. It is always a modifier serving as a big adjective or adverb, and it always begins with a preposition. As we have seen, the phrase also contains a noun or pronoun which is an object of the preposition. Example: Magellan sailed **around the world**.
>
> An **appositive phrase** is an interrupting definition which is apposed (placed beside) the word it defines. Example: *Carmen*, **my favorite opera**, is by the composer Bizet.
>
> A **verbal phrase** is a phrase based on a **verbal**, which is a noun, adjective, or adverb made out of a verb. There are three kinds of verbals: **gerunds**, **participles**, and **infinitives**.
>
> > A **gerund** is a noun made out of a verb. Gerunds end in *-ing*. Example: **Not remembering names** is my problem. In this sentence, the gerund is the noun *remembering* which is used as the subject of the sentence. It is made out of the verb *to remember*.
> >
> > A **participle** is an adjective made out of a verb. Participles end in various typical verb endings. Example: **Working quickly**, the painter splattered paint all over the canvas. In this sentence, the participle is the adjective *working*, which modifies the noun painter. This adjective is made out of the verb *to work*. Example: The **cracked** branch broke. The adjective *cracked* is made out of the verb *to crack*.
> >
> > An **infinitive** is the infinitive form of the verb used as a noun, as an adjective, or as an adverb. Examples are: **To work** is a pleasure. (noun) The man **to see** is the Director. (an adjective modifying the noun *man*) He lives **to fish**. (an adverb modifying the verb *lives*)

What does this discussion of phrases show us? It shows us the incredible flexibility and creativity that our minds possess. This is especially true in the case of the verbals, which are possibly the most creative and imaginative element of the English language. In verbals, we see our brains leaping over barriers, extending the limits of what verbs can do, and forging new imaginative uses for words. Using verbals, we can communicate energetic and exciting ideas that would be impossible in any other way.

Conclusion

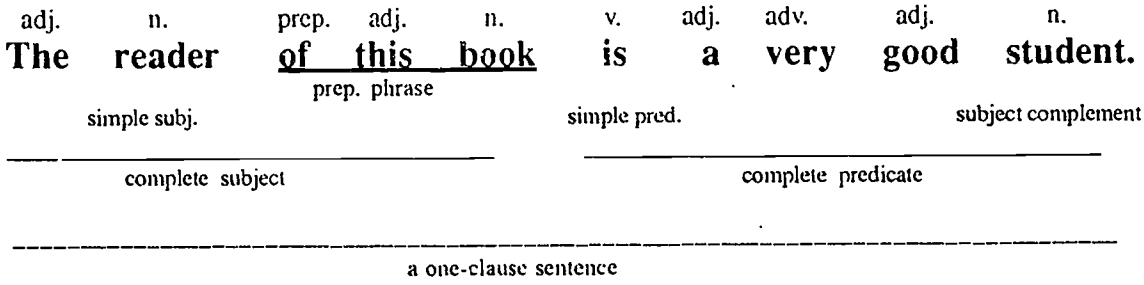
Now let's think carefully about all of the things that we have learned. We have learned a very important secret about the way we think and express our ideas about the world. The secret is that our ideas, which we sometimes call **sentences**, are only complete when they are made of two parts. These two parts are the **subject** that the sentence is about, and the **predicate** that says something about the subject. If we do not have both of these parts in our ideas, we will not have a complete thought, and we will not make any sense to anyone else. Other people have to know both of these parts in order to understand our ideas; they have to know what we are talking about, and they have to know what we are saying about it. When we extend this insight to all levels of communication—to the sentence, to the paragraph, to the essay—we have a deep understanding of the secret of clarity.

We have also learned an amazing secret about the thousands and thousands of words in our English language: incredible as it may seem, there are only eight basic kinds of words. We call these eight kinds of words the **parts of speech**. We have learned that each kind of word has a special purpose, a function, that it does in a sentence. From these eight functions, language is made. Two of the parts of speech, the **noun** and the **verb**, are special, because they are in almost every sentence. The **subject** of a sentence usually has a **noun** (but it might have a **pronoun** instead to take the noun's place), and the **predicate** of the sentence always (yes, always) has a verb.

We have learned that parts of speech are also used as **parts of the sentence**. The **simple subject** is the noun or pronoun that the sentence is about. The **simple predicate** is the subject's verb. The **direct object** is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the action verb, and the **subject complement** is the noun or pronoun linked to the subject by the linking verb. The **indirect object** is the noun or object pronoun that is located between the action verb and the direct object, and that it is indirectly affected by the action.

We have learned that our minds are clever enough to collect little groups of words together into **phrases** that imitate other parts of speech, and we have seen examples of phrases acting as adverbs, as adjectives, and even as nouns. We have seen **prepositional phrases** that are used as modifiers, **appositive phrases** that are interrupting definitions, and three different kinds of **verbal phrases**, in which verbs are changed into other parts of speech. **Gerund phrases** use -ing verbs as nouns. **Participial phrases** use verbs as adjectives. And **infinitive phrases** use verbs as nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

Finally, **verbs** have taught us a very important secret about ideas. Since there are two kinds of verbs, the **action** kind and the **equals** or **linking** kind, this means that there are two main kinds of ideas. We can either say that the **subject is doing something**, or we can say that the **subject is something**. For example, we can use an action verb and say, "The reader of this book saw a very good student." But if we use an equals verb, we can say something even better: "The reader of this book is a very good student."



Now, that is a good, two-part, linking verb idea. As you see, grammar is a fascinating way to think about our own thinking. Using grammar, we can examine our thoughts, and we can see how we have made them. If we did not have grammar, we would never really be able to understand how powerful our minds are. But after this short introduction to grammar, you have begun to understand how powerfully your mind makes ideas out of language. As you learn more and more about grammar in the future, you will gain a greater insight into how wonderful it is to be a human being, an idea-maker. I hope that you will always look forward to the wonderful study of grammar. It is truly a way of inspecting our own ideas.

Grammar Post Test - Grades 7-8

50 Questions, 2 Points Each

Fill in the Blank

1. A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate is called a _____.
2. The noun or pronoun that the sentence is about is called the _____.
3. The part of the sentence that says something about the subject is called the _____.
4. How many kinds of words are there in our language? _____.
5. A word that names a person, place, or thing is called a _____.
6. A word that modifies a noun or pronoun is called an _____.
7. A word that shows action is called a _____.
8. A word that joins two words into a pair is called a _____.
9. A word that shows emotion is called an _____.
10. A word group acting as a single part of speech is a _____.
11. An -ing noun made out of a verb is called a _____.
12. An adjective made out of a verb is called a _____.
13. The words *a, an,* and *the* are called the _____.
14. In a sentence, each group of words with its own subject and predicate is a _____.
15. A sentence which contains two independent clauses is called a _____ sentence.

Underline the Subjects of These Sentences

16. The architect drew a suspension bridge.
17. Raphael painted a vivid fresco on the wall.
18. Well, the sergeant and the colonel became allies quickly.
19. The adventurer Cortés conquered the Aztec empire.
20. Hannibal and his Carthaginian army defeated the Romans in Italy.

Circle the Correct Answer

21. In the sentence "The architect drew a suspension bridge" the word *architect* is a

    a. noun b. pronoun c. adjective d. adverb

22. In the sentence "The architect drew a suspension bridge" the word *drew* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

23. In the sentence "The architect drew a suspension bridge" the word *a* is a

    a. conjunction b. adverb c. preposition d. adjective

24. In the sentence "Well, the sergeant and the colonel became allies quickly" the word *and* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

25. In the sentence "Well, the sergeant and the colonel became allies quickly" the word *well* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

26. In the sentence "Well, the sergeant and the colonel became allies quickly" *quickly* is a

    a. adjective b. adverb c. interjection d. conjunction

27. In the sentence "Hannibal defeated the Romans in Italy" the word *in* is a

    a. conjunction b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

28. In the sentence "Hannibal defeated the Romans in Italy" the word *defeated* is a

    a. verb b. conjunction c. preposition d. adverb

29. In the sentence "Raphael painted a vivid fresco on the wall" the word *vivid* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

30. In the sentence "Raphael painted a beautiful fresco on the wall" the word *fresco* is a

    a. noun b. verb c. adjective d. adverb

For the following sentence, answer the questions below.

When we arrived, the breaking rock rolled slowly down the silent hillside.

31. The sentence structure is
    a. simple
    b. compound
    c. complex
    d. none of the above

32. The sentence contains
    a. one prepositional phrase
    b. two prepositional phrases
    c. three prepositional phrases
    d. no prepositional phrase

33. The word *breaking* is
    a. an appositive
    b. a gerund
    c. a participle
    d. an infinitive

34. The word *we* is a
    a. first person singular subject pronoun
    b. second person singular subject pronoun
    c. first person plural subject pronoun
    d. third person plural subject pronoun

35. The word *hillside* is a
    a. object of preposition
    b. direct object
    c. subject complement
    d. indirect object

36. The sentence contains
    a. one clause
    b. two clauses
    c. three clauses
    d. no clauses

37. The word *slowly* is a
    a. noun
    b. pronoun
    c. adjective
    d. adverb

38. The word *down* is a
    a. adverb
    b. adjective
    c. interjection
    d. preposition

39. The word *the* is a
    a. direct object
    b. definite article
    c. indefinite article
    d. indirect object

40. The words *When we arrived* are a
    a. dependent clause
    b. independent clause
    c. appositive phrase
    d. none of the above

41. The second verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. action, past tense, active voice
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
    d. linking, past tense

42. The first verb in the sentence is
    a. action, present tense
    b. linking, present tense
    c. action, past tense, passive voice
    d. action, past tense, active voice

43. The word *When* is a
    a. subordinating conjunction
    b. coordinating conjunction
    c. correlative conjunction
    d. interjection

44-50. Describe, in your own words, why grammar is important.

Grammar Post Test - Grades 7-8

50 Questions, 2 Points Each

Fill in the Blank

1. A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate is called a **sentence or clause**.
2. The noun or pronoun that the sentence is about is called the **subject or simple subject**.
3. The part of the sentence that says something about the subject is called the **predicate**.
4. How many kinds of words are there in our language? **eight**
5. A word that names a person, place, or thing is called a **noun**.
6. A word that modifies a noun or pronoun is called an **adjective**.
7. A word that shows action is called a **verb**.
8. A word that joins two words into a pair is called a **conjunction**.
9. A word that shows emotion is called an **interjection**.
10. A word group acting as a single part of speech is a **phrase**.
11. An -ing noun made out of a verb is called a **gerund**.
12. An adjective made out of a verb is called a **participle**.
13. The words *a, an,* and *the* are called the **articles**.
14. In a sentence, each group of words with its own subject and predicate is a **clause**.
15. A sentence which contains two independent clauses is called a **compound** sentence.

Underline the Subjects of These Sentences

16. <u>The architect</u> drew a suspension bridge.
17. <u>Raphael</u> painted a vivid fresco on the wall.
18. Well, <u>the sergeant and the colonel</u> became allies quickly.
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    a. **conjunction** b. preposition c. interjection d. adverb

25. In the sentence "Well, the sergeant and the colonel became allies quickly" the word *well* is a

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    a. noun
    b. pronoun
    c. adjective
    d. **adverb**

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    a. adverb
    b. adjective
    c. interjection
    d. **preposition**

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    b. **definite article**
    c. indefinite article
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    d. **action, past tense, active voice**

43. The word *When* is a
    a. **subordinating conjunction**
    b. coordinating conjunction
    c. correlative conjunction
    d. interjection

44-50. Describe, in your own words, why grammar is important.