



FOUNDATIONS Of GMAT GRAMMAR

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Nouns

A noun is a word that denotes a person, place, or thing, e.g. Tom, apple, laughter, Phoenix

Example Sentence 1 - *Tom went around the world, from California to Cairo, by ship.*

All underlined words are nouns.

- Tom = Name of the person
- world = place
- California = Name of the place
- Cairo = Name of the place
- ship = thing

Concrete & Abstract Nouns

Nouns can be either concrete or abstract, depending upon what type of entity they denote.

Concrete Nouns denote items that one can identify, using any of the 5 senses – sight, touch, taste, smell, & sound. E.g. all nouns in the example sentence 1 (Tom went...ship.) are concrete nouns.

Abstract Nouns denote items that cannot be detected by the 5 senses. E.g. love, truth, pain, skill.

Proper & Common Nouns

Nouns can be either proper or common, depending upon whether they express specific names or generic entities.

Proper Nouns name specific persons, places, or things. They are capitalized. In the example sentence 1, the nouns ‘Tom’, ‘California’, and ‘Cairo’ are all proper nouns since each of these nouns is the name of a person or a place.

Common Nouns are general nouns. In the above sentence, the nouns ‘world’ and ‘ship’ are common nouns.

Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns have a number associated with them. Since they express entities, they can either express a single entity or a plural entity. Thus, nouns can be singular or plural.

- ① Singular means one. A noun in its native form is singular: e.g. – ship.
- ② Plural means more than one.

Typically, most nouns can be made plural by adding –s, –es or –ies after the noun. E.g.

- *ship* is singular; *ships* is plural
- *injury* is singular; *injuries* is plural

Certain other nouns have distinct plural forms. E.g.

- *man* is singular; *men* is plural
- *child* is singular; *children* is plural
- *mouse* is singular, *mice* is plural

Countable and Un-Countable Nouns

Classification of nouns as countable and uncountable nouns is important because it governs the use of certain adjectives with these nouns, as explained below.

What is a countable noun?

A countable noun is a word that can be counted and has a plural form. For example:

The word ‘onion’ is a countable noun because:

- It can be counted as one onion, two onions, three onions, etc.
- It has a plural form (onions).

The word ‘reason’ is a countable noun because:

- It can be counted as one reason, two reasons, three reasons, etc.
- It has a plural form (reasons).

By the same reasoning as above, words such as ‘thing’, ‘job’, ‘coin’, ‘story’, etc. are countable nouns.

👉 What is an un-countable noun?

An un-countable noun is a word that cannot be counted and that *usually does not have a plural form. For example:

The word 'garlic' is an un-countable noun because:

- It cannot be counted as one garlic, two garlies, three garlies, etc.
- It does not have a plural form (~~garlies~~).

The word 'knowledge' is an uncountable noun because:

- It cannot be counted as one knowledge, two knowledges, three knowledges, etc.
- It does not have a plural form (~~knowledges~~).

By the same reasoning as above, words such as 'stuff', 'furniture', *'money', 'rice', 'anger' etc. are un-countable nouns.

*The noun 'money', which is usually an un-countable noun, has a plural form 'moneys', which is used in a very different context and not in the context of 'one moneys', 'two moneys', etc.

👉 How can I determine whether a noun is countable or un-countable?

A noun is countable noun if:

- It can be counted as 1 (noun), 2 (nouns), 3 (nouns)
- It has a plural form.

A noun is un-countable noun if

- It cannot be counted as 1 (noun), 2 (nouns), 3 (nouns)
- It does not have a plural form.

👉 What adjectives can be used with countable and un-countable nouns?

Quantity adjectives such as 'few', 'many', etc. can only be used with countable nouns. For example, you can say 'few songs' because here 'songs' is a countable noun, but you can't say 'few music' because 'music' is an uncountable noun. Similarly, you can say 'many songs'; but you can't say 'many music'.

Quantity adjectives such as 'less', 'amount', etc. can only be used with un-countable nouns. For example, you can say 'less music' because here 'music' is an un-countable noun, but you can't say 'less songs' because songs is a countable noun, and 'less' cannot be used with countable nouns.

Similarly the expression ‘amount of music’ is correct, while the expression ‘amount of songs’ is incorrect idiomatic usage.

Pronouns

Pronouns take the place of a noun to avoid repetition and to clearly express the meaning of the sentence. E.g.

1. *The teacher walked in to the class and saw that the students doing the group assignment were too loud, so the teacher told the students that the group assignment would have to end if the students did not control students’ volume.*
2. *Teacher walked in to the class and saw that the students doing the group assignment were too loud, so he told them that the group assignment would have to end if they did not control their volume.*

Notice how in sentence 1, the nouns are repeated, and, therefore, the sentence is clumsy and difficult to comprehend. On the other hand, in sentence 2, pronouns are used in place of the nouns, and the sentence becomes much more precise and clear.

Since pronouns replace nouns, they also express the name of a person, a place, or a thing. E.g.

1. *Tom was angry at Sheila for not taking Tom to the Central Park, as Tom loves to go to the Central Park for picnics with Sheila.*
2. *Tom was angry at Sheila for not taking him to the Central Park, as he loves to go there for picnics with her.*

Types of pronouns

There are 5 types of pronouns.

1. Personal Pronoun

These pronouns refer to specific people or things. For example: he, she, they, etc. When you use personal pronouns, you should take care to use them in the correct case or form.

1.1 Subject Case Pronouns – I, You, She, He, It, We, They

Be sure to use a subject case pronoun when the pronoun acts as a subject in the sentence. For example:

- a. *Sheila slept before the sunset.*
 - **She** slept before the sunset.
- b. *Tom and Sheila left the meeting early to attend a gala event.*
 - **They** left the meeting early to attend a gala event.

1.2 Object Case Pronouns – Me, You, Her, Him, It, Us, You, Them

Likewise, use object case pronouns when the pronoun acts as an object in the sentence. For example:

- a. *Assign the task to Sheila.*
 - Assign the task to **her**.
- b. *Tom needs to meet Sheila and James.*
 - Tom needs to meet **them**.

1.3 Possessive Case Pronouns – My, His, Her, Their, Its

Likewise, use possessive case pronouns when you need to show ownership. For example:

- a. *Sheila's share of chocolate is almost over.*
 - **Her** share of chocolate is almost over.
- b. *The students' books are torn.*
 - **Their** books are torn.

2. Relative Pronouns

These pronouns connect group of words to specific nouns. They are called relative pronouns because they relate to the word that they modify. For example *that*, *which*, *where*, *whose*, etc are relative pronouns.

- a. *The book **that** contains the details of the experiment was stolen.* ('that' relates to the noun 'book')
- b. *The barren land, **which** has not been cultivated since ages, belongs to an old couple, **who** cannot hire any help.* ('which' relates to the noun 'land' and 'who' relates to the noun "old couple")

3. Indefinite Pronouns

These pronouns refer to people and things that are not specific. For example all, everyone, each, everything, anyone, anything, etc are indefinite pronouns.

- a. **Everyone** has the right to vote in this country.
- b. **Each** student needs to sign the attendance sheet.

4. Demonstrative Pronouns

These pronouns refer to the nouns that follow them. For example this, those etc are demonstrative pronouns.

- a. **These** shoes are mine.
- b. **This** box contains several antique items.

5. Reflexive Pronouns

These pronouns are used when the subject of the sentence does something to itself. These pronouns end in –self or –selves.

- *I cut **myself** while chopping the vegetables.*

We also use these pronouns to emphasize the subject.

- *They **themselves** cannot handle the situation.*

➤ Singular and Plural Pronouns

Like a noun, a pronoun can be either singular or plural. Some singular pronouns are he, it, I, her, this etc. Some plural pronouns are they, we, us, them, those etc.

Verbs

A verb is an essential component of a sentence. A sentence is not complete without a verb and its subject. Typically, verbs denote the action performed by the subject. For example:

- *The clock ticks all day long.*

“ticks” is an action verb here as the clock is the doer of the action. The clock does the action of ticking.

- *The beggar sat down by the side of the road.*

“sat” is the action verb here, and the doer of this action is the subject of the sentence – “the beggar”.

On several occasions, verbs, instead of presenting the action of the subject, simply connect the subject to some other additional information about the subject. In such cases, they are called linking verbs. Let’s take a closer look at such verbs.

Linking verbs

Verbs can also connect or link the subject to additional information about this subject. Such verbs are called linking verbs.

For example:

- *My mother **is** a great cook.*

The verb “is” does not denote an action. But it connects the subject of the sentence – “My mother” – to some additional information about her – a great cook.

- *Richard **seems** sad today.*

The verb “seems” does not denote any action, but it connects the subject of the sentence “Richard” with the additional information – that he looks sad.

- *After getting the news that she had made it to her dream college, Rachael **was** very happy.*

The verb “was” does not denote any action, but it connects “Rachael”, the subject of the sentence, with the remaining information about her.

How to recognize linking verb?

If you can replace a verb in the sentence with is, am, or are and the sentence still makes sense, then those verbs are linking verbs.

For example:

- *The question **looked** difficult to everybody in the class.*

Let’s replace “looked” with “is” – The question is difficult. This replacement makes complete sense. Hence “looked” is a linking verb in this sentence. Furthermore, it will not make sense to consider the question actually performing the action of “looking”. The sense of the sentence here is that the question actually appeared difficult to everyone in the class.

- *Josh **looked** at the question until he solved it in his brain.*

So can we say, Josh is the question? Not at all. Hence, “looked” in this sentence is an action verb. In fact in this sentence, it will make complete sense to say that Josh is actually performing the action of “looking”.

Next we will see how different verb forms are created from the base form of the verb.

Base form of Verb

The base verb is the simplest form of a verb, a form without any special ending. You can easily recognize these verbs from the manner in which they are used in “to + verb” forms. For example: dance, do, cook, sing, play, read, etc. (to dance, to do, to cook, to sing, to play, to read)

All verb tenses are created from the base form of the verb.

They can be created either by adding some helping verbs before the base form of the verb or by making some changes to the verb form itself or both.

For example:

- *run – will run, is running, ran*

Here, to create the future tense, we added the helping verb “will” to the base form of the verb, but to make the present continuous form, we added the helping verb “is” and modified “run” to “running”. Furthermore, to create the simple past tense, we changed the form of the verb to “ran”.

- *laugh – will laugh, is laughing, laughed*

Here again, we added helping verbs to create the first two tenses. For the second tense, we also modified “laugh” to “laughing”. To create past tense, we added “ed” after the base form of the verb.

Base verbs are also used with pronouns I and you and all plural subjects.

- I cook food.*
- You dance well.*
- You play all the time.*
- They do the work.*

Singular form of verbs can be formed by adding “s” or “es” to the base verb. For example:

- She cooks food.*
- She dances well.*
- She plays all the time.*
- He does the work.*

Understanding of base form of verb is very important. Once you have this understanding then by understanding how different tenses work and how you can write verbs in different tenses, you will get a good handle on verbs. Next, we will review helping verbs.

Helping verbs

A verb can consist of more than one word. In such cases, there is one main verb and the rest are called the auxiliary or the helping verbs. Following is the list of the auxiliary verbs:

is, are, am, was, were, has, have, had, has been/have been/had been, can/could, may/might, will/would, shall/should

Let's take a few sentences to understand helping verbs:

- *The president is deliberating on the issues of economic crisis.*

In this sentence, “deliberating” is only part of the verb. It alone does not form a verb in this sentence. The preceding helping verb “is” makes them together the verb.

- *Mike has been working on his project since yesterday.*

In this sentence, “working” is only part of the verb. But the complete verb here is “has been working” in which “has been” are the helping verbs without which the *-ing* form of the verb cannot be regarded as a verb.

Also, notice that when we use do/does/did, it is always followed by a base verb. And when that happens, the number of the helping verb depends upon the number of the subject.

For example:

- *The flower does not bloom well in windy weather.*

Notice that “the flower” is the singular subject. That is why the helping verb used for this subject is singular “does”. Since we have already used one singular verb in the sentence, the verb that follows the helping verb is in the base form. Even if the subject is singular, we cannot say “does not blooms”.

Now if this sentence is written without the helping verb, then the main verb will follow the number of the subject. For example:

- *The flower blooms in windy weather.*

Likewise, in past tense sentences, if the helping verb “did” is used, then it is also followed by the base verb. We cannot use the past tense of the main verb with “did”. For example:

- a. *The flower did not bloom in windy weather. Correct*
- b. *The flower did not bloomed in windy weather. Incorrect*

Now that we understand the base form of verb and the helping verbs, let's understand how the tenses govern the timing of the action presented by the verb.

Verb Tenses

The tense of the verb denotes the time of the action. The tense can be divided into three categories – Present Tense, Past Tense, and Future Tense.

1. Present Tense

The verb that refers to the present time is said to be in the Present Tense. For example:

- a. *Harry goes to a wizard school.*
- b. *Ria is working on her project.*

Present Tense can be further divided into four main sub-categories:

1.1 Simple Present Tense

This tense is used to present general information or universal truths that hold true for all times. It is also used to express habitual actions. For example:

- a. *The sun rises in the east.* (Universal Truth)
- b. *My mother always prepares breakfast for me.* (Habitual Action)
- c. *The company gives handsome perks to diligent employees.* (General Information)

1.2 Present Progressive/Continuous Tense

This tense is used to show an action that has begun, is still happening, and is not finished yet. Since the action is still continuing and not over, it is called the continuous tense. Generally, the present continuous tense is derived by adding “ing” to the base verb. A point to remember here is that only the verb-ing word does not make the continuous tense. The verb-ing word must be preceded by a present tense helping verb to make the verb in the present continuous tense. Let’s take examples here:

- a. *Stella is explaining her project to the investors.*
- b. *The managers are looking for people for a number of vacant posts in the company.*
- c. *I am cooking dinner early so that I can watch my favorite show.*

The verbs in all the above three sentences are “is explaining”, “are looking”, and “am cooking”. Notice that if we used only “explaining”, “looking”, or “cooking” in these sentences (without the helping verbs “is”, “are”, and “am” respectively), they

would not qualify as verbs. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action.

Hence, in present continuous tense, the **verb-ing word** must be **preceded by is/are/am**.

1.3 Present Perfect Tense

This tense is used to denote an action

- that has finished in the immediate past. For example:
 - a. *She has just finished her breakfast.*
 - b. *They have just returned from the vacation.*

- that has finished in the past but the effect of which continues in the present. For example:
 - a. *The recession has made many people jobless.*
 - b. *Many students have applied for travel concession.*

- that shares experiences, an action whose time is not given and is not known.
 - a. *Johnny has visited Europe.*
 - b. *I have read all the Harry Potter books.*

- that started in the past and is continuing up to the current moment. Such sentences are generally written with “since” or “for phrases”.
 - a. *I have known him since 1987.*
 - b. *He has been sick for the last two weeks.*

The present perfect tense verbs are written with “has” or “have”. However, these words in themselves are not present perfect verbs. To be so, they must be followed by the verb in its past participle or third form. The verbs in all the above mentioned examples follow this structure.

So “**Has**” or “**Have**” together **with the past participle** form of the verb makes the present perfect tense.

If “has” or “have” is used just by itself and is **not** followed by a verb in its past participle form, then it works as a simple present tense verb.

- a. *I have lots of chores to finish.* (Simple Present Tense)
- b. *He has your book.* (Simple Present Tense)

1.4 Present Perfect Continuous Tense

This tense is used to present an action that started sometime in the past and is still continuing in the present. This tense is a mix of present continuous and present perfect tense and hence uses the following structure:

- a. *Joe has been sleeping since morning.*
- b. *They have been playing all afternoon.*

2. Past Tense

The verbs that denote that the actions took place in the past are said to be in the past tense. For example:

- a. *John went to school yesterday.*
- b. *Gina prayed before she slept.*

Past Tense can be further divided into four sub-categories:

2.1 Simple Past Tense

This tense is used to present general information about the actions that started in the past and finished in the past as well. We also use this tense to talk about past habits. For example:

- a. *Many freedom fighters gave their lives, fighting for the independence of their country.*
- b. *Mary practiced for 12 hours every day before her first dance performance.*

2.2 Past Progressive/Continuous Tense

This tense is used to show an action that was happening in the past. The time of the action may be or may not be indicated.

Like the present continuous tense, the past continuous tense is derived by adding “ing” to the base verb. A point to remember here is that only the verb-ing word does not make the continuous tense. The verb-ing word must be preceded by a past tense helping verb to create the verb in past continuous tense. Let’s take examples here:

- a. *Roy was playing football with his younger brother.*
- b. *The managers were looking for people for a number of vacant posts in the company.*
- c. *The power went off when I was reading.*

The verbs in the above three sentences are “was playing”, “were looking”, and “was reading”.

Notice that if we used only “playing”, “looking”, or “reading” (without the helping verbs “was”, “were”, and “was” respectively) in these sentences, they would not qualify as verbs. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action.

Hence, in the past continuous tense, the **verb-ing word** must be preceded by **was/were**.

2.3 Past Perfect Tense

This tense describes an action that was completed before a certain moment in the past:

- a. *I had finished my dinner before my parents came back home.*
- b. *By the time he reached the venue, the audience had left.*

The past perfect tense verbs are always written with “had”. However, this word in itself is not a past perfect verb. To be so, “had” must be followed by the verb in its past participle form. The verbs in the above mentioned examples follow this structure. **So “had” plus the past participle form of the verb makes the past perfect tense.**

If “had” is used just by itself and is **not** followed by a verb in its past participle form, then it works as a simple past tense verb.

- a. *I had your book last week but not anymore. (Simple Past Tense)*
- b. *The team had great respect for its former coach. (Simple Past Tense)*

2.4 Past Perfect Continuous Tense

This tense is used to present an action that started sometime before a certain point in the past and continued up to that time. This tense is a mix of past continuous and past perfect tense and hence uses the following structure:

- a. *When Prof. Roy joined the institute, Prof Sen had already been teaching there for six years.*
- b. *By November 2011, he had been working on his fifth book for three months.*

3. Future Tense

In order to talk about the events that are to take place sometime in the future, we use Future Tense. We use “will” or “shall” to indicate the future tense.

- a. *Ria’s performance will take place sometime next month.*
- b. *Tomorrow, you will get your flu shot.*

Like Present and Past Tenses, Future Tense can also be divided into four sub-categories.

3.1 Simple Future Tense

This tense is used to talk about the general events that will take place in the future. We also use future tense for events that we think or believe will take place in the future.

- a. *Mary will perform well in her singing recital.*
- b. *I think John will participate in the annual marathon this time.*

3.2 Future Progressive/Continuous Tense

This tense is used to show an action that will begin sometime in the future and will continue in the future as well.

Like the present and past continuous tenses, the future continuous tense is also derived by adding “ing” to the base verb. The verb-ing word must be preceded by future tense helping verbs to create the verb in future continuous tense. Let’s take examples here:

- a. *Roy will be playing football with his younger brother.*
- b. *The managers shall be looking for people for a numbers of vacant posts in the company.*

The verbs in the above sentences are “will be playing” and “will be looking”. Notice that if we used only “playing” or “looking” in these sentences, without the helping verbs “will be” or “shall be”, they would not qualify as verbs. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action. Hence, in the future continuous tense, the **verb-ing word MUST BE PRECEDED by will be/shall be.**

3.3 Future Perfect Tense

This tense is used to talk about an action that will be completed by a certain future time. For example:

- a. *I **will have finished** my breakfast by the time he comes to pick me up tomorrow.*
- b. *The authorities **will have released** the results by tomorrow evening.*

3.4 Future Perfect Continuous Tense

This tense is used to denote a continuous action in the future with reference to a particular time/event set in the future. For example:

- a. *When he finishes his English language course, he **will have been living** in the UK for five months.*
- b. *By the end of November, he **will have been working** on his fifth novel.*

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns or pronouns. They do so by answering certain questions about the entity they modify. For example - What kind is it? How many are there? Which one is it? Let's look at some examples:

- *Incessant anxiety has undermined his health.*

In this sentence, "incessant" is the adjective that describes the noun "anxiety". What kind of "anxiety" are we talking about? We are talking about the anxiety that never stopped. So anxiety has been modified by "incessant".

- *Every cloud has a silver lining.*

This famous proverb contains the adjective "silver" that modifies the noun "lining". This word defines the color of the lining.

- *Maria has to prepare two dishes for dinner.*

In this sentence, "two" is the adjective that describes the noun "dishes". How many dishes? Two dishes.

- *Tom takes pleasure in working on challenging projects.*

In this sentence, "challenging" is the adjective that describes the noun "projects". What kind of projects? Challenging projects.

So, as you saw in the above three example sentences, adjectives provide a little more information about the entity they describe. Now in the examples above we saw single words that act as adjectives. However, phrases and clauses can also act as adjectives.

Adjectives – Words, Phrases, and Clauses

We learned that adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns or pronouns. For example:

- *Incessant anxiety has undermined his health.*

In this sentence, “incessant” is the adjective that describes the noun “anxiety”. What kind of “anxiety” are we talking about? We are talking about the anxiety that never stopped. So anxiety has been modified by “incessant”.

Now apart from just words, even phrases and clauses can act as adjectives. For example:

- *We will have to order six vegetable and cheese sandwiches and two slices of broccoli chicken pizza for the guests tonight.*

This sentence talks about a few food items. While the adjectives “six” and “two” present the number of specific eatables required for the guests, “vegetable and cheese” and “broccoli chicken” refer to their kind. Notice that both these adjectives (“vegetable and cheese” and “broccoli chicken”) are phrases.

- *The books with the black and white photographs have been missing since last week.*

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase “with the black and white photographs” describes the noun entity the “books”. It describes what kind of books have been missing. Hence, this prepositional phrase acts as an adjective in this sentence.

- *Nick wants the umbrella that has the Spiderman print on it.*

This sentence says that Nick wants a specific kind of umbrella, and this kind has been explained by using the clause “that has the Spiderman print on it”. So in this sentence, this entire clause acts as an adjective, describing the umbrella.

So as you saw in the above three example sentences, adjectives provide a little more information about the entity (noun or pronoun) they describe, and adjectives can be of various kinds - a single word, a group of words, or a clause.

Adjectives can also be used to make comparisons. When we make comparisons, we need to use adjectives in their comparative or superlative forms.

Adjectives – for comparisons

We learned that adjectives are used to describe nouns or pronouns. Adjectives can also be used to present comparisons. And when they are used in this role, they should be used in the appropriate comparative or superlative forms.

When a comparison between 2 entities is made, the comparative form of adjective is used.

Comparative form

This form should be used when an adjective is used to compare 2 entities. It can be formed in two ways. We can add either “er” to the end of the adjective or “more” or “less” before it. **Remember that we cannot use more/less + er adjective.**

- a. *Jacob has a bigger villa than Jack does.*
- b. *My cat is certainly lazier than my dog.*
- c. *The salary offered in corporate organizations is more handsome than that offered in governmental firms.*
- d. *Some flowers are more colorful than others even if all of them belong to the same family.*

Superlative form

This form should be used when an adjective is used to compare more than 2 entities. Like comparative adjectives, superlative adjectives can be formed in two ways. We can add either “est” or “iest” to the end of the adjective or “most” or “least” before it. **Remember that we cannot use most/least + est/iest adjective.**

- a. *Jason has the biggest villa in this block.*
- b. *Gina’s is the thickest exercise book in the class.*
- c. *Kim selected the crispiest bacons for her breakfast.*
- d. *For Jason, his grandmother is the most gorgeous woman in the world.*
- e. *This is the most colorful rainbow I have even seen.*
- f. *The stories that Harry tells are the least believable of all.*

So always be sure to use adjectives in their correct form. Use the **comparative form** of the adjective when you **compare 2 entities**. Construct the comparative form appropriately. Likewise, use the **superlative form** of the adjective when you compare **more than 2 entities**. Construct the superlative form appropriately.

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that describe or modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs or clauses. They can be a single word, a phrase or a clause. Adverbs generally answer one of these four questions about the entity they modify: How? When? Where? and Why?

For example:

- *Kim quickly grabbed the last cookie left on the plate.*

In this sentence, the adverb “quickly” modifies the verb “grabbed” by defining the How aspect of the action. How did Kim grab the last cookie? She grabbed it “quickly”.

- *In the game of hide and seek, Amy decided to hide in a completely dark room in the basement.*

Here, the adverb “completely” modifies the adjective “dark”. How dark was the room? It was completely dark.

- *Ria happily accepted the new project.*

In this sentence, the adverb “happily” describes the verb “accepted”. How did Ria accept the new project? She did so happily.

- *Ria very happily accepted the new project.*

In this sentence, the adverb “very” describes the adverb “happily”. How happily did Ria accept the new project? She did so very happily. So here the adverb presents the extent or degree of happiness.

- *Surprisingly, our Indian food stall had the maximum footfall in the World Gourmet Fest.*

Here, “Surprisingly” describes the entire main clause.

How are Adverbs formed?

Most of the single-word adverbs end with “ly”. For example, “quickly”, “completely”, “happily”, and “surprisingly” are all adverbs ending with “ly”.

However, there are a few words that are not adverbs despite ending with “ly”. For example, “lonely”, “lively”, “lovely”. Even if they end with “ly”, these words are adjectives that modify nouns or pronouns. So you must not blindly consider any “ly” ending word an adverb. Always go by the meaning and role of the word!

Furthermore, there are many adverbs that do not have a specific ending. For example: next, often, very, seldom etc.

So as you saw above, adverbs can describe any entity in the sentence except nouns and pronouns. They can describe verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even complete clauses. You also saw that the adverbs in these examples are single words. Now, apart from single words, phrases and clauses can also act as adverbs.

Adverbs – Words, Phrases, and Clauses

We learned that adverbs are words that describe verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and clauses. For example:

- *Ria very happily accepted the new project.*

In this sentence, the adverb “happily” describes the verb “accepted”. How did Ria accept the new project? She did so happily. Furthermore, the adverb “very” describes the adverb “happily”. How happily did Ria accept the new project? She did so very happily. So here the adverb presents the extent or degree of happiness.

Now apart from just words, even phrases and clauses can act as adverbs. For example:

- *Joe finished his dinner at 9 pm.*

Notice here that “at 9 pm” is a prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrases can modify nouns as well as verbs. Those prepositional phrases that modify verbs act as adverbs. In this sentence, the prepositional phrase “at 9 pm” modifies the verb “finished”. It talks about the “when” aspect of this action.

- *Mary mixed the cake dough with an egg beater.*

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase “with an egg beater” describes how Mary mixed the cake.

- *Nancy hid the marbles under the pillow because she did not want to give them to her brother.*

Here, the dependent clause “because she did not want to give them to her brother” is an adverb because it modifies the verb of the preceding main clause. Why did Nancy hide the marbles? She did so because she did not want to give them to her brother.

So as you saw in the above four example sentences, adverbs provide a little more information about the entity that they describe, and adverbs can be a single word or a phrase or a clause.

Adverbs can also be used to make comparisons. When we make comparisons, we need to use adverbs in their comparative or superlative forms.

Adverbs – for comparisons

We learned that adverbs are used to describe other verbs, other adverbs,

adjectives, or clauses. While describing these entities adverbs can also present comparison. And when they do so, they should be used in the appropriate comparative or superlative forms.

When we compare an aspect of two entities, we add “more” or “less” before the adverb to make it a comparative adverb. For example:

- a. *Jack goes to swim more frequently than his sister Jill.*
- b. *Jill understood the concept of probability less quickly than that of coordinate geometry.*

When we compare an aspect of more than two entities, then we use adverbs in the superlative form. In order to make an adverb superlative, we need to add “most” or “least” before the adverb. For example:

- a. *The quality of the project showed that Amy’s was the most hastily done project in the class.*
- b. *Prof. Roy always raises the least frequently discussed topics in philosophy.*

So always be sure to use adverbs in their correct form. Add the word “more” or “less” when you compare two entities. Likewise use the word “most” or “least” when you compare more than two entities.

Prepositions

Prepositions are words that link or connect a noun or a pronoun to other words to show the relation of that noun or pronoun with other words. Prepositions always appear in prepositional phrase, that is, they begin with a preposition and end with a noun or a noun phrase.

Prepositions are always followed by Noun

They generally describe place (in, out, above), time (during, by, at), and movement (to, towards). For example:

- *Generally, the family sits by the fire place.*

Here, “by” describes the place where the family sits during winters.

- *Many Siberian birds fly to warmer countries during the winter.*

Here “to” presents movement of the Siberian birds from one place to warmer countries. Preposition “during” shows which time of the year do Siberian birds fly to warmer countries.

Notice that “to” is sometimes followed by a verb. For example: *I like to sing*. In this usage, “to” is NOT a preposition; it is an infinitive.

- Below is the list of prepositions divided according to what they describe. Note that this table is not an exhaustive list of prepositions and that one preposition may fall in more than one category:

PLACE	TIME	MOVEMENT
above	about	to
across	at	toward
after	by	through
against	during	throughout
along	since	round
among	till	past
around	around	across
at	by the time	under

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that join different parts of sentences together. There are following types of conjunctions:

1. Coordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions join together nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, clauses, and propositional phrases. These conjunctions are – For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. The popular acronym for these conjunctions is FANBOYS.

- Mary wanted to perform at the concert tonight, but her health did not permit her.* (joining two independent clauses)
- Samuel went to Paris to see the Eifel Tower and to write his thesis.* (Joining two “to verb” phrases)

2. Subordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions join a clause to another to communicate the full meaning of the sentence. They may provide a necessary transition between the two ideas in two clauses in the sentence. This transition can indicate a time, a place or a cause and effect relationship.

- a. *The teacher will announce the date of assessment once all the students submit their projects.*
- b. *John watched his favorite TV show after he finished his project.*
- c. *Since Amy was getting late for the concert, she asked her friends to meet her directly at the venue.*

They may also reduce the importance of one clause to make the more important idea of the two obvious. The more important idea lies in the main clause, while the less important idea lies in the clause followed by the subordinating conjunction.

- a. *Although the day is pleasant, it does not look apt for picnic.*
- b. *As he saw his father approaching, Joe hung up the phone.*

3. Correlative Conjunctions

Some conjunctions are used in pairs. They connect two equal grammatical entities. These conjunctions are Either...Or, Neither...Nor, Not Only...But Also, Both...And, etc. Always make sure that the entities following the two conjunctions are grammatically and logically parallel to each other.

- *Amy not only baked the cake but also cooked the sumptuous meal.*
Entities parallel – Verb phrases = “baked the cake” and “cooked the sumptuous meal”.
- *The teacher cares both about the physical development of the students and about their mental development.*
Entities parallel – prepositional phrase = “about the physical development of the students” and “about their mental development”.

Articles

Articles are a kind of modifier that modifies noun entities. Their modification denotes whether we are talking about a specific entity or a non-specific entity and hence can be divided into two categories:

Indefinite Article

‘A’ and ‘an’ are called the indefinite articles because they each refer to an object that is not specific. These two articles are used only with singular noun entities. For example:

1. My mother gave me an apple and a banana for breakfast today.

2. Toby has a cat whom he calls Riki.

Whether to use “a” or “an” before a noun entity depends upon the sound of that entity. If the noun entity begins with a vowel sound, we use “an” before it. For example: an apple, an ocean, an honest man, an MBA, etc.

If the noun entity begins with a consonant sound, we use “a” before it. For example: a bat, a horse, a university, a useful article, etc.

Definite Article

“The” is called the definite article as it refers to a specific noun entity. “The” can be used with both singular and plural noun entities. For example:

- a. *The man in the blue shirt is my school friend.*
- b. *The pens that you gave me yesterday are not there in my bag.*

The Definite Article is used in several cases. Here are a few of the most commonly used scenarios:

1. When we talk about a particular person or thing, or one already referred to. Note that the context clearly indicates this specific noun. For example:
 - a. *The book you want is not available now.*
 - b. *The movie is doing really well.*
2. When a singular noun is meant to represent a whole class/species. For example:
 - a. *The dog is a very faithful pet.*
 - b. *The bamboo is a kind of grass.*
3. Before some proper names, such as the names of oceans and seas, rivers, deserts, mountain-ranges, groups of islands, a few countries that have “republic” or “kingdom” in their names. For example:
 - a. *The Himalayas have some very difficult trekking tracks.*
 - b. *The Nile is the longest river of the world.*
4. Before the names of certain books. For example: *the Iliad, the Bible, etc.*
5. Before the names of things that are unique. For example: *the sun, the earth, etc.*

6. With superlatives. For example: *the best presentation, the most extraordinary game*, etc.
7. Before musical instruments. For example: *Krishna plays the flute*.
8. With words representing the rank of a number with respect to some order, in particular order or position (i.e. first, second, third, etc.). For example:
 - a. *Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, died a few days ago.*
 - b. *I love the eighth chapter of this novel.*
9. Before the adjective when the noun is understood. For example:
 - *In this country the rich (people) get richer and the poor (people) get poorer.*
10. As an adverb with comparatives. For example:
 - *The more, the merrier.*
11. Before the adjectives when they are followed by a proper noun. For example: *the holy Bible, the great Caesar*, etc.