



# FOUNDATIONS OF GMAT GRAMMAR



## VERBAL LIVE PREP

Pre-requisite article for  
SC1: How to Approach Sentence Correction

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## NOUNS

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

*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

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### CONCRETE & ABSTRACT NOUNS

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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 – see, touch, taste, smell, & hear. E.g. all nouns in the sentence above are concrete nouns.

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

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### PROPER & COMMON NOUNS

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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 above sentence, the nouns ‘Tom’, ‘California’, and ‘Cairo’ are all proper nouns since they are the names of person or place.

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

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### SINGULAR AND PLURAL NOUNS

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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.

**Singular** means one. A noun in its native form is singular. e.g. – ship.

**Plural** means more than one.

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

- ship is singular, ships is plural
- injury is singular, injuries is plural

Certain other nouns can be converted into plural by changing the spelling. E.g.

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

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## COUNTABLE AND UN-COUNTABLE NOUNS

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

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### WHAT IS COUNTABLE NOUN?

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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 'person' is a countable noun because:

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

By the same reasoning as above, words such as 'thing', 'job', 'coin', 'story' etc. are Countable Nouns.

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### WHAT IS AN UN-COUNTABLE NOUN?

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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 a non-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 a non-countable noun because:

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

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By the same reasoning as above, words such as 'stuff', 'furniture', 'money', 'rice', 'anger' are uncountable nouns.

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### HOW CAN I DETERMINE IF A NOUN IS COUNTABLE OR UN-COUNTABLE?

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A noun is countable noun if:

- It can be counted as 1 word, 2 words, 3 words
- It has a plural form

A noun is un-countable noun if

- It cannot be counted as 1 word, 2 words, 3 words
- It does not have a plural form

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### WHAT ADJECTIVES CAN BE USED WITH COUNTABLE AND UN-COUNTABLE NOUNS?

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Quantity adjectives such as 'few', 'number', 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 a non-countable noun. Similarly you can say 'number of songs'; but you can't say 'number of music'.

Quantity adjectives such as 'less', 'amount' etc. can only be used with uncountable nouns. For example, you can say 'less music' because here 'music' is uncountable 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.

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## PRONOUNS

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Pronouns take the place of a noun to avoid repetition and to express the meaning of the sentence clearly. Since pronouns replace nouns, they also express name of person, place, or thing. E.g.

1: Teacher warned the students doing the group assignment that the students 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 warned the students doing the group assignment that they 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 the sentence is clumsy and is difficult to comprehend. On the other hand in sentence 2, pronouns are used in place of the nouns and the sentence becomes so much more precise and clear.

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## TYPES OF PRONOUNS

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There are 5 types of pronouns.

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### PERSONAL PRONOUN

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

- She slept before the sun set.
- They left the meeting early to attend an gala event.

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### SUBJECT CASE PRONOUNS – I, YOU, SHE, HE, IT, WE, THEY

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

- Assign the task to her.
- I need to meet them.

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### OBJECT CASE PRONOUNS – ME, YOU, HER, HIM, IT, US, YOU, THEM

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

- Her share of chocolate is almost over

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- Their books are torn

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### POSSESSIVE CASE PRONOUNS – MY, HIS, HER, THEIR, ITS

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### RELATIVE PRONOUNS

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

- This is the book **that** contains the details of the experiment.
- The barren land, **which** has not been cultivated since ages, belongs to an old couple, **who** cannot hire any help.

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### INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

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

- **Everyone** has the right to vote in this country.
- **Many** people vote in the primary elections.

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### DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

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

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

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### REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

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

- I like to do my tasks myself.
- They themselves cannot handle the situation.

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### SINGULAR AND PLURAL PRONOUNS

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



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## VERBS

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

On several occasions, verbs instead of presenting action of the subject, simply connect the subject to some other additional information about the subject. In such cases they are called linking verbs.

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## LINKING VERBS

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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 **became** very happy.

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

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## HOW TO RECOGNIZE LINKING VERB?

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**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.**

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For example:

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

Let's replace "looked" with "is" – The question is difficult. This makes all 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.

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**BASE FORM OF VERB**

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The base verb is the simplest form of verb 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)

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**ALL VERB TENSES ARE CREATED FROM THE BASE FORM OF THE VERB.**

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They can either be created by adding some helping verbs before the base form of verb or by changing the verb itself. For example:

- run – will run, is running, ran

Here to create future tense and present continuous tense we added helping verbs "will" and "is" but to create simple past tense we changed the form of verb to "ran".

- laugh – will laugh, is laughing, laughed

Here again we added helping verbs to create the first two tenses. 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 determined 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 the helping verbs.

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## HELPING VERBS

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A verb can consist of more than one word. In such cases, there is one base 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/have/had been, can/could, may/might, will/would, shall/should.

Let’s take a few sentences here:

- The president is still 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.

In this sentence, “working” is only part of the verb. But the complete verb here is “has been working” where “has been” are the helping verbs without which the ing form of 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 past tense verb with “did”. For example:

- The flower did not bloom in windy weather. Correct.
- 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.

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## VERB TENSES

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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.

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### PRESENT TENSE

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

1. Harry goes to a wizard school.
2. Ria is working hard on her project.

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

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#### SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

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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:

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

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#### PRESENT PROGRESSIVE/CONTINUOUS TENSE

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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 present continuous. Let’s take examples here:

1. Stella **is explaining** her project to the investors.
2. The managers **are looking** for people for a number of vacant posts in the company.
3. 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, they would not qualify as verbs in the absence of the helping verbs “is”, “are”, and “am” respectively. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action.

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**HENCE, IN PRESENT CONTINUOUS TENSE, THE VERB-ING WORD  
MUST BE PRECEDED BY IS/ARE/AM.**

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### PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

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This tense is used to denote two kinds of action, action

1. that has finished in the immediate past. For example:
  - She **has** just **finished** her breakfast.
  - They **have** just **gone** out.
2. that has finished in the past but the effect of which continues in the present. For example:
  - The recession **has made** many people jobless.
  - Many students **have applied** for travel concession.
3. whose time is not given and is not known.
  - Johnny **has visited** Europe.
  - **have read** all the Harry Potter books.
4. that started in the past and is continuing up to the current moment. Such sentences are generally written with “since” or “for phrases”.
  - I **have known** him since 1980s.
  - 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 participle form. The verbs in all the above mentioned examples follow this structure.

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**SO “HAS” OR “HAVE” TOGETHER WITH THE PARTICIPLE FORM OF  
VERB MAKES THE PRESENT PERFECT TENSE.**

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

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

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### PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

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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:

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

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### PAST TENSE

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

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

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

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#### SIMPLE PAST TENSE

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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:

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

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#### PAST PROGRESSIVE/CONTINUOUS TENSE

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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 tense is also 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. Let’s take examples here:

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

The verbs in all the above three sentences are “was playing”, “were looking”, and “was reading”. Notice that if we used only “playing”, “looking”, or “reading” in these sentences, they would not

qualify as verbs in the absence of the helping verbs “was”, “were”, and “was” respectively. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action.

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**HENCE, IN PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE, THE VERB-ING WORD MUST BE PRECEDED BY WAS/WERE.**

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### PAST PERFECT TENSE

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

- I **had met** Julia before she moved to England.
- My great grandfather **had given** this watch to my grandfather before he died.

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 participle form. The verbs in the above mentioned examples follow this structure. So “had” together with the participle form of verb makes the past perfect tense.

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

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

### PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

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This tense is used to present an action that started sometime before a certain point 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:

- When Prof Roy joined the institute, Prof Sen **had already been teaching** there for six years.
- At that time, he **had already been working** on his fifth book for three months.

### FUTURE TENSE

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

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

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

### SIMPLE FUTURE TENSE

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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.

- I think John **will also participate** in the annual marathon this time.
- Mary **will be** excellent in her singing recital.

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### FUTURE PROGRESSIVE/CONTINUOUS TENSE

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This tense is used to show an action that will begin in 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 a future tense helping verb to create the verb in future continuous tense. Let’s take examples here:

- Roy **will be playing** football with his younger brother.
- The managers **will 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, they would not qualify as verbs in the absence of the helping verbs “will be” or “shall be”. These helping verbs actually show the tense of the action. Hence, in present continuous tense, the verb-ing word **MUST BE PRECEDED** by will/shall be.

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### FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

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

- I **will have finished** my breakfast when he comes to pick me 8 am tomorrow.
- The authorities **will have released** the results by tomorrow evening.

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### FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

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This tense is used to present an action that will be in progress over a period of time that will end in the future. For example:

- When Prof Roy arrives at the meeting, Prof Sen **will have** already **been finishing** his speech.
- By the winters this year, he **will have been working** on his fifth novel.



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## ADJECTIVES

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Adjectives are the words that describe or modify nouns or pronouns. They do so by answering questions such as these about the entity they modify – What kind is it? How many are there? Which one is it? 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”.

- Every cloud has a **silver** lining.

This famous proverb contains the adjective “silver” that modifies the noun “cloud”. This word defines the color of the cloud.

- 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 some more information about the entity that they describe. Now in the examples above we saw single words that act as adjectives. However, phrases and clauses can also act as adjectives.

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### ADJECTIVES – WORDS, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES

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We learned that [adjectives](#) are the 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 edibles required for the guests, “vegetable and cheese” and “broccoli chicken” refer to their kind. Notice that both the adjectives are **phrases**.

- The monkeys **with black face and long tail** are still a menace in some parts of Delhi.

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase “with black face and long tail” describes the noun entity the “monkeys”. It describes what kind of monkey is a menace. 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 *Spiderman* print on it”. So in this sentence this entire **clause** acts as an adjective and describes the umbrella.

So as you saw in the above three example sentences, adjectives provide some more information about the entity that they describe and adjectives can be a single word or 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.

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## ADJECTIVES – FOR COMPARISONS

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We learned that adjectives are used to describe another noun or pronoun. Adjectives can also be used to present comparison. And when adjectives are used in that role, they should be used in the appropriate comparative or superlative forms.

When comparison between 2 entities is made, comparative form of adjective

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## COMPARATIVE FORM

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This form should be used when 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 do both together. For example:

1. Jacob has a **bigger** villa than Jack.
2. I prefer my crepes **thinner**.
3. My cat is certainly **lazier** than my dog.
4. The salary in corporate offices is **more handsome**.
5. Some flowers are **more colorful** than others even if they belong to the same family.
6. Religious scripture always teach the commoners to be **more compassionate** towards every living being.

## SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

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This form should be used when 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” to the end of the adjective or “most” or “least” before it. Remember that we cannot do both together.

1. Jason has the **biggest** villa in this block.
2. Gina’s is the **thickest** exercise book in the class.
3. Kim selected the **crispiest** bacons for her breakfast.
4. For Jason, his grandmother is the **most gorgeous** woman in the world.
5. This is the **most colorful** rainbow I have even seen.
6. The stories that Harry tells are **least believable**.

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

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## ADVERBS

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Adverbs are the 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 examples:

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

In this sentence, the adverb “quickly” modifies the verb “grabbed” by defining the How aspects 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” refers to the adjective “dark”. How dark was the room? It was completely dark.

- Ria **happily** accepted the new project that was the gateway for her promotion.

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

- Ria **very** happily accepted the new project that was the gateway for her promotion.

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.

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## HOW ARE ADVERBS FORMED?

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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 adjective that modify nouns. So you must not blindly consider any “ly” ending word to be 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, not, then, often, and seldom.

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

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## ADVERBS – WORDS, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES

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

- Ria **very happily** accepted the new project that was the gateway for her promotion.

In this sentence, the adverb “happily” describes the adverb “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 adjectives. 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 some 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.

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## ADVERBS – FOR COMPARISONS

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We learned that adverbs are used to describe another verb, adverbs, adjectives, or clauses. While describing these entities adverbs can also present comparison. And when they do, they should be used in the appropriate comparative or superlative forms.

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

- Jack goes to swim **more frequently** than his sister Jill.
- Jill is **less agile** than Jack.

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

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

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

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## PREPOSITIONS

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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 ends with a noun or a noun phrase.

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### PREPOSITIONS ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY NOUN

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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 in 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:

Place	Time	Movement
above	about	to
across	at	toward
after	by	through
against	during	throughout
along	since	round
among	till	past
around		
at		

before		
behind		
below		
beyond		
by		
down		



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## CONJUNCTIONS

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

Coordinating Conjunctions: These conjunctions join together nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, clauses, and propositional phrases. These conjunctions are – For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. In short, they are called **FANBOYS**.

- Mary wanted to perform tonight, but her health did not permit her. (Joining two independent clauses)
- Samuel went to Paris to visit the tourist places and to write his thesis. (Joining two “to verb” phrases).

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 time, place or cause and effect relationship.

- The teacher will announce the date of assessment **once** all the students submit their projects.
- John watched his favorite TV show **after** he finished his project.
- **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.

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

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 must be grammatically and logically parallel to each other.

- Amy **not only** baked cake **but also** cooked sumptuous meal.

Entities parallel – Verb phrases = “baked cake” and “cooked sumptuous meal”.

- The teacher cares both about the physical development of students and about their mental development.

Entities parallel – prepositional phrase = “about the physical development of students” and “about their mental development”.

## ARTICLES

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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

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'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:

- a. My mother gave me **an** apple and **a** banana for breakfast today.
- b. 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 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

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"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 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:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.

- iii. 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.
  
- iv. Before the names of certain books. For example: **the** Iliad, **the** Bible, etc.
  
- v. Before names of things unique of their kinds. For example: **the** sun, **the** earth, etc.
  
- vi. With superlatives. For example: the best presentation, **the** most extraordinary game, etc.
  
- vii. Before musical instruments. For example: Krishna plays **the** flute.
  
- viii. 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.
  
- ix. Before the adjective when the noun is understood. For example:
  - a. In this country **the** rich is getting richer and **the** poor is getting poorer.
  
- x. As an adverb with comparatives. For example:
  - a. **The** more, **the** merrier.
  
- xi. Before the adjectives when they are followed by a proper noun. For example: **the** holy Bible, **the** great Caesar, etc.