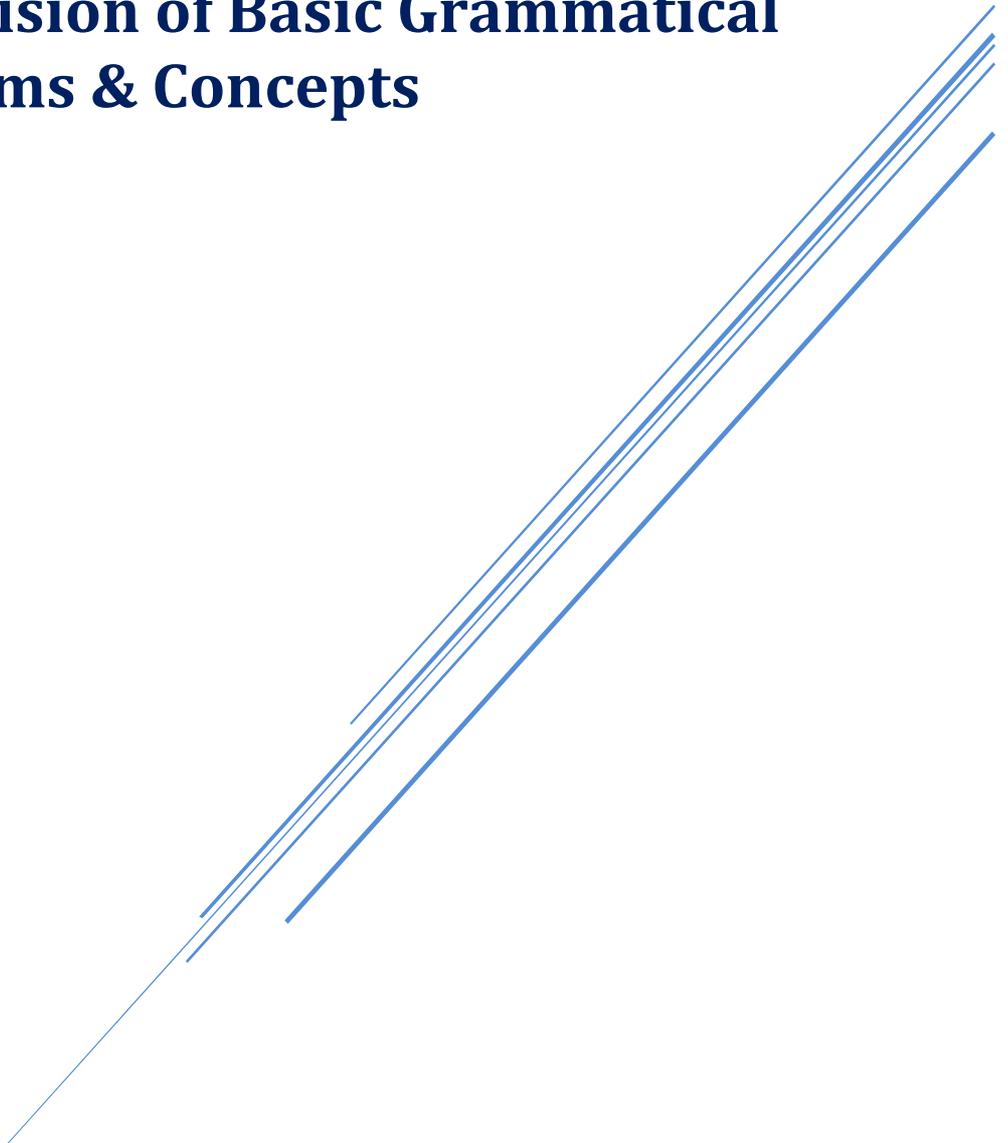


# **APPENDIX II. REVISION OF BASIC GRAMMATICAL TERMS & CONCEPTS**

**Revision of Basic Grammatical  
Terms & Concepts**



**(1) What are Parts of Speech?**

*Syntax*, or the arrangement of words in the sentence, is determined primarily by word *functions*, otherwise called *Parts of Speech*. So Parts of Speech are really the *functions* of words, phrases, or whole clauses within the larger context of the sentence. We can use words (or groups of words) in different ways:

	<i>Function</i>	<i>Questions they answer</i>
<b>Nouns</b>	name things	( <i>What? Who?</i> )
<b>Pronouns</b>	stand instead of nouns	( <i>What? Who?</i> )
<b>Adjectives</b>	describe (modify) nouns	( <i>Which? What kind?</i> ) [resemblance]
<b>Verbs</b>	name actions or states of being; apart from <i>naming</i> actions, they carry in them the meaning of time:	

A **verb** is that which, in addition to its proper meaning, *carries with it the notion of time* ... It is a sign of *something said of something else* (Aristotle).

**Adverbs** modify/ describe verbs (*How? Where? When? Why?* etc.)

**Conjunctions** join similar grammatical items (words, phrases, clauses, etc.)

**Prepositions** show relative 'positions' of things in space and time [contiguity]

**Interjections** expressions of feelings and attitudes interjected, or 'thrown into' the midst of a clause (they are our 'raisins in the cake')

Word-meanings in all languages have ways of doing these eight 'jobs' and, *depending on what they do* in the sentence, they will function as one or another part of speech:

**Parts of Speech are the functions of words in the sentence.**

Some words may have only one function (for example, *and* as a conjunction). Others may be used in different ways (for example, *fancy*, which is a noun in the phrase '*flights of fancy*', a verb in '*Fancy that!*' and an adjective in '*a fancy hat*'). Some other examples:

A characteristic *feature* (noun)

To *feature* in a film, etc. (verb)

A *feature* film (adjective)

Ann came in *early* (adverb)

She is an early bird! (adjective)

The divide between the rich and the poor is growing wider (nouns)

The poor people get poorer, whereas the rich elite get richer (adjectives)

Figure of speech (noun)

It is difficult to figure out his meaning (verb)

Figure skating (adjective)

The killer bicycles away (verb)

Barack Obama gave a 'get-down-to-business' speech (adjective)

Most of these are examples of single words doing different 'jobs.' However, *groups of words* can also 'team up' and work together as one unit, fulfilling one function (Re: the 'Barack Obama' speech example, where 4 words are used as one *adjective*, to describe the *kind* of speech he gave). Groups of words working together as one part of speech are called **phrases** or **clauses**.<sup>1</sup> What are they? We already know that both are groups of words. The difference between them is structural: phrases do not have their own subject-predicate patterns, whereas clauses do.

## (2) What is a Sentence?

A sentence is not just any group of words, such as 'beyond high mountains and deep blue seas,' for example; it's **a group of words that says something about something**. For example, '*I breathe*' is a sentence, because it says something about me.

A sentence, then, has 2 parts: **what we speak about** (its **Subject**) and **what we say about the Subject** (the **Predicate**, or the verb together with all the words that go with it). In the examples below, the Subjects are in bold, and the Predicates are underlined:

**Every word of language** is a generalisation.

**Every sentence** (*thought*) is a generalisation.

**(3) Basic Sentence Pattern (S/V/C).** In English, most declarative sentences follow the S/V/C pattern: the **Subject** + its modifiers (**what we speak about**) fill the first slot / the **Finite Verb** and its modifiers fill the second slot / and **Compliment** (optional) takes the third slot (S/V/C).

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<sup>1</sup> Re: notes below

Linguists usually refer to the third sentence component as Object (S/V/O). We will call it Compliment, because objects are not the only things that can fill that third slot:

1. **Zero Compliment:** I breathe. I think.
2. **Predicate Adjective (PA):** Life is interesting. Work is hard.
3. **Predicate Noun (PN):** Life is hope. Knowledge is Power.
4. **Direct/ Indirect Object (DO/IO):** Peter fries fish for his friend.

Together, the Verb and the Compliment make up the Predicate, or what we say about the Subject. The ‘heart’ of the predicate is the **finite verb**,<sup>2</sup> which may be separated from its Subject by modifiers (other words, phrases, or even clauses). It is important that the Subject-Verb Agreement is maintained despite the intervening words: without the Subject-Verb Agreement the sentence becomes ungrammatical (as in ‘Mary, a girl in my class, am clever’). Another example:

S                    / V /                    C (PN)  
**Ignorance / is / the mother of devotion.** (Robert Burton)

**Reminder:**

**Subject** is what we speak about and **Predicate** is what we say about the subject (V/C).

The **subject** of the sentence is the thing we talk about with all its modifiers, e.g.:

*The definition of experience is knowledge acquired too late.*

The **predicate** is made up of the finite verb (expressing action performed or received by its subject), together with all the words that go with that verb:

*The definition of experience is knowledge acquired too late.*

**(4) Four types of sentence structure:**

⇒ **Simple:** one S/V/C pattern: *All great truths begin as blasphemies.*



⇒ **Compound:** two or more S/V/C patterns (simple sentences), joined by a conjunction:

*You can twist perceptions, but reality won't budge.*

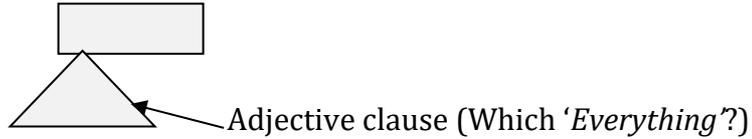
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<sup>2</sup> **Finite Verb** is a verb *defined* by its Subject (it has the Subject's number and person, because it about its Subject: I am, You are, He is, We are, They are, etc.)



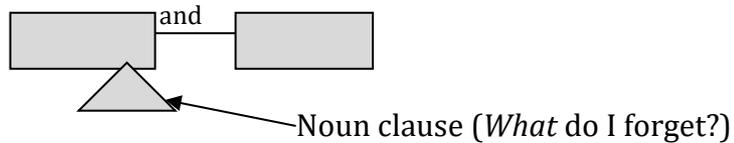
⇒ **Complex:** one main clause plus one or more dependent clause(s):

**Everything you can imagine is real.**



⇒ **Compound-complex:** at least two main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses:

*But I forget what I to say so wanted  
And fleshless thought dissolves in other shadows...*



**(5) What is the Difference between Phrases and Subordinate Clauses?** Both are groups of words that function as one part of speech (a noun, an adjective, or an adverb). In order to understand and diagram sentence structure correctly, we must be able to *recognize* clauses and differentiate them from *phrases*, which are not shown in our schematic clause diagrams.

The difference between them is *structural*: clauses have their own S/V/C pattern; phrases do not:

It is a mark of an educated mind *to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it*

(Aristotle)

**N.B.:** The phrase '*without accepting it*' is an adverb modifying the infinitive verb 'to entertain' within the framework of the larger phrase '*to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it*' which names that thing that the 'mark' is. Neither of these phrases has an S/V/C pattern.

/S<sub>1</sub>/ /S<sub>2</sub>/ /V<sub>2.1</sub>/ /C<sub>2.1</sub>/ /V<sub>2.2</sub>/ /C<sub>2.2</sub>/ /V<sub>1</sub>/ /C<sub>1</sub>/  
A man, *who has made a mistake and doesn't see it*, is making another mistake.

(Confucius, 'Success and Failure')

Here the clause who has made a mistake and doesn't see it is an Adjective describing the noun 'man' in the main clause.

**(6) The Difference between the Main and Subordinate Clauses:**

**Subordinate clauses** may function in three ways within the sentence mosaic:

⇒ **Noun clauses** name something/somebody in the main clause, i.e.:

The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible (Einstein)

⇒ **Adjective clauses** modify (describe) nouns in the main clause, for example:

*The person who knows how to laugh at himself will never cease to be amused.*

⇒ **Adverb clauses** describe actions in the main clause, i.e.,

*'We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are.'* (Anais Nin)

**Main** clauses have no such function; they are generalizations, correlating what they speak about with what they say about it (the Subject with its Verb and all the words that go with it):

⇒ 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' (Confucius)

**(7) What is the Finite Verb?** The finite verb is a verb that has a Subject which defines its form (*number* and *person*). Subject-Verb Agreement (conjugation, 'tie' between them) is what makes a sentence. Examples of some common verb **conjugations** (= the 'tying together' of the Subject and its Verb):

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Sing.	Plural
<b>Number</b>						
<b>Person</b>						
1 <sup>st</sup>	I am	We are	I do	We do	I have	We have
2 <sup>nd</sup>	You are	You are	You do	You do	You have	You have
3 <sup>rd</sup>	He/she/it is	They are	He/she/it does	They do	He has	They have

**Table 1 Verb conjugation**

**(8) What is the Infinitive Verb?** Infinitive verbs have no Subjects (or *doers*; they are just names of actions, as listed in dictionaries). Since they only name actions or states of being, they function as nouns, *names* of actions /states of being. They are usually preceded by the particle 'to' when used in sentences, except after modal verbs (can, must, may, might, could, should, would, etc.). Example (infinitives are in italics):

A diplomat is someone who can *tell* you *to go* to hell and *make* you happy *to be* on your way.

**(9) What are Modal Verbs?** Modal verbs do not express *concrete* actions; their meanings are *abstract* – they express our *attitudes* (what we think or feel about a situation), i.e., '*They should not have gone*' or '*They might get angry*.'

Our attitudes and opinions may concern:

**Ability** to do something – **can / be able / manage**

He can be very persuasive.  
We were able to breathe under water.  
He manages\* to resist the temptation every time.

**Advisability** of something – **should/ ought to**

We should go now, it's getting late.  
He ought to know better than take silly risks.

**Obligation /necessity** – **must/ have to / need to**

We must follow the law here.  
They have to follow the rules.  
I need\* to see the doctor / Need we go there? / He need not wait.

\***Need** can be used as an ordinary verb, meaning 'must have': *I need a new car*, etc.

**Possibility/ likelihood** – **could / can / might / may**

He could be there.  
He may not come.  
They might not come.

**Permission** – **can / may**

You may sit down now.  
You can go now.

**Requests – can / could / will / would**

Can you sit down, please?  
 Could you do it for me?  
 Will you keep quiet, please?  
 Would you please leave now?

**(10) What are the Auxiliary Verbs?** Auxiliary means ‘helping’; auxiliary verbs are verbs like DO, BE, and HAVE. Apart from their ‘concrete’ meanings, they also help us form:

1. **Negatives:** I do not see how we can do it.
2. **Questions:** Does he want to go?
3. **Complex verb tenses**, indicating continuing or completed aspects of the action: *to be waiting / to have waited / to have been waiting*

**(11) Compounding.** Compounding means joining two or more *similar* items by conjunctions ‘and,’ ‘or,’ ‘but,’ ‘either ... or,’ and ‘neither ... nor.’ These conjunctions are often used to join **equal grammatical constructions** – subject and subject, object and object, adjective and adjective, verb and verb, etc. Whatever grammatical construction appears before one of these words should also appear after it.

**(12) Ellipsis.** Ellipsis is simply the omission of understood words in a sentence (also called *omission* or *reduction*). For example,

[You] Help! [me]      or      [You] Put your thinking cap on [your head]!

**(13) English Verb Tenses:** Sentence analysis involves identifying the S/V/C patterns in sentences, and trying to figure out how all the words relate to each other / what ‘jobs’ they do. This means that we must be good at recognizing verbs, even when they are made up of several words (as in the complex tenses). Please review the structures and grammatical meanings of the various tenses of English verbs:

**1. Simple**

- a. Present Simple: regular, habitual actions; 2 forms: the base form and the ‘-s’-form (after 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjects)
- b. Past Simple: regular & irregular verbs, expressing non-specific actions in the past
- c. Future Simple: Auxiliary BE forms (will/shall) + base form of the verb; refer to any future actions.

2. **Continuous:** **BE + Present Participle** (*-ing*-form of the verb), i.e., I am working, You are working, He is working, etc.; I was working, We were working, etc.; I will be working, We shall be working, etc.; Continuous tenses express **continuing** actions at a point in time (Present, Past, or future)
3. **Perfect** Tenses relate two actions; the result (effect) of the first action is present (felt) at the time of the other action, i.e., I have seen this man before, We had expected this to happen, They will have arrived at 4 pm, etc.; The general 'formula' for the Perfect tenses:

**HAVE + Past Participle**

4. **Perfect Continuous:** a 'cross' between the Perfect and Continuous tenses: they refer to completed actions at a point in time, but emphasize their duration (the time that they took happening), i.e., 'We *have been waiting* for you,' etc.

The general 'formula' for the Perfect Continuous tenses:

**HAVE + BEEN + Present Participle**

**(14) Passive Voice** of the Verb: The **Direct Object** of the verb's action becomes the **grammatical Subject** of the Verb:

<b>Simple:</b>	BE + Past Participle	We will be told to leave We are told to leave We were told to leave
<b>Continuous:</b>	BE + being + Past Participle	We are being told to leave We were being taken for fools!
<b>Perfect:</b>	HAVE + BEEN + Past Participle	We will have been taken for fools We have been told to go We had been taken for fools!

The Future Continuous verbs are rarely used in the Passive; Perfect Continuous constructions, likewise, become too clumsy to be used in the Passive Voice.

The Passive is used when the doer (subject) of the action is either not known or is unimportant/ irrelevant: the focus shifts to the action *per se*. For example,

A car **is stolen** every minute in big cities.  
Water **is added** to the mixture, etc.

**(15) Etymology of 'recursion'*****Recursion***

1. A programming method in which a routine calls itself. Recursion is an extremely powerful concept, but it can strain a computer's memory resources. Some programming languages, such as LISP and Prolog, are specifically designed to use recursive methods.

***Mathematics:***

1. An expression, such as a polynomial, each term of which is determined by application of a formula to preceding terms
2. A formula that generates the successive terms of a recursion

**Etymology:**

Late Latin *recursiō*, *recursiōn-*, a running back, from Latin *recursus*, past participle of *recurrere*, to run back

***Recur***

1. To happen, come up, or show up again or repeatedly.
2. To return to one's attention or memory.
3. To return in thought or discourse.
4. To have recourse: *recur to the use of force*.

**Etymology:**

Latin *recurrere*: re-, re- + *currere*, to re-run