Strengthen English

GRAMMAR

FOR SECONDARY LEVELS

SAMPLE

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PART ONE

PARTS OF SPEECH

Parts of speech in English include **nouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, **adverbs**, **pronouns**, **prepositions**, **conjunctions** and **interjections**. Some grammarians suggest two other parts: **articles** and **numerals**, which can actually be classified under '**determiners**'. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are known as '**content words**'; prepositions, conjunctions and determiners are '**function words**'. The former are meaning-carrying words; the latter are meaning-carrying to a certain extent, but their main role is to help relate one element to another in a sentence.

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TOPIC 1 Types of Nouns

A **noun** is a name for a person, animal, thing, place or concept. There are five types of nouns: common, proper, material, collective and abstract.

(a) **Common nouns**

Common nouns are the general names of people, animals, things and places. 'Pupil', 'lady', 'hen', 'duck', 'pen', 'desk', etc. are common nouns.

(b) **Proper nouns**

'John', 'China', 'London', 'Harvard University', 'Reader's Digest', etc. are proper nouns, which refer to specific persons, places and things. The first letter of such a noun is capitalized.

(c) **Material nouns**

Material nouns usually refer to raw materials such as 'sugar', 'flour' and 'oil', or to natural elements such as 'water', 'air' and 'sand'.

(d) **Collective nouns**

When a noun stands for a number of persons or things as a single unit, it is a collective noun, such as 'jury', 'committee', 'crowd', etc.

(e) **Abstract nouns**

A large number of nouns refer to qualities such as 'love', 'hatred', 'honesty' and 'sincerity', and conditions such as 'poverty' and 'sickness'. Such nouns are abstract in nature and are therefore called abstract nouns.

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Exercise 1.1

In each of the following sentences, indicate if the underlined noun is a common, proper, material, collective or abstract noun.

Example: Mr Brown is my English teacher.
Answer: Proper noun

1. The committee will meet next Monday.

2. Experience is the best teacher.

3. Can we live without air?

4. Singapore is a small but well-developed country.

5. Our class consists of 25 students.

6. Have you read any novel by Thomas Hardy?

7. How many members are there in your literary club?

8. Lions are large and strong.

9. Procrastination is the thief of time.

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10. Asians eat a lot of rice.

11. What newspapers do you read every day?

12. To do him justice, he is a kind-hearted man.

13. Bees produce honey for us.

14. Please arrange the tables in good order.

15. Is the Chinese badminton team the strongest in the world?

16. Many students received financial aid from the Lee Foundation.

17. Many people succeed through hard work.

18. Mrs Lee was pleased to see her granddaughters.

19. David often drinks coffee without sugar.

20. Most hawkers live simply but happily.

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SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

In this part, there will be topics on sentence formation, types of sentences, types of phrases, the active voice and the passive voice, the direct speech and the indirect speech, subject-verb concord, sequence of tenses, phrasal verbs, sentence transformation, sentence synthesis, common errors, and the like.

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TOPIC 31 Sentence Formation

A sentence is made up of two parts: the **subject** and the **predicate**. These two parts combine to make a complete sentence. What are the subject and the predicate?

In a normal sentence, the subject appears at the beginning of the sentence, while the predicate comes after it.

The subject consists of one item or several items. The predicate also consists of one item or several items, as shown in the following chart.

Subject	Predicate
1. Birds	sing.
2. The sun	shines.
3. Rumours	spread fast.
4. The warden of the building	checked every visitor with great care.

The subject is often a noun or noun-equivalent.

In (1) to (3), the subjects 'birds', 'the sun' and 'rumours' are all nouns.

In (4), the subject 'the warden' is a noun with an adjective phrase 'of the building'.

As for the predicate, it may have one item or more. If it has only one item, that item must be the verb.

The simplest sentence is therefore a sentence with 'one subject + one verb'.

When the predicate consists of several items, the main item must be the verb; other items may be the object if the verb is transitive, an adverb / adverb equivalent, or both the object and the adverb / adverb equivalent.

In (1), the predicate is the verb 'sing'.
In (2), the predicate is the verb 'shines'.
In (3), the predicate is the verb 'spread' and the adverb 'fast'.

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In (4), the predicate is the verb 'checked', the object 'every visitor' and the adverb phrase 'with great care'.

The verb may be a linking verb. If so, it requires a complement, which may be one of the following.

(a) An adjective / adjective phrase (e.g. The sky becomes dark. / Our economy is in good condition.)

(b) A noun (e.g. Helen is a singer.)

(c) A pronoun (e.g. The traitor is you.)

(d) A present participle (e.g. This morning's lesson was boring.)

(e) A past participle (e.g. Irene seems worried.)

(f) An adverb of place (e.g. The guest is here.)

(g) An adverb phrase of place (e.g. Who is in the kitchen?)

The above complements are subjective since they say something more about each subject. Complements, however, can be objective when they refer to objects and make the meaning of each object complete.

Examples:

1. My parents named her Lucy.
2. The judge found him guilty.
3. William kept us waiting.
4. I believe him to be honest.
5. I find this book of great value.

In (1), the objective complement is a noun 'Lucy' referring to the object 'her'.

In (2), it is an adjective 'guilty' referring to the object 'him'.

In (3), it is a present participle 'waiting' referring to the object 'us'.

In (4), it is an infinitive 'to be honest' referring to the object 'him'.

In (5), it is an adjective phrase 'of great value' referring to the object 'book'.

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Exercise 31.1

In the following sentences, pick out the subject and the predicate. If the subject consists of several items, underline the main item. If the predicate consists of several items, underline the verb.

Example: A good master never ill-treats his servants.

Answer: Subject: A good master Predicate: never ill-treats his servants.

1. A good car requires constant maintenance.

2. Wounds caused by words are hard to cure.

3. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.

4. Experience has taught us useful lessons.

5. A great fortune in the hands of a fool is a great misfortune.

6. The streets of some towns are known for their cleanliness.

7. One man's meat is another man's poison.

8. The country life suited me nicely.

9. Her mother has been teaching her cookery.

10. William, quite pale with fright, rushed into the room.

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Exercise 31.2

Complete each of the following sentences with a subject and a predicate.

1. The _____ singing a song on the stage _____ my sister.
2. _____ _____ _____ swimming as the weather is fine.
3. Instead of going to play, _____ _____ at home studying.
4. To tell you the truth, _____ _____ to the questions _____ totally wrong.
5. In the rain, _____ _____ _____ quickly to pick up the balls.
6. _____ _____ one of the members of the Library Club.
7. This morning, _____ _____ a letter to him.
8. Yesterday, _____ _____ John captain of our debating team.
9. _____ _____ a sparrow this morning.
10. _____ _____ _____ a tall tree.

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EXERCISE 1.1

1. Collective noun
2. Abstract noun
3. Material noun
4. Proper noun
5. Collective noun
6. Proper noun
7. Common noun
8. Common noun
9. Abstract noun
10. Material noun
11. Common noun
12. Abstract noun
13. Material noun
14. Common noun
15. Collective noun
16. Proper noun
17. Common noun
18. Common noun
19. Material noun
20. Common noun

EXERCISE 2.1

1. leaves; branches
2. women; babies
3. boys; photographs
4. farmers; geese
5. undergraduates; theses
6. children; answers
7. teachers; formulae/formulas
8. men; cigarettes
9. answers; partners
10. singers; fans

EXERCISE 3.1

1. baggage
2. Confusion
3. expertise
4. welfare
5. stationery; quality
6. clothing
7. punctuation
8. machinery; personnel
9. progress; work
10. police; evidence; misbehaviour

EXERCISE 3.2

(Other suitable answers are acceptable.)

1. Most good knives are made of steel. (UNC)
2. There are wild animals in the jungle. (C)
3. Have you ever seen a police patrol boat? (C)
4. I like to travel by train. (C)
5. We use a lot of paper every day. (UNC)
6. All of them are hardworking people. (C)
7. Please turn on the light. (C)
8. Helen needs more practice in grammar. (UNC)
9. Iron is a useful metal. (UNC)
10. There is a sheep outside the gate. (C)
11. I have bread and cheese for breakfast. (UNC)
12. Do you have enough money for the trip? (UNC)
13. Sam was rewarded for his bravery. (UNC)
14. Our friendship started three years ago. (UNC)
15. Why is there a crowd of people outside his office? (C)
16. We eat rice every day. (UNC)
17. This book is based on the new school syllabus. (C)
18. Noelle is a girl of great intelligence. (UNC)
19. Do you like to catch fish? (C)
20. There is still some food left. (UNC)

EXERCISE 4.1

1. a little
2. a few
3. few
4. a little
5. a few
6. little
7. few
8. a few
9. little
10. a few

EXERCISE 5.1

1. love (T)
2. smiled (INT)
3. came (INT)
4. feel (INT)
5. drinks (T)
6. go (INT)
7. wrote (T)
8. ran (INT)
9. like (T)
10. listen (INT)

EXERCISE 5.2

1. cold
2. teacher
3. in the field
4. moody
5. better
6. strange
7. fragrant
8. good
9. a singer
10. a spinster
11. delicious
12. out
13. timid
14. an engineer
15. in the kitchen

EXERCISE 5.3

1. M
2. L
3. A
4. M
5. L
6. M
7. L
8. A
9. A
10. M
11. A
12. L
13. A
14. M
15. L
16. L
17. M
18. L
19. A
20. L
21. A
22. M
23. L
24. A
25. M

EXERCISE 6.1

1. Could you tell me the time, please?
2. Would you help me push the car?
3. Might I borrow your eraser for a while?
4. Could I take a look at your notebook, please?
5. Would you close the door behind you, please?
6. Could I interrupt you for a moment?
7. Might I have a word with you?
8. Could l borrow your dictionary for a moment?
9. Would the more experienced staff be promoted?
10. Might we employ one more office boy?
11. Could it be done by tomorrow?
12. Would you mind advising us or even guiding us?

EXERCISE 7.1

1. May
2. May; may
3. May; may
4. May; may
5. might
6. might; might
7. May; might
8. might; might

EXERCISE 8.1

1. must
2. need not
3. did not need to
4. need not
5. must
6. did not need to
7. need not
8. must
9. must
10. need not

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