

The Cambridge Dictionary of

English Grammar

PAM PETERS

CAMBRIDGE

The Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar

The most up-to-date A–Z resource available for English grammar, this dictionary provides concise, practical definitions and explanations of hundreds of terms. Each term includes examples and cross-references to related concepts. All the currently accepted terms of grammar are included, as well as older, traditional names, controversial new coinages, and items from the study of other languages. The dictionary pinpoints differences in the use of the same terminology, e.g. *adjunct*, *complement*, *verb phrase*, as well as alternative terms used for much the same concept, e.g. *noun phrase*, *nominal group*; *agentless passive*, *short passive*. It provides a wealth of examples, as well as notes on the relative frequencies of grammatical alternatives, e.g. *will* and *shall*. It also draws attention to some of the differences between spoken and written English grammar.

PAM PETERS is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University, Sydney.

The Cambridge Dictionary of
English Grammar

PAM PETERS

Macquarie University, Sydney



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521863193

© Cambridge University Press 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by Bell and Bain Ltd

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Peters, Pam.

The Cambridge dictionary of English grammar / Pam Peters, Macquarie University, Sydney.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-521-86319-3

1. English language--Grammar--Dictionaries. I. Title.

PE1097.P48 2013

428.2'03--dc23 2012031738

ISBN 978-0-521-86319-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

How to use this book vii

Introduction 1

The Dictionary 5

References 388

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Lookup

The entries in this book are of two kinds, focusing on:

- 1 grammatical terms, such as **adverb**, **intransitive verb**, **matrix clause**,
- 2 common function words of English grammar, such as: *AND, BE, BY, HAVE, I/ME, OF, WILL/SHALL*; as well as grammatical suffixes: *-ed, -ing, -ly*.

The first set is much larger, including terms at all levels in the grammatical hierarchy, from those referring to word classes (**noun**, **verb**), and their various subclasses (**count noun**, **mass noun**; **auxiliary verb**, **modal verb**), to types of phrases, clauses, and sentences (**matrix clauses**, **complex sentences**, **tag questions**), as well as some aspects of discourse structure and information delivery, such as **topical progression**. There are also entries for well-known abbreviations of grammatical terms, e.g. **NP** to take you to the entry which deals with **noun phrase**.

The second type of entry, headed by a function word or suffix, helps to connect with the relevant grammatical entry if you are unsure of the terminology. So the entry for *A/AN* identifies it as the **indefinite article**, its name in traditional grammar, and also introduces its name in contemporary grammar: **determiner**. The entries for high-frequency prepositions such as *BY* and *OF* discuss the variety of grammatical functions which they perform (*BY* in expressing the agent for the **passive voice**, as in *struck by lightning*, *OF* in formulating certain types of **apposition**: *the city of Zurich*), and readers are cross-referenced to them.

Within entries

Longer entries are prefaced by a boxed menu, enumerating the various grammatical aspects of the head term under distinctive headings. These same headings are used to flag each individual subsection of the entry below.

Type contrasts

Bold typeface is used for all the headwords at the start of each entry. Bold roman is used for the grammatical terms, and bold italic capitals for the function words. For both types of headword, the use of bold goes with a slightly larger

typeface than that used elsewhere in the entry. The terms bolded at the end of entries or sections within them are cross-references to other entries in the book.

Bold type is also used occasionally within entries, when terminology is the focus of discussion. Bold italic type is used within entries to:

- identify compound forms of the head term, e.g. *formal agreement, notional agreement*;
- mention alternative terminology, e.g. *concord* as an alternative for **agreement**;
- introduce terms for related concepts, e.g. *number, gender*.

Light italics are used for words, phrases, and sentences presented as examples, whether within the line of text, or set off from it. The word or words underlined in the examples set off illustrate the grammatical term/concept under discussion. So the underlining in *They insisted that he write a formal letter of complaint* illustrates a use of the **mandative subjunctive**.

In-text references

Supporting references are generally formulated in line with the author–date convention, for ease of reference to the consolidated list at the back of the book. Where the title of the book is pertinent, it may also be used in short-title form and is cross-referenced to the authors in the consolidated list.

INTRODUCTION

The *Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar* is designed for people who want to understand grammatical terms and concepts while not being specialists in grammar. That includes classroom teachers of English who grapple with grammatical terms and concepts as part of language pedagogy, and who need especially to decode the newer terms which are gradually replacing those of traditional grammar. Teachers in training need help with grammar terms of all kinds. Their schooling may not have included much formal grammar, but their undergraduate reading may well take them over the border between language pedagogy and linguistic research. They need a ready reference to find out where both older and newer grammatical terms come from, to understand their significance in language development, and their potential use in teaching English to first or second language learners.

Others whom this dictionary will serve are university students in English linguistics. For them grammar is not necessarily a central interest, though it impinges on various subdisciplines of linguistics, including discourse and conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, corpus linguistics. And of course it will allow anyone who has learned grammar in the past to keep up to date with present-day developments in English grammar. Those interested in the passionate public debates about the rights and wrongs of English usage will be able to interpret them from an independent grammatical perspective, and respond to the “grammar grouches.”

Coverage of grammatical terms and concepts

Since WWII and around the turn of the millennium, English has seen an explosion of fresh accounts of grammar and new grammatical paradigms. Grammatical researchers in most quarters of the English-speaking world have contributed, in some remarkable collaborations: between scholars in Britain and on the Continent in Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik's *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985); and between those on both sides of the Atlantic with Biber, Leech, Johansson, Conrad, and Finegan's *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999). Scholars from southern and northern hemispheres were involved in Huddleston, Pullum and a team of other authors in the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002); and there was cross-hemispheric collaboration in Halliday and Matthiessen's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2004).

These major millennial grammars have been taken as the reference set for this book, because they have influenced and will continue to influence grammatical thinking. They embrace different approaches to English grammar, giving different weight to syntactic and semantic criteria in their analyses, and to the interplay between grammar and discourse. Their respective terminologies and different perspectives on grammatical categories and concepts are discussed in many entries. Other grammatical paradigms and theories, from traditional grammar through structural and transformational–generative grammars to government–binding and lexicalism, are recognized with individual entries and mentioned elsewhere as relevant.

New terms and adaptation of older terms

Each of the millennial grammars contains much new terminology beyond that of traditional grammar, and as used in English dictionaries. All modern grammars recognize the need to find terms for grammatical functions to use alongside those of the traditional word classes. Thus *modifier* serves for the conventional function of *adjectives* and other words appearing prior to a noun, and *adjective* can be reserved strictly for words belonging to the class. Likewise *adjunct* is used for the adverbial function that may be embodied in adverbs or adverbial and prepositional phrases. Whole new word classes, e.g. *determiner*, are created out of subsets of older word classes, including numerals from the adjective class, demonstrative pronouns as used in *this/that book*, and the possessive forms of personal pronouns: *my, your, our, his, her*, etc. What were formerly *conjunctions* are now distinguished as *coordinators* and *subordinators*, along with post-traditional analysis of the various types of *coordination* and *subordination* (or *parataxis/hypotaxis*). Subclasses of *nouns* (*count* vs. *mass*) are identified by their behavior in the noun phrase, and subclasses of *verbs* (*auxiliary, copular, catenative*), on grounds of their syntax. But modern grammarians do not always agree on the constitution of word classes, their subclasses, and subsets, and the differences in their scoping of terms need to be discussed.

Apart from the mix of newly coined grammatical terms and repurposing of older ones, the *Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar* includes entries on phrases that mark the traditional concerns of prescriptive grammarians and usage pundits, e.g. *absolute, double negative, fused participle, split infinitive*. Such terms identify pressure points of English grammar which are of ongoing interest – grammatical ambiguities and anomalies which are now better understood, and recognized as natural sites for variable usage.

Terms of grammar and related areas of linguistics

The terms included in the *Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar* are drawn primarily from the areas of syntax and morphology as relevant to modern English grammar, but also from lexical semantics, orthography, and punctuation. Key

terms and concepts relating to information delivery and pragmatic aspects of communication are included, with reference to written as well as spoken discourse.

The topics raised by any given grammatical term are multifaceted, and the cross-references supplied should help to show how interconnected grammar is with language and communication at large. Readers are invited to take advantage of the cross-references to reinforce their grammatical knowledge, and to enjoy the interconnections.

Access to entries and their contents

The alphabetical organization of this book allows readers ready access to hundreds of grammatical terms and their best-known alternatives. The alternatives are cross-referenced to the major term, decided as far as possible by consensus among the four millennial grammars introduced above. Except for entries which are simple cross-references, each provides at least some identification of the term, with more or less extended discussion – much more than a standard one-sentence glossary.

Many entries in the *Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar* have a table up front listing the various meanings and applications of a term, and the different analytical perspectives put upon it. This helps to separate the older meaning(s) inherited from traditional grammar, and to show the term's fresh applications in modern grammars, as for *verb phrase*. Itemizing the alternative meanings is crucial where older terms are assigned to now recognized oppositions in syntax, e.g. the use of *modifier* to refer to optional dependencies and *complement* to obligatory ones.

Each application of the term is explained in accordance with the grammar(s) to which it belongs. Where there are very individual uses of terms, e.g. the use of *complement* in systemic–functional grammar, their unusualness is noted for the benefit of readers. But the dictionary aims to describe alternative conceptualizations of English grammar, not to pass judgment on them.

Most terms and concepts are illustrated with examples from natural language, as part of their identification and explanation. The examples are as regionally and stylistically neutral as possible, so as to be transparent to readers everywhere.

Corpus evidence and emergent grammar

The *Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar* makes use of data from corpus-based grammars, especially Biber et al. (1999), and other corpus-based research studies on individual topics of grammar. This data allows us to review the status and frequency of grammatical constructions in different regional varieties of English, as well as different registers and styles. Corpus data is used also to document the relative frequency of grammatical alternants, such as *will* and

shall, and the use of *not* versus *no* negation, where the first has become the dominant form in each case.

The changing relationships between alternatives like those draw attention to the way in which grammar is continually evolving, allowing new lexemes to replace older ones within the system, and new grammatical units such as complex prepositions and complex conjunctions to grammaticalize out of other elements of the lexicogrammar. They are all part of the emergent grammar of English which need to be documented at the turn of the third millennium.

Acknowledgments

Several colleagues in grammar and English linguistics have helped greatly in the shaping of the dictionary. I would like to thank Professor Bas Aarts (University College London) for his feedback on some early samples of the manuscript, and both Professor Kate Burridge (Monash University, Melbourne, Australia) and Professor Peter Collins (University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia) for their helpful reading of the whole manuscript: their suggestions and examples have made it all the better. Thanks are due also to Andrew Winnard, my commissioning editor at Cambridge University Press, and to Anna Oxbury for her care in copy-editing the manuscript. But my greatest thanks and debt of gratitude are to John Peters, for the countless shared pleasures in the good things of life while the book was in preparation.

A

A

In syntactic analysis this capital letter is the symbol for any obligatory **adjunct** of the verb, or other **adverbial** constituent of the clause. See further under **adjunct**, sections 2, 3, and 4; **adverbial**, sections 1 and 2; and **clause**, section 1.

A/AN

These are the two forms of the **indefinite article**, which serve as **determiner** for an indefinite noun phrase, as underlined in:

We saw a man riding a unicycle through the forest.

Let's make it an evening at the opera in Sydney.

As in those examples, the indefinite article does not undertake to define the referent for the context. Rather it introduces a topic for further discussion. See further under **determiner**, section 1; and **given and new**.

The choice between *A* and *AN* depends on the first *sound* of the following word. If the word begins with a consonant sound (as does “man”), *A* is the form to use. If it begins with a vowel sound (as does “evening”), *AN* is normally used. Note that the word “unicycle” begins with a consonant sound “y,” and is therefore prefaced by *A*. The fact that the spelling of “unicycle” begins with a vowel letter is immaterial. This principle also applies in cases like “an hour” (because “hour” begins with a vowel sound), and “a history book” (because “history” begins with a consonant sound).

ablative absolute

In Latin grammar, the **ablative absolute** construction could stand within a clause while grammatically independent of it. Its independence is shown by the fact that all inflectable items in it (nouns, adjectives, etc.) are in the **ablative case**. Thus both words in the Latin tag *deo volente* (“God willing”) are in their ablative form. As the translation shows, its English counterpart (a nonfinite clause) can be used in much the same way, though there is no distinctive case marking to separate it from the rest of the sentence. See further under **absolute**, section 4; and **clause**, section 5.

ablative case

This is one of the six **cases** of nouns present in Latin grammar, but not in modern English. It marked a noun as having the meaning “by,” “with,” or “from” within the clause, often in relation to the verb. In Latin the **ablative** singular

ending for various classes of noun was *-o*, and thus *ipso facto* means “by that same fact.” See further under **case**, section 1.

absolute

- 1 **absolute adjective: three applications of the term**
 - 2 **absolute verb**
 - 3 **absolute pronoun**
 - 4 **absolute construction**
-

This word has been applied in multiple ways in English grammar, in relation to adjectives, verbs, pronouns, and constructions such as nonfinite clauses. Because of this, modern English grammarians generally avoid it. Yet older applications of **absolute** are still to be found in traditional grammar and in reference books that draw on it.

1 **Absolute adjective: three applications of the term**

- as a name for the base form in the *degrees of comparison*, for adjectives that can also be made comparative or superlative. Thus *big* is the *absolute form* for *bigger* and *biggest*. See further under **adjective**, section 3.
- as the traditional term for *nongradable adjectives* which do not permit any degrees of comparison. These include those which refer to the extreme points on a notional scale, e.g. *first*, *initial*, *primary*, and *final*, *last*, *ultimate*, as well as the notional midpoint, such as *medium*, *mediocre*. Others of the same type are:

<i>complete</i>	<i>countless</i>	<i>eternal</i>	<i>fatal</i>	<i>impossible</i>
<i>infinite</i>	<i>paramount</i>	<i>perfect</i>	<i>permanent</i>	<i>previous</i>
<i>simultaneous</i>	<i>supreme</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>unique</i>	<i>universal</i>

There are in fact many other nongradable adjectives, including defining and classificatory adjectives:

<i>absolute</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>classic</i>	<i>horizontal</i>	<i>ivory</i>
<i>second-hand</i>	<i>unprecedented</i>			

By their nature, these adjectives put something into a specific class (or a class of its own), which is by definition not to be compared. The most notorious *absolute adjective* is *unique*, but it is only contentious for those who insist that it has only a nongradable meaning. Large modern dictionaries recognize that it has both gradable and nongradable meanings.

- to refer to adjectives that serve as the head of a noun phrase. Fowler (1926) called this the *absolute use* of adjectives as nouns, for example:

<i>the brave</i>	<i>the elderly</i>	<i>the rich</i>	<i>the underprivileged</i>
<i>the very young</i>	<i>the young at heart</i>		

As the last two examples show, these noun-like adjectives can still be premodified by *very*, and can also be postmodified like nouns. They are normally prefaced by *the* and always construed in the plural when they refer to a category

of human being, despite the absence of plural marking. The same applies to adjectives of nationality which end in a sibilant sound, e.g.

the Dutch the English the French the Spanish

Yet when the absolute adjective refers to an abstract concept, e.g. *the nude* as an subject of art, it is construed in the singular:

The nude has been a recurrent artistic genre for centuries.

- Note that in modern grammars these adjective-headed noun phrases are referred to as **zero-headed** NPs. See further under **fused head**.

2 Absolute verb

This term was applied by Fowler (1926) to verbs which, though normally transitive, appear without a following object or adjunct. Compare the uses of “write” in:

We asked them to write a letter but they never wrote.

See further under **transitivity**, section 1.

3 Absolute pronoun

This term is used in some grammars such as Huddleston (1984) for the type of possessive pronoun, e.g. *MINE, HERS, OURS*, which stands as the head of a noun phrase. Most grammarians now call them **independent pronouns**. See further under **possessive pronoun**.

4 Absolute construction

Grammatical constructions are termed **absolute** when they are an independent structure within the syntax of the clause. They are typically nonfinite clauses appearing as the first constituent in the following:

All things considered, they were pretty well off.

That being so, I will put in an application.

Examples such as those are commonplaces of English discourse, often used for cohesive purposes to connect with a series of previous statements (see further under **cohesion**). Those created ad hoc by writers caught up in their narrative are sometimes castigated as **dangling participles** or **unattached phrases** (see further under **dangling participle**).

Absolute constructions were an accepted component of the clause in Latin grammar: see **ablative absolute**.

accusative

This term was taken over from Latin grammar by the first English grammarians in C17, to refer to the **case** of the object of a verb or preposition. In Latin and other languages, nouns typically carry a special **inflection** to show their case and thus their role within the clause or phrase. But in modern English, nouns have no special ending to distinguish object from subject: they are the same whether *the dog bit the man*, or *the man bit the dog*. The accusative case is only visible for English personal pronouns, as in *I love him* and *He loves me*.

With the lack of accusative inflections for modern English nouns, plus the fact that their function as **object** is only to be seen in their syntactic position

(following verb or preposition), grammarians such as Quirk et al. (1985) prefer to refer to the **accusative** as the **objective case**. Others such as Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) retain the term **accusative** where they refer to the distinctive case forms of the English personal pronouns. The downside is that the accusative forms of pronouns are then the ones used in English for direct as well as indirect objects (whose case in traditional grammar terms is the **dative**). See further under **case**, section 1; **inflection**, **object**, and **objective case**.

- See also **oblique**, sections 1 and 2.

acronym

A word or name formed out of the initial letters of a phrase is often called an **acronym**, e.g. *AIDS* (“auto-immune deficiency syndrome”), *WASP* (“White Anglo-Saxon Protestant”). In most cases, the acronym contains the first letter of each contributing word, though occasionally it involves the first two or three letters. For example, *modem* is an acronym formed from “modulator” and “demodulator.” The letters of an acronym may form one or more syllables, as in the examples above. Those whose letters generate words that conform to the phonotactic and orthographic patterns of English may come to be written in lower case (as with *laser*, *scuba*) and become words of the common language. Yet very few new words are formed by **acronymy**: it is the least common form of abbreviation (see further under **clipping**).

The term **acronym** is often extended to words and names formed out of the initial letters of a phrase, each of which is pronounced as a separate syllable, e.g. *IOU*, *IQ*, *IT*, *KO*. They may also be distilled out of a polysyllabic word, as with *PJs* from “pajamas,” *TV* from “television.” Those who prefer to distinguish these formations from the “true” acronym refer to this second type as an **initialism** or **alphabetism**. Some of them, e.g. *UFO*, are more often found as acronyms than in their full form (“unidentified flying object”). They are of course very frequent as abbreviations for multiword proper names, e.g. *BBC*, *UNESCO*, *WHO*.

active voice

See under **voice (1)**.

adjacency pair

This term refers to one of the essential structures of dialogue, i.e. a pair of turns, the first of which is a stimulus in the form of a question or proposal to initiate a topic; and the second a response to it:

Would you like a drink?

No thanks, I've just had coffee.

Let's get down to business then.

That's my reason for being here.

Adjacency pairs make use of interactive syntax (e.g. the interrogative formulation for a polite offer *would you like*; and the inclusive first person imperative *let's*).

These are the stuff of ordinary social conversation, with one speaker and another articulating a topic to get the exchange going and contribute to the conversational momentum. They express both the *interpersonal* function of language and an aspect of the *textual* function. See further under **metafunction of language**.

adjectival clause

See **relative clause**.

adjectival group

See under **adjectival phrase**.

adjectival phrase (AdjP, AP)

This is a phrase type headed by an adjective. In traditional grammar, the **adjectival phrase** was regarded as a multiword unit, like the underlined phrases in:

They were very keen participants in the competition.

They were keen as mustard.

However in modern syntactic analysis, the term **adjectival phrase (AdjP)** can also refer to a single adjective. For adjectival phrases in which the adjective takes a clausal *complement*, see **adjective**, section 6.

Modern grammarians emphasize that an **adjectival phrase** is one in which the head is an adjective. It may include an adverb or prepositional complement, as shown below. Within the syntax of the clause, the adjectival phrase may appear

- either before or after a noun (as its pre- or post-modifier), as in:

a large enough space a space large enough

- following the verb as the complement of its subject:

The space was large enough for an office.

As the examples show, the adjectival head “large” may appear early or later in the adjectival phrase (see further under **head and headedness**, section 2). The adjectival phrase used to premodify a noun is sometimes termed *attributive*, while the one postmodifying it is *postpositive*. Those that take the role of subject complement after the verb are termed *predicative* (see further under **adjective**, section 5). Of the three types, the attributive use of the adjectival phrase is the least common, since without its own (adverbial) modifiers, the adjective is structurally a premodifier of the noun head. In systemic–functional grammar, the predicative adjective and any modifiers are termed the **adjectival group** (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). Their term for the attributive adjective is *epithet* (see further under **epithet**).

One special type of **adjectival phrase** consists only of a determiner and adjective, for example those underlined in:

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The Portuguese were adventurous sailors.

This construction typically presupposes a group of people as its head noun, and is always construed in the plural though it has no plural marking. The same nounless phrase can occasionally be found used more abstractly, as in:

The ultimate is a holiday on the moon.

Grammarians note that in this case, the adjectival head is construed in the singular. For Huddleston and Pullum (2002), these are examples of the **fused modifier-head** construction as noun phrase. See further under **absolute**, section 1; **noun phrase**, section 1; and **fused head**.

adjective

- 1 types of adjective: semantic and morpho-syntactic groupings
 - 2 sequences of adjectives
 - 3 gradability and degrees of comparison (analytical and synthetic)
 - 4 nongradable adjectives
 - 5 attributive, predicative, and postpositive adjectives
 - 6 complementation of adjectives
 - 7 compound adjectives
-

1 Types of adjective

Words belonging to the **adjective** class are many and varied, and can be grouped in terms of several intersecting parameters. They may express properties or attributes of the noun they qualify, or aspects of the way in which that noun is perceived or evaluated. In terms of this dichotomy they are either **inherent** or **non-inherent**: compare *a desirable car*, where the adjective is non-inherent, with *an old American car* (where both adjectives are inherent). Grammarians refer to these two types in other terms such as **evaluative** or **attitudinal** and **descriptive** or **defining** respectively. The dividing line between the two types is not always clear-cut, however. Systemic-functional grammar sees the two types as **interpersonal** and **experiential** respectively (see further under **metafunction of language**). It also draws a sharper distinction between the “descriptive” (e.g. *large door*) and “defining” (e.g. *iron door*) adjectives, where the first are termed **epithets** and the second **classifiers**. See further in section 2 below.

Within the subclass of inherent adjectives, some grammars (Quirk et al. 1985) distinguish further between the **stative** and the **dynamic**: the first is putatively a stable property of the noun, e.g. *He is a big man*, and the second a more temporary quality, e.g. *She is a tired teacher*, but they are difficult to separate in examples such as *She is a careful person*. Other grammars (Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) identify various subcategories of adjectives, those referring to age, color, shape, size; affect (emotional state); ease/difficulty, and other more or less inherent properties; as well as clearly non-inherent, evaluative subcategories such as importance and worth, and those expressing modal parameters such as certainty, ability, willingness, necessity. These

semantic subcategories correlate to some extent with syntactic properties of the adjective: see section 6 below.

English adjectives may be either *gradable* or *nongradable*, as reflected in their ability or otherwise to express degrees of comparison by means of inflections *clear* > *clearer* or their phrasal equivalents *transparent* > *more transparent*: see section 3 below. *Nongradability* correlates to a large extent with adjectives expressing categorial properties of the noun, such as the medium it consists of, its geographical/historical classification, etc.

2 Sequences of adjectives

The default order for a string of **adjectives** is from least to most categorial, as in

the remarkable new dieting program
fine old Chinese furniture

where *remarkable/fine* are the evaluative adjectives, *new/old* the descriptive ones, and *dieting/Chinese* the defining or categorial ones. Gradable adjectives may be preceded by their own modifiers, e.g. *very*, *more* (see further under **noun phrase**, section 2). Note that the practice of separating strings of adjectives by means of commas is no longer widely used, except for rhetorical reasons, and is not a grammatical requirement. See further under **comma**, section 3.

3 Gradability and degrees of comparison

Many kinds of **adjective**, both evaluative (e.g. *remarkable*) and descriptive (*new*), are *gradable*, i.e. they can be premodified to express *grades* of the adjectival property, using an adverb as an *intensifier*, e.g. *very*, *so*, *really*, *absolutely* (see **adverb**, section 3).

English grammar also provides a formal set of comparative grades or *degrees of comparison*, using either inflections to the adjective *-er/-est*, or the degree adverbs *MORE/MOST*. These provide the *comparative* and *superlative* grades for gradable adjectives, as in:

	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>
<i>fine</i>	<i>finer</i>	<i>finest</i>
<i>hopeful</i>	<i>more hopeful</i>	<i>most hopeful</i>

These two ways of marking the degrees of comparison are known respectively as *synthetic* or *inflected* comparison, and as *analytic* or *periphrastic/phrasal* comparison.

For a very few adjectives, the comparative and superlative forms are quite different from their *base* form:

<i>bad</i>	<i>worse</i>	<i>worst</i>
<i>good</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>best</i>

In both these examples the comparative and superlative forms are *suppletive*: see further under **suppletion and suppletive form**. Note that the base (uninflected) form for comparing adjectives is variously referred to as the *absolute* form (Quirk et al. 1985); the *positive* form; or the *plain* form (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). All agree on the terms *comparative* and *superlative*.

Most gradable adjectives tend to take either synthetic or analytical patterns of comparison according to the number of syllables in the base form, and other aspects of their morphology:

- One-syllabled adjectives e.g. *clear, bright, small, large, long, short* almost all use inflections for their degrees of comparison: *clearer, brighter*, etc. The rare exceptions are examples like *just, prompt*, which are usually compared analytically (*more just, more prompt*), perhaps because of their final consonant clusters. Note that the negative forms of one-syllabled adjectives, e.g. *unfair, unwise*, are compared synthetically in the same way as their positive counterparts.
- Three-syllabled adjectives, e.g. *analytic, beautiful, humorous, resolute*, and two-syllabled ones containing adjectival suffixes like *-ful, -ic, -(i)ous*, e.g. *hopeful, comic, anxious, famous*, all use analytic forms of comparison. The same is true of deverbal adjectives ending in *-ing* and *-ed*.
- Two-syllabled adjectives, including those with adjectival suffixes other than those just mentioned, are somewhat variable. Those ending in *-y*, e.g. *easy, funny, happy, wealthy*, usually take synthetic comparison for both comparative and superlative, as do those ending in *-le*, e.g. *humble, noble, simple*. Those ending in *-ly* (*costly, deadly, friendly, lively, lovely*) can go either way: *more friendly/friendlier*. Those with terminations other than *-y/-ly/-le* – e.g. *bitter, common, cruel, minute, polite, remote* – tend to be *analytically* compared: *more bitter*, etc. Yet they too are occasionally used with synthetic forms of comparison. Some speakers and writers just seem to prefer *commoner* to *more common*.

Research by Biber et al. (1999) found unequal numbers of the two types of inflected adjectives in the Longman corpus, with almost twice as many comparatives as superlative forms overall. The difference was most marked in academic prose, where there were four times as many inflected comparatives as superlatives. The highest ratio of superlatives to comparatives was found in newspaper prose.

- See under **double comparative** and **double superlative** for the use of those terms.

4 **Nongradable adjectives**

Some kinds of **adjectives** are nongradable by virtue of their semantics. This is true for:

- defining adjectives: *iron, woolen, Swedish, Victorian*
- classificatory adjectives: *auxiliary, chief, federal, rural*
- absolute adjectives: *equal, impossible, total*

Note that the gradability or otherwise of adjectives depends on the sense in which they are used. So while *French* as a defining adjective is not normally gradable, it becomes gradable in the expression *more French than the French*. There the first adjective carries the sense of “having French characteristics” (rather than being a native of France), and this allows for more or less Frenchness.

See further under **absolute**, section 1.

5 Attributive, predicative, and postpositive adjectives

Most **adjectives** can be used in one of two syntactic positions, either within an NP, as in *a golden sunset*; or as complement to the subject of a verb: *the sunset was golden*. The first of these examples shows the adjective in its **attributive** role, articulating an attribute of the head noun; the second shows the **predicative** role, where it forms part of the clausal predicate. There is also a third, less common syntactic position for **adjectives**, when they appear after rather than before the head noun:

The sunset, golden to the zenith, finally faded to grey.

In this case, the adjective is said to be **postpositive**. See further under **adjectival phrase**.

Note that some **adjectives** can only appear as attributives, e.g. *mere*, *total*, *utter*, and others such as *real*, *sheer*, when used in an intensifying sense (as in *a real friend*, *sheer madness*). Rather more appear as predicatives only:

ablaze aboard abroad ajar alone ashore asleep awry

The common feature of all those is the prefix *a-*, the modern form of the older preposition *on-*, which shows that all are prepositional phrases in origin, and therefore adverb-like in their syntactic behavior and incapable of attributive use.

Note also the special cases of *galore*, which can only appear in postpositive position, and *proper*, whose meaning differs according to whether it is attributive or postpositive. Compare ... *had a proper trial* with *The trial proper began with ...*

6 Complementation of adjectives

Many adjectives acting as head of a predicative **adjectival phrase** take a finite or nonfinite complement. The type of complement correlates to some extent with the semantic category of the **adjective** (see section 1 above). Thus adjectives expressing certainty (*definite*, *sure*), or some kind of emotional affect (*sad*, *sorry*) or evaluation (*important*, *true*), are typically complemented by a finite clause prefaced by *that*. For example:

I'm sure that the climate is changing.

He was sorry that he had no way to offer her a lift.

It was important that they met the children.

Some of these types, and others, can be complemented by a *TO*-infinitive (i.e. nonfinite clause). For example:

He was sorry not to be able to offer her a lift.

It was important to meet the children.

The instructions are easy to follow.

She was determined to get better fast.

Yet others are complemented by an *-ing* clause, with a variety of prepositions, e.g.

He was sorry about not being able to offer her a lift.

They were afraid of coming by helicopter.

The dog is good at shaking hands.

My boss is intent on signing us up for the competition.

Those clothes would be suitable for taking on holiday.

The examples show that some adjectives (e.g. *sorry*) can take all three types of complementation; while others (e.g. *important*) can take at least two of them. Others can take more than one form of complementation, but they tap a different sense of the word: compare *sure that* with *sure to* + infinitive and *sure about* + *-ing*. Research on the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999) found that nonfinite complements with *to-* and *-ing* clauses were most common in written language, whereas finite complements with *that* clauses (or clauses with **zero complementizer**) were commonest in conversation: see further under **complementizer**, section 2.

7 **Compound adjectives**

Compound **adjectives** typically consist of an adjective and its premodifier, e.g. an adverb, preposition, or elliptical prepositional phrase, as in *down-trodden*, *home-baked*, *overseas*, *worldwide*. See further under **compound word**, section 4.

AdjP

See **adjectival phrase**.

adjunct

- 1 a subclass of adverb
 - 2 any adverb or other syntactic unit serving as an adverbial constituent of a clause
 - 3 an obligatory adverbial constituent of a clause
 - 4 an optional adverbial constituent of a clause
-

The term **adjunct** has been applied in several different ways in the analysis of English grammar, sometimes coexisting in the same grammar. Its four major applications are set out below.

1 **A subclass of adverb (in Quirk et al. 1985)**

Adjuncts contrast in their syntactic behavior with *conjuncts*, *subjuncts*, and *disjuncts* (see under **adverb**, section 3). These four subclasses are reclassified in other modern grammars, e.g. Biber et al. (1999), who use a set of three subclasses of **adverbial** (circumstance, linking, stance), see under **adverbial**, section 3.

2 **Any adverb or other syntactic unit serving as an adverbial constituent of a clause**

Used in this sense, the **adjunct** may be anything from a simple adverb to an adverb(ial) phrase or clause, or a prepositional phrase or noun phrase, as underlined in the following:

He drove furiously.

He drove like there was no tomorrow.

He drove like the wind.

He drove four hundred kilometers.

3 An obligatory adverbial constituent of a clause

This application of **adjunct** by Quirk et al. (1985) aligns it with its appearance in two of the canonical clause structures: SVA, SVOA (see further under **clause**, section 1). **Adjunct** is the term used of the constituents underlined in:

They are here. He put it on the table.

The same component is called **adverbial** by Biber et al. (1999), pointing to the word class by which it is typically realized. But it is called **complement** by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), in keeping with it being required by the structure of the clause, and modern rather than traditional use of the term: see further under **complement**, section 3.

4 An optional adverbial constituent of a clause

The term **adjunct** is used also by Quirk et al. (1985) in referring to the **optional predication adjunct** in:

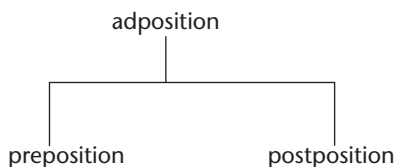
They will come soon.

For Huddleston and Pullum (2002), this optional constituent is simply an **adjunct**, belonging to any of a large set of functional subtypes expressing location, degree, cause, purpose, reason, domain, as well as connective, evaluative, and modal subtypes serving as **sentence adjuncts**. Their positions in the clause are quite variable. For Biber et al. (1999), all these are again **adverbials**: see further under that heading.

The application of **adjunct** at different levels of syntactic analysis (word class, clause structure, etc.) is somewhat problematic, and modifiers are needed to distinguish the **obligatory adjunct** from the **optional adjunct**. Quirk et al. (1985) have to use the terms **predication adjunct** and **sentence adjunct**, to distinguish both from their use of **adjunct** to refer to a subclass of adverb.

adposition

This term is sometimes used in linguistics as a superordinate for the word class of **preposition** and **postposition**.



In English and many European languages, prepositions normally precede the noun phrase they head, whereas in languages such as Japanese, they follow it and are therefore postpositions. In English the postposed preposition is a rarity, associated with very particular idioms such as *those things aside*, used as an

alternative to *aside from those things*, and archaic phrases such as in *those rules notwithstanding*, used in legal parlance. Thus the term **preposition** is quite sufficient in the context of English grammar.

adverb

- 1 **forms of adverbs**
 - 2 **semantic types**
 - 3 **syntactic types**
 - 4 **degrees of comparison for adverbs**
-

1 Forms of adverbs

The forms of **adverbs** are very variable, making them one of the most heterogeneous word classes in English. Although they are often thought of as ending in the suffix *-ly*, as in *easily, happily, pleasingly, shamefacedly*, this is true only of those derived from an adjective. Such adverbs typically detail the manner in which the verb was enacted. In fact adverbs derived from adjectives may or may not carry the *-ly* suffix. Compare:

They valued her highly as a mediator.

The balloon soared high into the sky.

As in that example, the two forms of the adverb (with and without suffix) often carry somewhat different meanings. The two adverbial forms of *real* are associated with different varieties of English:

The show was really exciting. (British English)

The show was real exciting. (American English)

Suffixless adverbs are idiomatic in various high-frequency collocations for all varieties of English. For example:

come quick fly direct get it cheap go slow

The assumption that these should nevertheless end in *-ly* makes them subject to hypercorrection (*come quickly, get it cheaply*) which tends to alter the style. See further under **zero adverb**.

Many common adverbs have little or no connection with adjectives. See for example:

around besides clockwise downstairs here most never
outside quite rather soon therefore tomorrow upwards

Adverbs like those, which express time, place, and direction; degrees of intensity, preferences, and contingencies, are mostly constructed out of other word classes (e.g. preposition + noun: *downstairs, tomorrow*), or go right back to Old English (*never, soon*). A few represent small sets formed with special adverbial suffixes such as *-wards, -wise*, and the once more widely used *-s*. See further under **-s**, section 3.

2 Semantic types of adverbs

In traditional grammar, **adverbs** were often subclassified into semantic groups, like those mentioned in the previous section. They include:

- time: *now, soon, then, today, tomorrow*
- place: *behind, here, indoors, overseas, worldwide*
- manner: *briskly, carefully, quietly, smoothly, thoughtfully*
- degree/extent: *almost, merely, quite, somewhat, utterly*
- contingency: *hence, nevertheless, so, still, thus*
- modality: *allegedly, maybe, presumably, probably, really*

In modern grammars, these broad categories are extended with smaller sets, expressing:

- addition/restriction: *also, hardly, only, relatively, too*
- viewpoint/stance: *arguably, fortunately, obviously, regrettably, undeniably*

Note that adverbs are often polysemous and can express meanings associated with more than one of those categories. For example:

- *then* can refer to time or contingency:

Will you be here then?

If John agrees then I'll be there with bells on.

- *really* can express degree/extent or modality:

Mona Lisa's smile is really cool.

I really believe her.

- *just* can express a point in time, or be a restrictive:

They've just arrived.

I'll just put on my shoes.

- *hopefully* can express manner or stance:

He looked hopefully out of the window.

Hopefully they missed the storm.

Examples like these show how crucial the role of the adverb is in constructing the meaning of the sentence.

3 Syntactic types of adverbs

Modern grammarians all comment on the fact that **adverbs** may be more and less integrated with the syntax of the clause. This is the basis for the four categories of adverb postulated by Quirk et al. (1985):

- **adjuncts** may be more or less closely related to the verb, as an obligatory complement (especially for verbs of action: *he spoke clearly*, or those expressing location: *he put it down*). More often they are optional items, expressing additional aspects of the verbal activity, its time, manner, location, extent, etc.
- **disjuncts** stand apart from the core syntax of the clause, and express such things as modality, addition/restriction, viewpoint/stance in relation to the overall predication of the sentence: *Surely he won't arrive before breakfast?* An alternative name for them is **sentence adverb**.

- **subjuncts** are tied to particular constituents of the clause, either intensifying it (*extremely, very*) or playing it down (*rather, somewhat*). Two of these subjuncts (*more, most*) provide the comparative and superlative degrees of comparison for adjectives and adverbs (see below, section 4; **adjective**, section 3; and **intensifier and downtoner**).
- **conjuncts** express the logical links between a clause and its predecessor: that it adds to it (*also, besides*), contrasts with it (*however, nevertheless*), or is contingent on it (*therefore, thus*).

These four types are reconfigured as three main types of *adverbials* by Biber et al. (1999), see **adverbial**, section 3. The number of types is expanded by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), under the heading of **adjuncts** (see **adjunct**, section 4). They are detailed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) as *circumstances* (see further under **circumstance**).

4 **Degrees of comparison for adverbs**

A limited number of **adverbs** support comparative forms to express degrees of comparison. Some derive comparatives and superlatives from their base (or absolute) form; others form them by premodification with *MORE* and *MOST*. See for example:

<i>soon</i>	<i>sooner</i>	<i>soonest</i>
<i>thoughtfully</i>	<i>more thoughtfully</i>	<i>most thoughtfully</i>

As those examples show, one-syllabled adverbs can be compared by means of suffixes, whereas those with two or more syllables do it with the aid of *MORE* and *MOST*, in the same way as adjectives (see further under **adjective**, section 3). This means that the comparative form of one-syllabled adverbs derived from adjectives (i.e. **zero adverbs**) is indistinguishable from the adjective:

The train got there faster than we expected. (comparative adverb)

The faster train goes straight through the inner suburbs. (comparative adjective)

The same applies to the superlative forms. See further under **zero adverb**.

- For the positions of adverbs within the clause, and their mobility, see under **adverbial**, section 4.

adverb phrase

This term refers to a phrase headed by an adverb, such as:

very strangely clearly enough this quickly a little faster luckily for him

Adverb phrases may or may not function as **adverbial adjuncts** within the clause. Compare the use of the adverb phrase in:

They were acting very strangely.

The audience fell very strangely quiet.

In the first sentence the adverb phrase is an obligatory adverbial adjunct for the verb “were acting” (SVA). In the second, the same adverb phrase is a modifier

within the adjectival phrase complementing the copular verb “fell” (SVC). See further under **adjectival phrase** and **copular verb**.

Adverb phrases commonly consist of one adverb modifying another, as in:

much less much better right now right here so much very well

As the examples show, the range of adverbs modifying other adverbs is quite limited. They are often **intensifiers** or **degree adverbs**: See further under **intensifier and downtoner**.

Note also by way of contrast that some more or less fixed adverb phrases consist of a preposition plus adverb:

before long for later until recently

These may also be analyzed as **prepositional phrases**, in keeping with the wider range of complements accorded to prepositions in recent grammars. See further under **preposition**, section 4.

adverbial

-
- 1 multiple applications of adverbial
 - 2 adverbial as a syntactic unit
 - 3 subtypes of adverbial
 - 4 mobility of adverbials within the clause
-

1 Multiple applications of adverbial

The term **adverbial** can be used to refer to adverbial elements of all kinds, whatever their form or semantic content, or their role in syntax (Biber et al. 1999). It thus includes:

- both single- and multi-word adverbs, such as *suddenly* and *very unexpectedly*, as well as prepositional phrases such as *on the spur of the moment*
- both obligatory or optional adjuncts in clause structure (see further under **adjunct**, sections 3 and 4)

Adverbials are very common in English sentences, both spoken and written. They occur on average 15 times in every 100 running words, according to Quirk et al. (1985).

2 Adverbial as a syntactic unit

Within the clause, **adverbials** function as independent constituents, i.e. as adjuncts, often associated with the VP. They are usually represented as A, as in:

She manicured her toes very beautifully. (SVOA)

There was mascara on her eyelashes day and night. (SVCAA)

As those examples show, the adverbial constituent may take the form of an adverbial phrase “very beautifully”, a prepositional phrase “on her eyelashes”, or a noun phrase functioning as a time adverbial “day and night”.

Note that adverbial structures like “very beautifully” may simply function as adverb phrases within other clause constituents, especially NPs, as in:

She displayed her very beautifully manicured toes. (SVO)

There “very beautifully” modifies the adjective within the object NP. See further under **adjectival phrase; clause**, section 1; and **prepositional phrase**, section 2.

3 **Subtypes of adverbial**

The frequency of **adverbials** reflects their ability to project a wide range of meanings, including time, location, manner, contingency, degree, modality, stance, logical connections. Some adverbials may express more than one meaning, depending on their position in the sentence. Compare:

They discussed the staffing problems frankly.

Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

In the first sentence, “frankly” is a **manner adverbial**, whereas in the second it works as a **stance adverbial**. These represent two of the major categories of adverbials recognized in modern English grammars, reflecting their particular roles in syntax (Biber et al. 1999). The first type just illustrated (manner) belongs to the very large group of **circumstance adverbials**, which also includes those relating to time, location, contingency, degree, addition, and restriction. The second type (the **stance adverbial**) comments on the proposition contained in the clause, and includes adverbials expressing epistemic modality (doubt and certainty), actuality, viewpoint, and attitude: *probably, maybe, definitely, of course*. The third type is the **linking adverbial**, such as *accordingly, in addition*, which forges cohesive ties with the previous sentence (see further under **cohesion**). Alternative names for the second and third types of adverbial are **disjunct** and **conjunct** (see further under **adverb**, section 3). Whatever their semantic subtype, adverbials may or may not end in *-ly*.

4 **Mobility of adverbials within the clause**

The position of obligatory **adverbials** within the clause is usually fixed after the verb (as in SVA, SVOA). The only exceptions to be found occur in tightly constrained types of **inversion** (e.g. *Here comes the bus*), where the obligatory adverbial adjunct is allowed to precede the verb (see further under **inversion**).

Optional adverbials enjoy much greater freedom of location, as for example in:

They will come today probably.

They will probably come today.

They probably will come today.

Probably they will come today.

Adverbs of **modality** (like “probably”), and those which modify the whole clause or sentence (i.e. stance adverbials or sentence adverbs), are especially mobile, able to appear at the start, in the middle (before and within the VP), or at the end of the sentence (i.e. *initially, medially, or finally*).

Compare the more limited options for the circumstance adverbial “today” in the same sentence (only initial and final positions).

Today they will probably come.

They will probably come today.

Research on adverbial data in the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999) found that linking adverbials were most commonly found at the start of the sentence, and circumstance adverbials at the end. However variations from those default locations are used occasionally by both speakers and writers to spotlight other constituents inside the clause.

They however could never agree on the amount. (linking adverbial)

I would also like to be there. (circumstance adverbial)

See further under **information focus**, section 6.

When two circumstance adverbials come together in a spoken or written sentence, their order is predictable in so far as adverbials of time and place are most likely to appear in that order after the verb (Biber et al. 1999). For example:

Do come next Monday to the exhibition.

This sequencing probably reflects the fact that time adverbials are more closely related to the verb. Combinations of time and manner, and place and manner, are much more variable, depending on their length. So one-word circumstance adverbials can be deployed much more flexibly than a prepositional phrase. The extended prepositional phrase functioning as adverbial is most likely to appear after the verb or at the end of the clause, especially in writing (Hasselgard 2010). See further under **prepositional phrase**, section 3.

- ▶ Note that in systemic–functional grammar, the adverbial elements of the clause are termed the *circumstances*. See further under **circumstance**.

adverbial clause

- 1 types of adverbial clause
 - 2 nonfinite adverbial clauses
 - 3 adverbial clauses of comparison and comparative clauses
-

1 Types of adverbial clause

An **adverbial clause** functions as an *adverbial adjunct* to the main clause, linked by a subordinating conjunction (*subordinator*). But the semantic relationships between the two clauses are many and varied, as reflected in the large number of subordinators that may be used to preface the adverbial clause underlined.

They arrived when the sun was setting. (time)

A simple cross on the roadside showed where the driver had died. (place)

They took photographs of the site so that they could show the police. (purpose)

We took photographs because we had no other evidence. (reason)

We can only find closure if we share the story. (condition)

The road sign looked like it had been run over. (similarity/comparison)

You feel as if you're sharing that hellish moment. (hypothetical comparison)

For the radical reinterpretation of many types of adverbial clause as prepositional phrases by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), see below, section 2.

The dominant types of adverbial clause vary in different types of discourse, according to corpus-based research associated with the *Longman Grammar* (Biber et al. 1999). Adverbial clauses of time are most frequent in news reporting and fiction, as you might expect; while clauses of reason and condition most commonly occur in conversation. In academic prose, adverbial clauses of purpose and condition are the most common types.

Less frequently used types of adverbial clause noted by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999) express:

concession	subordinated with	<i>although, though, while</i>
contingency	subordinated with	<i>if, whether</i>
result	subordinated with	<i>so (that)</i>
manner	subordinated with	<i>as</i>

Note that the adverbial clause of manner is like the similarity/comparison type shown above, except that it can take a non-dynamic verb, as in *She treats him as he deserves*. It also has something in common with the various adverbial clauses of process, i.e. other minor types such as accompaniment, means, instrument, and agent, which are normally expressed as nonfinite clauses, prefaced with *by* or *with*. The choice of subordinator is obviously crucial to articulating the meanings of adverbial clauses. Note that some subordinators are ambiguous, most notably *as* (time, reason, manner), and *since* (time, reason). *While* can be used to express both time and a concessive or comparative sense.

2 Nonfinite adverbial clauses

Although most **adverbial clauses** in conversation are finite, in writing they also quite commonly appear as nonfinite clauses, whether in academic or everyday prose. Research on nonfinite adverbial clauses (Biber et al. 1999) showed that 80–90% are not prefaced by any subordinator, and are supplementive in their function. Most of the time they are introduced by an *-ing* participle or the *TO*-infinitive. The absence of subordinators from most nonfinite adverbial clauses lends itself to the argument that subordinators can largely be discounted as a word class (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). See further under **subordinator**, section 1.

3 Adverbial clauses of comparison and comparative clauses

All modern grammars differentiate **adverbial clauses of similarity/comparison** (illustrated above, section 1) from **comparative clauses**, making them separate types of subordinate clause. There are syntactic grounds for doing so, because the adverbial clause of comparison is simply prefaced by a subordinator, such as *like*, *as if*; whereas the comparative clause complements a comparative phrase embedded in the main clause (= matrix clause), as underlined in the following examples:

The bend in the road was much sharper than they remembered.

The landscape was as beautiful as any I saw on the east coast.

See further under **comparative clause**, section 2.

adverbial group

This term is used in systemic–functional grammar for the *adverb phrase*: see further under **adverb phrase**.

adverbial phrase

This term is generally avoided in modern English grammars, because of potential confusion with:

- *adverb phrase*, i.e. a type of phrase headed by an adverb: see further under **adverb phrase**
- *adverbial adjunct*, an element in the syntax of the clause: see further under **adverbial**, section 2.

AdvP

See **adverb phrase**.

affix

-
- 1 **affixes: prefixes and suffixes**
 - 2 **the grammatical meanings of affixes**
 - 3 **the semantics of affixes**
-

1 Affixes: prefixes and suffixes

Affixes are the small units of meaning attached to the stem of a word, in front or behind it, or both, as underlined in the following:

disorientate indefiniteness undeniable

Those attached at the front are *prefixes*, while those attached behind are *suffixes*. Both types of affix are *bound morphemes*, inseparable from the stem and dependent on it. See further under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**, **prefix**, and **suffix**.

2 The grammatical meanings of affixes

English **affixes** (especially suffixes) often contribute to the grammatical identity of a word. So the suffix *-ate* marks the first example as part of the verb, the *-ness* in the middle example marks it as a noun, and the *-able* in the last marks it as an adjective. All the affixes illustrated above are *derivational affixes*, to be distinguished from *inflections* such as *-(e)d* which could be appended, as in *disorientated*, to mark it as the past tense or past participle of the verb. Both inflectional and derivational affixes help to indicate the grammatical roles of words within the clauses. See further under **derivational affix** and **inflection**.

3 The semantics of affixes

The meaning attached to prefixes, as illustrated above with *dis-*, *in-*, and *un-*, is a kind of categorial semantic, i.e. negative rather than any word class or syntactic notion. Apart from marking negation, prefixes also serve to indicate such things as:

- time reference, before or after: *pre-*, *post-*
- location, above or below: *sub-*, *super-*
- relative size: *micro-*, *macro-*

Both prefixes and suffixes express generalized meanings, which helps to distinguish them from the combining forms involved in word formation, such as *geo-*, *hydro-*, *-archy*, *-graph(y)*. See further under **combining form**, section 2.

affixation

At its most general, the term **affixation** refers to the process of adding one or more **affixes** to a stem. This may produce new forms of the same stem, as in the set *help*, *helped*, *helping*. There the suffixes *-ed* and *-ing* are the **inflections** which contribute alternative forms to the verb paradigm. See further under **inflection**.

Affixation also refers to the process of using **prefixes** and/or **suffixes** to derive new words, as in *micromanagement*, *preschool*, *renewal*, *sub-Saharan*. This is one of the most frequent methods by which new words are formed in English, second only to the use of **compounding** in Ayto's research (1996). However he also found that new affixed words were often among the least enduring of the various types of neologism – readily coined but highly context-dependent and limited in currency.

- For other processes by which new words are derived, see further under **derivation** and **word formation**.

AFTER

Apart from being an adverb, this is one of the common temporal subordinators and prepositions of English. It can be complemented by finite adverbial clauses, nonfinite clauses, and noun phrases. For the argument that it should simply be regarded as a preposition which can take a finite complement, see under **preposition**, section 2; and **subordinator**, section 1.

agent

This term has long been used to refer to the semantic role of the subject of a verb, especially when the verb is in the active voice, and the subject is the doer of the action. The **agent** can be either human or nonhuman:

The boy played the violin.

Large hailstones broke the tiles on the roof.

When the verb is in the passive voice, the agent may still be expressed by means of an **agentive phrase**, as in:

The tiles were broken by large hailstones.

Many passive constructions are nevertheless formulated without identifying the agent, the so-called **agentless passive**. See further under **passive voice**, section 2.

Agent is one of the **deep cases** identified in case grammar, and one of the **theta roles** of government-binding theory (see further under **case grammar**

and **theta role**). In systemic–functional grammar the agent is one of the participant roles. See further under **participant**.

agentive suffix

In English grammar this term is most often used to refer to the derivational suffix **-er**, which is freely used to form deverbal agentive nouns, e.g. *driver, player, singer, writer* (see further under **-er**).

The term also applies to other more specialized agentive endings:

- **-ant**, used with agentives based on Latin and French verbs, e.g. *attendant, contestant, informant, inhabitant*
- **-or**, introduced via Latin loanwords, such as *supervisor*, and applied especially to latinate verbs in English, as in *calculator, compositor, instigator, orchestrator*

An alternative term, found in Quirk et al. (1985) is **agential suffix**.

agentless passive

See under **passive voice**, section 2.

agreement

- 1 agreement and concord
 - 2 three types of agreement
 - 3 pronoun agreement: personal pronouns
 - 4 agreement with demonstrative, relative/interrogative, and indefinite pronouns
 - 5 verb agreement with collective nouns, bipartites, and summation plurals
 - 6 agreement with proper nouns and proper names
 - 7 agreement with open-class quantifiers and other numerical phrases
 - 8 agreement with coordinated and complex subjects
-

1 Agreement and concord

Both these terms are used to refer to the various ways in which the grammatical properties of a constituent (number, person, gender) are matched by others in the same clause or a following clause. This is visible in the forms selected for the subject and verb of the clause, and any embedded relative clauses, as well as for any pronouns that sustain the reference to a previous noun phrase. The term **concord** is long established for this concept and used by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999). Meanwhile Huddleston and Pullum (2002) use **agreement**, which is also well used and recommends itself on grounds of having a parallel verb (*agree*) readily available.

2 Three types of agreement

Modern English grammars all recognize that there's some ambivalence about **agreement** between nouns, verbs, and pronouns, against the default of matching items for number (singular with singular or plural with plural). The *Comprehensive Grammar* (1985) explains it as the interplay between three different principles of number agreement:

- formal
- notional
- proximity

Often more than one applies, and the first two (**formal**, **notional**) are sometimes in contention. The third (**proximity**) can underscore the effect of the first or second, as illustrated in (iii) below. It does not count on its own.

(i) **Formal agreement** is the default type of agreement, where the form of the noun is matched in the verb, with its *-s* inflection present for the singular, and absent from the plural. However the singular/plural matching is only visible when the verb is in the present tense, or when the auxiliaries *BE*, *HAVE*, or *DO* are used:

The office looks shut. *The offices look shut.*
That office is probably shut. *Those offices are probably shut.*

As the examples show, formal agreement applies in its full form to **count nouns**, whereas **mass nouns** only take singular agreement: *The furniture is broken* (see further under **noun**, section 4).

The second example also shows the agreement of the demonstrative determiner (*that/those*) with the noun it premodifies. Formal agreement requires the matching of personal pronouns with the verb (in number and person, e.g. *I think/he thinks*); and the matching of pronouns with the relevant noun phrase (see below section 3). Note also that mass nouns take singular determiners and singular agreement with the following verb, while count nouns take singular or plural (see further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**, and **determiner**, section 4).

(ii) **Notional agreement** is when the sense of the noun (as singular/ plural) is matched in the verb, overriding the noun's actual form as singular or plural. In a few cases this is obligatory; in many others it's optional.

Obligatory:

The police are ready for any disturbances.
The news is good.

Optional:

The clergy have to consider the matter.
The printers is on the right hand side.

In both optional cases, the number of the noun subject (singular/plural) differs from that of the verb. There are numerous collective nouns like *clergy* where the plural verb is an option (discussed below section 5); while *printers*, referring to the premises of a particular business, can take a singular verb, because the *-s* is simply a collective suffix rather than a plural (see under **-s**, section 4). These notional kinds of agreement are more freely used in British and Australian English than in American.

Complementary concepts used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) in analyzing cases of notional agreement are:

- **semantic override** (where the singular or plural form of an NP is "overridden" by its opposite)

- **number transparency** (where the grammatical number is not inherent in the head, e.g. in **complex determiners**)

See further under **determiner**, section 6, **semantic override**; and **number transparency**.

(iii) **Proximity agreement** is when the form of the verb reflects the number of the immediately preceding noun, usually when the subject is long and/or complex.

Neither of his latest films appeal to me.

Bird songs and the sound of a waterfall makes it a magical place.

In the first example, the plurality of *films* next to the verb works in combination with the notional plural agreement (both films are embraced in the writer's thinking). In the second example, the detailing of the second coordinate (*sound of a waterfall*) tends to segregate it and reduce the sense of it being jointly coordinated with *and* (see further under **coordination**, section 3). The proximity of singular *waterfall* to the verb nudges it to agree in the singular, especially in conversation.

3 **Pronoun agreement: personal pronouns**

Personal pronouns are involved in different types of **agreement** with several other clausal elements, as follows. They agree with:

(i) the following verb. All personal pronouns embody a particular **person** (first, second, third), and **number** (singular or plural). When any of the pronouns appears as the subject of the clause, the verb must agree with it in both respects. In practice this happens only in the present tense, where the third person singular pronouns (*HE, SHE, IT*) are followed by a verb with the -s suffix, and there is no suffix for any of the others, singular or plural.

<i>I hear</i>	<i>we hear</i>
<i>you hear</i>	<i>you hear</i>
<i>he/she/it hears</i>	<i>they hear</i>

(ii) an antecedent noun. The third person singular pronouns must agree in **number** and **gender** with their antecedent. Thus:

When the policeman arrived at their door, he brought bad news. (masculine, singular)

When the midwife came back, she brought good news. (feminine, singular)

When the storm broke, it forced us to cancel the rest of the game. (neuter, singular)

The third person plural pronoun generally agrees in number with its antecedent:

When people saw the crowd, they knew something was happening. (plural)

Note however the frequent use of *THEY* in reference to a singular antecedent (see under **THEY and THEM**) and after **indefinite pronouns** (see below, section 4).

(iii) subsequent pronouns and determiners. The number and gender of the subject pronoun are matched in subsequent pronoun selections:

He introduced himself with reference to his earlier role at the hospital.

She consoled herself with the thought that her friends would understand.

This matching of pronouns/determiners can continue in following sentences, provided there is no ambiguity over the referent. The pronouns *IT* and *THEY* are the most susceptible to such ambiguity. Other things being equal, they will refer back to the nearest NP by its number (singular or plural).

4 Agreement with demonstrative, relative/interrogative, and indefinite pronouns

(i) **demonstrative pronouns** (*this/these, that/those*) are marked for number (singular vs. plural), which must match their antecedents:

I must choose one color and this is it.

The big chairs are what you ordered, not those.

As determiners, the demonstrative pronouns agree in number with the noun they premodify:

This color goes best with the carpet.

(ii) **relative/interrogative (wh-) pronouns** are marked for gender, in so far as *who/whom* refers to a human or quasi-human antecedent, and *which* to the nonhuman or neuter.

Who will go with you? These are the people who will go with me.

Which is your car? That's the car which I bought at the auction.

Both *who* and *which* are neutral in their grammatical number, and so the verb that agrees with them takes its number from the NP they refer to. Compare:

They talked to the person who is going with me.

They talked to the people who are going with me.

Note that *which* and *what* are also **number transparent** in this way (see further under **number transparency, WHAT, and WHICH**). *WHO/WHOM* (but not *WHICH, WHAT*) are marked for grammatical case (as the nominative and accusative forms respectively), and thus generally associated with the subject of the clause and the object of a verb or preposition: see further under **WHO and WHOM**.

(iii) **indefinite pronouns** (*anybody/anyone/anything, somebody/one/thing*) and distributive pronouns (*everybody/one/thing, nobody/one/thing*) are followed by a singular verb, in formal agreement with the singular form of their second component (i.e. agreement in number). However the third person plural pronoun or determiner is nowadays increasingly found following *-body* and *-one*, according to research associated with the *Longman Grammar (1999)*, as in:

Everyone must pay their taxes.

Anybody who claims that they don't must be out of touch.

This use of the plural pronoun (*their/they*) is notional agreement, in keeping with the distributive meaning of the subject (*everyone, anybody*). It also helps to avoid the cumbersome *his or her, he or she*, and satisfies the need for a *gender-free* pronoun (see further under **THEY and THEM**).

Indefinite pronouns like *ANY* and *NONE* as head of a noun phrase can be found with singular or plural agreement of the verb, as in:

Any of the books he wrote is/are worth reading.

None of his critics seem(s) to understand his purpose.

Plural agreement in the verb is often found in both speech and writing, reflecting the notional plurality of the whole NP, which is fed by the distributive sense of the pronoun. There is no requirement that *NONE* should be followed by a singular verb, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) notes.

Other indefinite pronouns for which the patterns of agreement with a following pronoun or verb vary somewhat are *EACH*, *EITHER*, *NEITHER*. Though they select one of a pair of items, they imply the presence of both, and thus seem to invite notional agreement in the plural. This is especially so for *NEITHER* because it deselected both members of the pair:

Neither of those suggestions appeal to us.

No doubt there is also an element of proximity agreement in such constructions, i.e. the effect of the adjacent plural noun which postmodifies the indefinite pronoun.

5 Verb agreement with collective nouns, bipartites, and summation plurals

(i) *Collective nouns* that refer to groups of people or animals are somewhat variable in their **agreement** with the following verb. Singular (i.e. formal) agreement is the default, yet plural (notional) agreement is also possible for any of the following:

<i>audience</i>	<i>assembly</i>	<i>board</i>	<i>choir</i>	<i>class clergy</i>	<i>club</i>
<i>committee</i>	<i>company</i>	<i>congregation</i>	<i>congress</i>	<i>council</i>	<i>couple</i>
<i>crew</i>	<i>crowd</i>	<i>delegation</i>	<i>department</i>	<i>executive</i>	<i>faculty</i>
<i>family</i>	<i>flock</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>group</i>	<i>herd</i>	<i>jury</i>
<i>mob</i>	<i>office</i>	<i>orchestra</i>	<i>pack</i>	<i>panel</i>	<i>parliament public</i>
<i>quartet</i>	<i>school</i>	<i>shoal</i>	<i>swarm</i>	<i>team</i>	<i>trio</i>
<i>troupe</i>	<i>union</i>				

The use of singular agreement tends to underscore the unity of the group, compare:

The committee has decided to award an extra prize this year.

The committee have not yet decided on the winner.

The use of singular/plural agreement with collective nouns is to some extent regionally conditioned. Research on collective nouns in newspaper data (Levin 1998) found that American journalists made less use of plural verb agreement than their British counterparts. Yet both groups were disposed to use plural pronouns in agreement with collectives. Note that a small number of collective nouns for people and animals invariably take a plural verb and plural pronouns, everywhere in the English-speaking world:

cattle folk (live)stock people police poultry vermin

as in:

Police hope for witnesses to come forward in response to their appeal.

Certain classical loanwords are plural in terms of the grammar of Latin or Greek, for example:

algae bacteria criteria data insignia media phenomena

Although they have traditionally taken plural agreement in English, they also appear with singular agreement, suggesting that they are also regarded as collectives in English. For example:

Our social data is very different from the pilot survey.

This shift from plural to collective nouns is discussed under **assimilation of loanwords**.

(ii) **Bipartites** are two key groups of nouns ending in -s which refer to objects consisting of two conjoined parts, and invariably take plural agreement

- two-sided tools and instruments, such as:

bellows binoculars goggles nutcrackers scissors tongs

- clothing, especially for the lower body:

braces briefs jeans pants pajamas shorts trousers

Despite the fact that they refer to a single object, **bipartites** take formal agreement according to their final -s. For their countable and singular forms, see **bipartite noun**.

(iii) **Summation plurals** are nouns ending in -s which are normally construed in the singular, because they are the standard names for an entity which is in some sense collective. Thus notional agreement prevails with most of them, for example

- names of diseases: *measles, mumps, shingles*, etc., as in:

Shingles is a disease of the nervous system.

- names of games and sports: *athletics, checkers, dominoes, gymnastics*, etc., as in:

Dominoes is great spectator sport.

- names of academic subjects: *ethics, linguistics, physics, statistics*, etc., as in:

Statistics is his forte.

Compare the large group of more or less abstract nouns ending in -s that refer to composite concepts (sometimes called **pluralia tantum**), which are almost always construed with plural agreement. They include:

amends arrears belongings congratulations dues funds
grounds looks means premises remains

For just a few of them, singular agreement is possible, e.g. *means* when it refers to a single method for achieving something. Singular agreement is also possible with *grounds* and similar nouns such as *barracks, headquarters* that refer to composite premises, or to single premises where several processes are carried out, such as *drycleaners, butchers, printers*. Consider:

The drycleaners is/are next to the supermarket.

The traditional explanation for the not uncommon use of the singular verb with these -s ending nouns was that *drycleaners* was elliptical for “drycleaner’s shop.” But there’s no evidence to support this. It is better explained by the fact that the final -s is a collective suffix, rather than a genitive or plural suffix (see further under -s, section 4).

6 Agreement with proper nouns and proper names

(i) *Proper nouns* which refer to corporate bodies or national teams may take singular or plural agreement, i.e. **formal agreement** with the form of the name, or **notional agreement** with the sense that the entity employs or involves a number of people (see above, section 2 (ii)). So either of the following patterns of agreement is possible in British English:

Lloyds Bank is poised to raise interest rates.

Lloyds Bank are poised to raised interest rates.

England has won the Ashes this year.

England have won the Ashes this year (= the English cricketing team)

In those examples, notional agreement can be seen in plural agreement despite the proper noun being singular. The reverse can happen with proper nouns ending in -s, which sometimes show notional agreement with a singular verb following, as in:

Woolworths in Australia has been selling petrol at some of its outlets.

Glasgow Celtics is the outright winner this season.

(ii) *Proper names* consisting of multiple elements also show some variability in number agreement, i.e. singular formal agreement or plural notional agreement, as in the following:

The College of Nurses has supported the reforms.

The College of Nurses have come out in favor of the reforms

Here again, the use of plural agreement projects the idea of multiple members of the College speaking out in support. Notional agreement works here in combination with proximity agreement.

7 Agreement with open-class quantifiers and other numerical phrases

Open-class quantifiers (i.e. those based on numerical nouns) vary in their **agreement** patterns, because some are closer to **grammaticalization** as complex determiners than others. Those that are tend to take plural agreement, e.g.:

A number of objections have been mentioned in earlier discussions.

Here the indefiniteness of “number” and its inherent plurality invites notional agreement with a plural verb, except when the noun is premodified (see further under **NUMBER OF**).

Other quantifying phrases are more variable. For example:

A total of twelve tenders was/were received on the closing date.

Because the noun “total” expresses a notional unity and is singular in form, it often prompts singular agreement with the verb. Yet its inherent plurality still makes plural agreement preferable for some writers and readers. The underlying syntactic issue is whether “total” is head of the NP and its postmodifier (dictating singular agreement); or whether “a total of” operates more like a complex determiner, which makes “twelve tenders” **head** of the NP and prompts plural agreement. See further under **head and headedness**; **determiner**, section 6; and **quantifier**.

There are quite a few **open-class quantifiers**, apart from *a number of* and *a total of*, with variable patterns of agreement. For example:

a couple of a group of a pair of a set of a team of

For all these, either singular or plural agreement is possible in standard English, and both were found in the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999). It depends on whether the singular noun or its plural noun complement is treated as **head**. Plural agreement is more likely with informal quantifiers such as the following:

*a batch of a bunch of a handful of a heap of
a mass of a pile of a rash of a score of a spate of*

Yet other quantifying phrases with variable agreement are those formulated as ratios: *one in/out of ten people*, as well as those formulated with *one of those* and a following relative clause. See further under **ONE IN/OUT OF and ONE OF THOSE THAT/WHO/WHICH**.

Freshly formulated numerical phrases are also subject to variable agreement, according to whether the plural number of the head noun dictates plural agreement, or the whole NP is taken to express a set quantity, with singular agreement:

*Six days in Helsinki were/was enough for me.
Twenty tonnes of rice are/is less than they hoped for.
Thirty dollars buys you a good meal.*

8 Agreement with coordinated and complex subjects

For **coordinated subjects** the default type of agreement is plural:

James and his wife are on their way.

This is however variable under certain conditions. For example, singular agreement may be used when the coordination:

- is unitary, i.e. has a single referent, e.g. *His bread and butter is telemarketing.*
- is inclusive with *or*, i.e. both coordinates are included: *Rye or soya improves the flavor of the bread.*

See further under **coordination**, sections 3 and 4.

The default type of agreement with **complex subjects** is formal matching of the verb’s **number** with that of the head of the subject NP:

*The prospect of a better future keeps us going.
Their hopes of a better future keep them going.*

However lengthy postmodification of the head NP can induce nonmatching:

The prospect of a better future for the planet and for our country keep us going.

Examples like this could be explained in terms of notional and/or proximity agreement. They do not form a distinct set of exceptions, like the quantifying phrases of section 7.

alethic

This Greek-derived term meaning “true” refers to a type of modality that expresses *logical necessity*, i.e. one which formulates a logical deduction. See for example the use of *MUST* in the following:

If she is his second cousin they must share great-grandparents.

Most modern grammarians include *alethic modality* with *epistemic modality*, though some make it a separate category from inferential uses of modals, in examples like:

Now she’s making all these decisions, her mother must have gone.

The latter use of “must” is clearly *epistemic*, expressing a confident inference rather than logical deduction. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

ALL

This is a quantificational determiner, pronoun and adverb, as illustrated in the following:

All the work has been done. (determiner)

All of the work has been done. (pronoun)

The work is all finished. (adverb)

As determiner/pronoun, *ALL* is number transparent: see further under **determiner**, section 4; and **number transparency**. As an adverb, *ALL* is a *maximizer*: see under **intensifier and downtoner**.

allograph

- 1 variant form of individual grapheme
- 2 alternative orthographic symbol for phoneme
- 3 spelling variants in base form of word
- 4 allographic variation associated with inflected forms

1 Variant form of individual grapheme

The term **allograph** is used to refer to graphical variants of a given letter, e.g. the lower and upper case versions *a/A*, *n/N*, and to italic and roman versions used in typewritten texts. Many more allographs can be found in handwriting, and their analysis is the subject of paleography.

2 Alternative orthographic symbol for phoneme

Allograph is used to refer to the orthographic alternatives that render the same sound in English words, e.g. the allographs *ie*, *ea*, and *ee*, which symbolize /i/ in *chief*, *heat*, and *sheen* respectively.

3 Spelling variants in base form of word

The term **allograph** can be used to refer to regular spelling variants in the base form of a word, e.g. the variation between *i* or *y* in *dike/dyke* and between *z* or *s* in *realize/realise*. These are orthographic choices made according to one's custom and variety of English.

4 Allographic variation associated with inflected forms

This is a regular feature of complex words at the junction between stem and inflection. The **allographs** work in complementary pairs, e.g.

- double consonant instead of the single final consonant for same sound, as in *pat/patted*
- omission of the final *e* of the stem, as in *hope/hoping*
- alternation of final *y* of the stem with *i*, as in *defy/defied*
- alternation of final *ie* of the stem with *y*, as in *tie/tying*

These allographic alternations are built into the morphology of all varieties of English.

allomorph

- 1 alternative form of a morpheme
 - 2 phonological variant of a morpheme
 - 3 grammatical variant of a morpheme
 - 4 orthographic variant of a morpheme
-

1 Alternative form of a morpheme

Allomorph is the morphologist's term for a variant form of a morpheme, whether bound or free. It can refer to alternant forms of the same stem, such as *loaf* and *loav-* for singular and plural forms of the word respectively. It serves to refer to the variant forms of the prefix in *inquiry* and *enquiry* and the alternatives *hiccough* and *hiccup*. As the latter examples show, **allomorphs** can reflect divergent patterns of usage for individual words.

2 Phonological variant of a morpheme

Allomorphs found only at the phonological level can be heard in the variable pronunciation of the regular past tense morpheme *-ed*, which may be realized as either /d/ or /t/, depending on whether the final consonants of the stem are voiced or voiceless. In the case of "rolled" it is /d/, whereas for "picked" it is /t/.

3 Grammatical variant of a morpheme

Allomorphs at the grammatical level can be seen in the variable forms of the past participle suffixes for English verbs, i.e. *-ed* for regular/weak verbs, and *-en* for irregular/strong verbs. The various plural morphemes found with English nouns are also a set of allomorphs: see under **plural**, sections 2 and 3.

4 Orthographic variant of a morpheme

The term **allomorph** is applied by some to purely graphemic alternants of a given morpheme, e.g. alterations to the stem of a verb (as from single to double

consonant in *bat/batting*), which have no phonetic consequences, but help to identify the inflected members of the lexeme. This application of the term **allomorph** to an orthographic variant is at variance with the core definition of *morpheme* as a unit of meaning attached to a *phonological* form. Orthographically defined morphemes were however embraced as “visual morphemes” by Bolinger (1946). See further under **morpheme**, and **allograph**.

alphabetism

See under **acronym**.

alternant

See under **allomorph**, section 1.

ambitransitive

An **ambitransitive verb** can be construed either transitively or intransitively, without any change to its form. One example is the verb *write*:

He writes an article every morning before breakfast.

She writes well.

The verb “write” has a direct object in the first sentence, but none in the second. In fact many English verbs are ambitransitive, though dictionaries show this simply by listing transitive and intransitive uses in the same entry. See further under **transitivity**, section 1

Note that some ambitransitive verbs are used either transitively or **ergatively**, for example:

A low intensity earthquake rattled our windows last night.

The windows rattled for several minutes.

These two uses of “rattle” differ in that the subject of the first is the agent of the action; in the second the subject is the “patient.” See further under **ergative**, section 3.

anacoluthon

This Greek-derived term (plural **anacolutha**) refers to an abrupt break in the syntax of a sentence and its continuation with a separate syntactic structure, as in:

Our world is facing a critical shortage of – why are you laughing?

As the example suggests, anacoluthon is characteristic of interactive speech.

analogy

In linguistics this is the process whereby words are modified or new ones formed on the basis of existing models, i.e. by association with a very particular word or set of them. In early modern English the past tense of the modal verb *can* was once *coude*, but it was modified to *could* by **analogy** with *should* and *would*. The past tense of the irregular verb *thrive* has been remodeled on the analogy of regular verbs like *survive(d)*, and the old past forms *throve* and *thriven* are now obsolete (Peters 2004). Thus analogy contributes to changes to grammatical morphemes.

In word formation too, the process of **analogy** has contributed to the formation of new words. The neo-Latin word *millennium* was modeled on the classical words *biennium*, *triennium*, combining their second element with *mille* “a thousand.” A modern example of a larger set of words formed by analogy can be found in *read-a-thon*, *spell-a-thon*, *rock-a-thon*, etc. These are all coined on the model of the Greek word *marathon*, and on the assumption that its last two syllables are a suffix (Marathon was in fact a Greek placename). Thus putative affixes often play a part in derivation by analogy. About 20% of English words are formed by analogy, the other 80% by affixation and other rule-based *word-formation* methods (Bauer 2001). See further under **word formation**.

anaphora

This is the abstract process of referring to a preceding lexical unit (the *antecedent*) for the meaning of an ongoing unit. The referring item, typically a pronoun, is the *anaphor*. For example:

The stairs in front of the building took us up to its huge carved doors.
antecedent anaphor

Anaphoric pronouns (both personal and demonstrative) are an important means of achieving *cohesion* in a text. See further under **cohesion**.

Many grammarians, e.g. Quirk et al. (1985), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), distinguish between **anaphora** (referring back in the text) and **cataphora** (referring forwards in the text). *Cataphoric* use of pronouns can be seen in the following:

It was the rustiest car that she had ever ridden in.

Others (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) recognize the distinction, but prefer to use the terms *retrospective anaphora* and *anticipatory anaphora*. All agree that backward-looking anaphora is commoner by far.

ancestor

This is an alternative for the *mother node*, a term used in *immediate constituent analysis*. See further under **immediate constituent analysis**.

AND

This is the commonest English *coordinator*, used to join words, phrases, and clauses of equal weight, in an additive relationship:

knife and fork to have and to hold
I love my wife and she loves me

In cases like these, **AND** is the *conjunction* linking two constituents of the same sentence. **AND** can also be used at the start of a sentence, where it forges a link with the previous sentence, as in:

And the Lord said unto them ... (Authorized version of the Bible, 1611)
She gave me that winning smile. And I could never say no.

Using **AND** at the start of a sentence was deemed ungrammatical by traditional grammarians, on the assumption that – as a *coordinating conjunction* – it must

conjoin items within the same sentence. But modern grammarians such as Quirk et al. (1985) recognize that it is perfectly idiomatic for *AND* to occur at the start of a sentence, and in that position it operates as a connective adverb or *conjunct*. See further under **conjunct**; and **coordination**, sections 2 and 3.

ANOTHER

This is a determiner (one of the general ordinals), and an indefinite pronoun. Although it identifies the second of a pair, it is nonspecific as to which. See further under **determiner**, section 3; and **indefinite pronoun**.

antecedent

- 1 In the grammar of cohesion, the **antecedent** is the NP to which a pronoun or other *anaphoric* device refers back for its meaning. See under **anaphora**.
- 2 In the structure of a conditional sentence, the **antecedent** is an alternative name for the *protasis*. See further under **apodosis**.

antonymy

This is the sense relationship of oppositeness between pairs of words, e.g. *hot/cold*, *alive/dead*, *parent/child*, *up/down*. As those *antonyms* show, there are different kinds of oppositeness in meaning:

- *hot/cold* represent the *antonymic pairs* (typically adjectives) which are at the opposite ends of a notional scale – here it is temperature. Such antonyms are *gradable*, in allowing degrees of comparison <<<hotter ----- colder>>> on the scale between (see further under **adjective**, section 3). Often one of the two antonyms is commoner than the other, e.g. *good* rather than *bad*, *deep* rather than *shallow*, *full* rather than *empty* (Crystal 2003), and seems to serve as the indexical word for the scale. It is the one used in open questions such as “How deep is the river?”
- *alive/dead* are *complementary antonyms*, because there is no scale between them. Saying someone is “half-dead” actually means they are alive. Normally the affirmation of one of the complementary antonyms entails negation of the other, and so *alive* means “not dead.”
- *parent/child* represents the kind of oppositeness that goes with nouns expressing reciprocal relationships, where the use of one entails the existence of the other. Some linguists call them *relational opposites*, others *converses*. Antonymic pairs like the adverbs/prepositions *up/down* also fall into this set.

Despite these differences, all antonymic pairs work on the same abstract parameter or scale, which explains how readily they associate with each other in our mental lexicons (Aitchison 2003).

ANY

This is an indefinite pronoun and determiner. See under **indefinite pronoun**.

ANYBODY, ANYONE, and ANYTHING

These are *indefinite pronouns*: see further under **indefinite pronoun**.

- For issues of grammatical agreement with them, see **agreement**, section 4.

AP

See **adjectival phrase**.

apodosis

In a conditional sentence, this is the proposition of the main/matrix clause which indicates the consequence of the *if*-clause. So the underlined clause in:

If it rains the event will be rescheduled.

is the **apodosis**, also known as the *consequent*. The *if*-clause is known as the *protasis* or *antecedent*. See further under **IF**.

apostrophe (1)

-
- 1 **apostrophes in syntax**
 - 2 **apostrophes as markers of omission**
 - 3 **apostrophes as markers of possession, and other relationships**
 - 4 **apostrophes with personal names ending in -s**
 - 5 **apostrophes on the wane**
-

1 Apostrophes in syntax

The **apostrophe** in an NP such as *the novelist's work* is both a mark of syntax and of punctuation. As a syntactic marker, it combines with the following *s* to show the **genitive/possessive** case, and that it is the **determinative** for the following noun *work* (see under **determinative**). Thus *novelist's* is syntactically bonded into the same NP as *work*. The fact that the relationship between them is not always possessive is why many grammarians prefer the term **genitive** (see further below, section 3, and under **case**). In its attachment to a word within the NP, the apostrophe is a type of **word punctuation** rather than **sentence punctuation**. See further under **punctuation**, sections 2 and 4.

2 Apostrophes as markers of omission

As a **punctuation** mark, the **apostrophe** has steadily evolved since early modern English. In C17 English it was a marker of an omitted letter or letters, as in Shakespeare Folios and Milton's works in words such as "mislik'd." It was "a kind of apology for omission," according to Harris (1752). The apostrophe is still used this way in modern English contractions of adjacent words, e.g. *don't*, *we'll*; see further under **contraction (1)**. It was once also used in contracted forms of individual words, e.g. *c'tee* for "committee," but this is no longer current practice: see **contraction (2)**.

3 Apostrophes as markers of possession, and other relationships

The use of the **apostrophe** as a marker of possession has evolved steadily over the last three centuries, out of the original use to mark omission. Though the apostrophe was evidently rationalized by some as a contraction of the possessive pronoun/determiner *his*, Samuel Johnson appreciated that the *s* derived from the Old English genitive inflection. His account in the introduction to his *Dictionary* (1755) of the **apostrophe 's** for the singular possessive noun codified its use,

and it was confirmed in mid-C18 grammars such as that of Lowth (1762). Only in C19 was the apostrophe applied as possessive marker to plural nouns, as an extraposed ' mark at the end. Though it has no impact on the pronunciation of the noun, its use serves to distinguish singular and plural possessives in writing, where either might apply: *the girl's birthday* vs. *the girls' birthday* (that of girl twins) – assuming that there is no contextual knowledge to disambiguate the NP.

An **apostrophe** is used to mark longer possessive phrases, as in *the king of Spain's daughter*, an example of the **group genitive** (see **genitive**, section 3). In *Laurel and Hardy's films* the single apostrophe confirms that the two collaborators form a joint coordinate. Compare the use of two separate apostrophes in *Fellini's and Bertolucci's movies*, where the persons named never collaborated in movie-making, and are mentioned as **segregated coordinates**. See under **coordination**, section 3.

In practice 's and s' are used to mark a variety of relationships other than possession – even though this was made central to its use by traditional grammarians, some of whom ruled out expressions like *the table's legs* and *Japan's coastline*, since they did not express possessive relationships and therefore misused the apostrophe. According to this view such NPs had to be rephrased as *the legs of the table*, etc. But as those examples show, the singular apostrophe has long been used for associative relationships such as **meronymy** (part-whole relationship). The apostrophe attached to plural nouns often expresses a generic relationship, as in *printers' ink*, though its use is somewhat variable (see further below, section 5).

4 Apostrophes on personal names ending in -s

Proper nouns ending in -s pose a problem in English orthography since the final -s does not represent plurality for the name *Jones* – any more than it does in common nouns such as *lens*. Traditional grammarians sought to resolve the problem by reference to the way the word was pronounced (i.e. its phonology), suggesting that a single-syllabled proper name with 's would be pronounced with two syllables, and written as in *Jones's day off*. It could thus be distinguished from the plural in *keeping up with the Joneses*, as well as the plural possessive in *the Joneses' dinner party*. But proper names consisting of two syllables or more were often exempted from this rule, and so *Dickens'* and *Thucydides' works* were to be written with only the extraposed apostrophe – whether this corresponded to pronunciation or not. In practice, many writers and editors sidestep the issue of pronunciation, and prefer to observe a general rule for all personal names ending in -s, whatever their syllable count. They use either:

- the extraposed apostrophe alone, as in *Jones', Thucydides'*, whatever the number of syllables in the name. This was the traditional practice for biblical and classical names (see *New Hart's Rules* 2005), applied by some to all personal names ending in -s.

- the full 's for all names, as in *Jones's*, *Thucydides's*, whatever the number of syllables in the name. This is standard practice in the US (see *Chicago Manual of Style* 2010), and increasingly in the UK.

Clearly this is a matter of orthography (how to disambiguate possessive structure in texts for *silent* reading), rather than grammar.

5 **Apostrophes on the wane**

Amid the general trend towards lighter punctuation (see **punctuation**, section 3), nonpossessive uses of the **apostrophe** are declining, e.g. in placenames such as *Kings Cross*, and in plural dates and numerical strings *1960s*, *fly 747s*, where they have always been anomalous. More generally, the use of the extraposed plural apostrophe is on the wane, for example in its generic applications in formal NPs like *Boys High School*, *Music Educators Association*, *Department of Veterans Affairs*, where the plural term indicates the people associated with the head noun, and is not possessive in any sense. The relationship is more like that which holds between a modifier and the base word of a compound, although noun compounds consisting of two successive nouns typically have the first one in its uninflected form: see further under **compound word**, section 3.

- For the origin of the term apostrophe, see under **apostrophe (2)**.

apostrophe (2)

Derived from Greek, this term means literally “a turning away” or “digression.” It referred to the fact that in productions of Greek drama, the actors address some of their remarks not to other actors on stage but directly to the audience. It has since become a rhetorical term, used for the writer’s tactic of occasionally addressing his or her readers directly, rather than concentrating on the narrative. In Nabokov’s novel *Lolita*, the central male character appeals to the reader from time to time with “Gentlemen of the jury” or “Gentlewomen of the jury,” as if they were judging him in a court of law.

apposition

- 1 **full apposition: the core criteria**
 - 2 **nonrestrictive and restrictive apposition**
 - 3 **partial apposition**
-

1 **Full apposition: the core criteria**

The term **apposition** refers to the juxtaposition of two grammatical units in a sentence with the same or similar referent. They may or may not have exactly the same grammatical structure, and it may or may not be possible to omit one of them without impairing the syntax of the sentence. Thus there are several parameters involved in apposition, on which grammarians diverge. The key properties are *coreference* and *juxtaposition*, with the canonical structure being two NPs set side by side, marked off by a pair of commas, as in:

I was in Australia, the land of birds, and hearing kookaburras laugh for the first time.

The **appositive** “land of birds” is an NP, like “Australia” and juxtaposed to it. It refers to the same entity, and could stand instead of it without impairing the syntax of the sentence. Any variation of the referent in the **appositive** material can make substitution impossible, as in:

I was hearing Australian birds, such as the kookaburra, for the first time.

Thus the juxtaposed example (“such as...”) challenges the core criterion of coreference, apart from its slightly different syntactic structure, and is not usually regarded as being in apposition to the core constituent (“Australian birds”).

2 Nonrestrictive and restrictive apposition

The canonical form of apposition is **nonrestrictive**, i.e. not essential to the definition of the entity referred to, as in both the examples used in section 1. In this respect they are like nonrestrictive relative clauses (see further under **relative clause**, section 3). However some appositive material is clearly restrictive in its relationship to the referent, as in

This is an old movie about the Dutch artist Rembrandt.

The term “sustainability” has multiple meanings.

We’ll get there in the year 2050.

As the examples show, the second element in **restrictive apposition** typically details the one that precedes (like the restrictive relative clause). The **appositive elements** appear with no syntactic separation or intervening comma, like a kind of fused head: see further under **fused head**.

3 Partial apposition

The examples discussed above show that apposition depends on both syntactic and semantic properties of the appositive material. Partial apposition can be found in parallel constructions like those identified in sections 1 and 2 above, and others, such as those formed with *OF*-phrase, or *and*:

First stop is the city of Manchester.

Thirdly and finally, we need someone to develop a promotional campaign.

In both examples the underlined element is clearly coreferential with the preceding grammatical unit; but they do not satisfy the strictest definition of apposition as being syntactically equivalent NPs.

argument of the verb

See under **thematic structure**, section 2; and **valency**, section 4.

article

In traditional English grammar, this referred to the very small word class comprising the **definite article** and **indefinite article**: *the* and *a/an* respectively. Their vital syntactic role is to signal the beginning of a noun phrase (see further under **noun phrase**). Both are now classified as **central determiners**. See further under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.

AS

This is one of the highly grammaticized prepositions of English (see under **preposition**, section 1). It also commonly appears as a subordinator in comparative clauses, and in adverbial clauses of comparison, manner, time, and reason (see further under **adverbial clause**). Just which of the latter is intended is sometimes ambiguous, as in:

They left by the back door as the police were approaching the house.

For the view that AS should no longer be regarded as a subordinator, see under **preposition**, section 2.

aspect

In English grammar this refers to the particular perspective a verb or rather verb phrase may embody on the situation or event expressed in it. Compare:

we went home (past)
we were going home (past progressive)
we had gone home (past perfect)

All three verbs refer to a past action, but with different implications. While *went* makes it a simple event in the past, *were going* adds durational perspective, making the action continue as the background to another event, e.g. *We were going home when the rain began*. By contrast, *had gone* adds a retrospective view, emphasizing the completion of the event: *We had gone home before the rain began*. The second and third angles on the action are the two major types of **aspect** which can be expressed in the English VP (see further under **verb phrase**, section 1). The first example above with its simple past tense is neutral as to aspect.

The aspect of a VP is independent of its **tense**, and can be expressed in both past and present VPs, as in:

I am driving you to the station. (present progressive)
I was driving you to the station. (past progressive)
He is driven mad by all the publicity. (present perfect)
He was driven mad by all the publicity. (past perfect)

Again in these examples, the **progressive aspect** shows that the action of the verb is continuing, and the **perfect aspect** that it has already finished as a point of reference. Note that the **progressive aspect** is sometimes referred to as **continuous**, **durative**, or **imperfect**.

The terms used to refer to the two conceptual categories of **aspectuality** vary from grammar to grammar:

<i>progressive</i>	<i>perfective</i>	Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999)
<i>imperfective</i>	<i>perfective</i>	Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004)

Thus all four grammarians use **perfective** as the categorial term for VPs formed with the past participle, to distinguish it from actual instances of the **perfect aspect**. They diverge over whether to use **progressive** for the other categorial term (i.e. the same term as for the VP formed with *-ing*), or to call it the **imperfective**. The latter

makes a useful parallel with *perfective*, and it connects with the term *imperfect*, used in traditional grammar for the *aspect* of a VP formed with *-ing*. Now that *imperfect* has been superseded by *progressive aspect* in all four modern reference grammars, the use of *imperfective* for the aspectual category stands apart from it.

Note that the two types of *aspectuality* tend to occur in different contexts of discourse. For more about them, see **progressive aspect** and **perfect aspect**.

aspectuality

See further under **aspect**, and **perfective**.

assertive

See under **nonassertive**.

assimilation of loanwords

Loanwords are one of the sources of new words (see **word formation**, section 2). They naturally come into English with some inbuilt properties relating to their source languages. These may be at several levels of language, from pronunciation, spelling, and morphology to their inherent grammar. Loanwords are usually modified over the course of time to accord more closely with the norms of English. So the nasal vowels in loanwords such as *envelope*, *restaurant* are anglicized in pronunciation; and the spellings of others, e.g. *motif*, *naïf*, have been normalized as *motive*, *naïve* in accordance with modern English orthography.

Some loanwords also undergo morphological adaptation as they are absorbed into English. So for example the French word *cerise* “cherry” (singular) shows how the final /s/ sound of the French word has been removed in the process of assimilation, on the assumption that it was a plural form, leaving the English singular form without it.

By contrast, the absence of the English plural *-s* from Latin loanwords like *candelabra*, *data*, *media* hides the fact that they are plural forms in their source languages. Those who know the source languages are acutely aware of the need to use plural verbs in agreement with them, and that there is a distinct singular form (*candelabrum*, *datum*, *medium*), though they may be rarely used in English (as with *datum*) or have acquired a distinct meaning (as with *medium*). Meanwhile forms like *data* and *media* are widely understood in English as neutral in terms of grammatical number, and used with singular as well as plural agreement (with verbs and pronouns), reflecting their use as **mass nouns** or **count nouns**. Thus modification to the underlying grammar of loanwords is brought to the surface in the associated syntax, and part of their assimilation into the English language. See further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**; **determiner**, section 4; and **agreement**, section 2.

asyndeton and asyndetic

This Greek term refers to *coordination* without an explicit form of conjunction: see **coordination**, section 7.

- For the use of commas as *asyndetic coordinators*, see under **comma**, section 4.

AT

This is one of the highly grammaticized prepositions of English: see under **preposition**, section 1.

auxiliary verb

-
- 1 auxiliary verbs as a subclass
 - 2 primary auxiliaries: *BE, HAVE, DO*
 - 3 modal auxiliaries
 - 4 periphrastic modals
 - 5 informal modal auxiliaries
 - 6 NICE properties
 - 7 structural analysis: dependent auxiliary vs. catenative
-

1 Auxiliary verbs as a subclass

English grammar uses a special subclass of verbs to express tense, aspect, voice, and modality in the VP, in combination with a *lexical* verb. A variety of **auxiliary verbs** are underlined in the following examples:

is calling was being called had been called do call
might call will be called could have been calling should have called

The first row exemplifies the three **primary auxiliaries**, *BE, HAVE, DO*, in some of their alternative forms and combinations with a lexical verb. The different combinations are detailed below in section 2. The second row exemplifies four of the nine **modal auxiliaries** in combination with a lexical verb, and with primary auxiliaries as well. Their order of appearance is strictly regulated, in that the modals always precede the primary auxiliaries, and where both *HAVE* and *BE* are involved, they appear in that order, followed finally by the lexical verb. A third and more open-ended group of *auxiliaries* are the **periphrastic modals**, such as *be going to* and *have (got) to*, which serve to paraphrase the modal auxiliaries.

2 Primary auxiliaries: BE, HAVE, DO

The three primary auxiliaries present different patterns of combination with the following lexical verb, in accordance with the different grammatical properties they express.

- *BE* combines with: (i) *-ing* forms as in *be calling* to express the progressive (or continuous) aspect; and (ii) with *-ed* (past participle) forms as in *be called* to express the passive voice
- *HAVE* combines with *-ed* (past participle) forms as in *have called* to express the perfect aspect
- *DO* combines with the infinitive as in *do call* to: (i) emphasize the verb; (ii) formulate negative clauses; and (iii) formulate interrogatives

See further under **BE; HAVE; and DO**.

3 Modal auxiliaries

The nine modal auxiliaries combine with infinitive forms of the lexical verb to express attitude and orientation to it, in terms of ability, inclination, intention, obligation, permission, as well as assessments of the possibility and frequency of the event embodied in it. Historically they form present/past tense pairs, *CAN/COULD*, *MAY/MIGHT*, *SHALL/SHOULD*, *WILL/WOULD*, although the past forms have now in each case developed independent modal meanings. For example, *WOULD* has acquired a habitual sense detached from time, as in:

They would walk in the woods every day.

The use of the past forms of modals to frame events in the past is now mostly found in subordinate clauses where the formal *sequence of tenses* is observed:

They thought that the weather would be fine.

See further under **modality and modal verb**, sections 3 and 4.

4 Periphrastic modals

In general terms the periphrastic modals express the same kinds of attitudes and orientations as modal auxiliaries, and like them they combine with the infinitive form of the lexical verb. But there are at least two subgroups of them, going by their syntactic behavior:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| (i) <i>dare (to)</i> | cf. <i>COULD</i> | <i>need (to)</i> | cf. <i>SHOULD</i> |
| <i>used to</i> | cf. <i>WOULD</i> | <i>ought (to)</i> | cf. <i>MUST</i> |
| (ii) <i>be able to</i> | cf. <i>CAN</i> | <i>be about to</i> | cf. <i>WILL</i> |
| <i>be going to</i> | cf. <i>WILL</i> | <i>be likely to</i> | cf. <i>WILL</i> |
| <i>be obliged to</i> | cf. <i>MUST</i> | <i>be supposed to</i> | cf. <i>SHOULD</i> |
| <i>be willing to</i> | cf. <i>WOULD</i> | <i>have (got) to</i> | cf. <i>MUST</i> |

The first set (i) consists of a single verb, while the second (ii) are all combinations with one of the primary auxiliaries. None of them require *DO*-support to express the negative (*ought not to*, *was not able to*), although *dare* and *need* are usually found with it. All of them allow subject inversion to formulate questions (*Ought I to?*; *Am I able to?*). They thus share two of the four key properties of auxiliaries (see further below, section 6).

Because of their formal differences, the two sets of periphrastic modals are given distinct names in modern English grammars. For Quirk et al. (1985), set (i) are *marginal modals* and set (ii) *semi-auxiliaries*; whereas for Biber et al. (1999), set (i) are *marginal auxiliaries* and set (ii) *semimodals*. This overlapping but divergent nomenclature does not help to distinguish the two sets, which are similar rather than different in their syntactic functions. An alternative name applicable to all of them is *quasi-modals* (Collins 2009b), which focuses on their semantic likeness to the core modal auxiliaries, and without the distracting question as to which “half” (*semi-*) they embody.

5 Informal modal auxiliaries

Beyond the well-recognized periphrastic modals, there are synthetic forms such as (*I'm gonna* (“going to”) and (*I've gotta* (“got to”) crystallizing out of them in

everyday speech. The omission of the preceding auxiliary, especially in the second case, is a basis for regarding them as incipient modal verbs, as argued by Krug (2000).

6 **NICE properties**

These are the four syntactic properties identified with **auxiliary verbs** (both *primary* and *modal auxiliaries*) which distinguish them from other English verbs, i.e. *negation*, *inversion*, *code*, *emphasis*. See further under **NICE**.

7 **Structural analysis: dependent auxiliary vs. catenative**

While traditional grammar and most modern grammars such as Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) maintain the distinction between auxiliaries and other verbs, some challenge it, most notably Huddleston and Pullum (2002). For them **auxiliary verbs** (both primary and modal auxiliaries) are entirely comparable to lexical verbs in their roles as operator of the clause. The fact that they take infinitive verbs as complements makes them no different from *catenative verbs* with their nonfinite complements (see further under **catenative verb**). Periphrastic modals like *be going to* are explained as “idioms” rather than complex VPs in which two different types of verb combine.

avalent

See under **valency**.

B

backchannel

This is the term used now by discourse analysts to refer to the feedback sounds (*mm, oh, uhuh*, etc.) provided by the listener to the speaker in a dialogue. They are the most common type of **reaction signal**: see further under **interjections**.

backformation

This term refers to the process of forming words by cutting back the existing stem, as *burgle* is derived from *burglar*, *jell* from *jelly*, *liaise* from *liaison*, *surveil* from *surveillance*. As those examples show, the **backformed** word is typically a verb derived from a noun, so that it changes its word class in the process. In some cases a new singular noun is backformed in English from a loanword ending in *-s*, on the assumption that the word borrowed is plural. Thus *cherry* is derived from medieval French *ciris* (modern “cerise”), and *currant* from “raisins de corauntz,” i.e. from Corinth (Peters 2004).

The source word for a **backformation** is always a special case and the derivational process ad hoc, so the product was often deprecated by early prescriptive grammarians – felt to be “irregular, and used only ignorantly, slangily or jocosely” (Fowler 1926). But many backformations are well established in the lexicon, at least in informal style. The larger scope of backformation can be seen in verbs backformed from pre-existing noun compounds, especially those ending in *-er* or *-ing*, e.g. *brain-wash*, *chain-smoke*, *day-dream*, *house-keep*, *sky-dive*.

Compare **backformation** as a derivational process with:

- **clipping**, where a given word or stem is abbreviated without any change to its word class, e.g. *exam* from *examination*
- **conversion**, where an existing word/stem is applied to a new grammatical role by its role in syntax without the addition of any inflectional suffixes: e.g. *to master the technique*
- **affixation**, where one or more of a set of established derivational *affixes* is added to an existing word or stem: *compare* > *comparable* > *comparability*

See further under **clipping**, **conversion**, and **derivation**.

backshift

See under **sequence of tenses**.

bahuvrihi compound

See **compound word**, section 3.

bare infinitive

See **infinitive**.

bare relative

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to the non-use of a relative pronoun to introduce a relative clause, referred to by other grammarians as *zero relativizer*. See further under **relative pronoun**, section 5.

base

Modern English grammarians use the term **base** to refer to the morphological unit of complex words to which affixes or other morphemic components can be added. For Quirk et al. (1985) the base itself may be simple, as with *cherri-* in the plural *cherries*, or complex as with *befriend* for the past form of *befriended*. Meanwhile *cherry* and *friend* are the **stems** in those cases (see further under **stem**).

Other grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002) also use **base** for referring to the source unit (simple, complex, or compound) from which other words are formed or derived, but with some differences in terminology:

- simple base: *friend* > *friends*; *cherri-* > *cherries* = special alternant (base)
- derivative (complex) base: e.g. *befriend* > *befriended*
- compound base: *girlfriend* (consists of two simple bases)
- lexical base: *cherry* – not part of a larger base found in word formation

Note that while many English lexical bases (like *cherry*) are **free bases** which can stand alone in a sentence, some never do and are therefore **bound**. Two groups of **bound bases**, both derived from classical loanwords, may be distinguished:

- (i) those found only in complex words combined with other affixes, e.g. *curs-* as in *cursive*, *incursion*. In comparative philology *curs-* is a **root** or **stem**. See **root**.
- (ii) those which form classical compounds, e.g. *hydro-* as in *hydrology*, *hydrography* (also called **combining forms**). See further under **combining form**, section 1.

- For more about **free** and **bound bases**, see under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**.

base form

- For the **base form** of verbs, see **verb**, section 4.
- For the **base form** of adjectives, see **adjective**, section 3.

BE

This lexeme is the most frequent verb in English, because of its use as an **auxiliary verb** as well as a **copular verb** (see further below). Its lemma includes eight different forms, more than any other English verb. The modern English paradigm is a mix of forms from three different verbs and different dialects of Middle English, standardized only in C16/C17 (see further under **suppletion and suppletive form**). They include:

- present tense forms: *am*, *is*, *are*
- past tense forms: *was*, *were*
- participles: (past) *been*, (present) *being*
- infinitive, imperative, present subjunctive: *be*

See further under **infinitive**, **imperative**, and **mandative subjunctive**.

The fossilized past subjunctive form *were* is now used only to express closed conditions: see under **subjunctive**, section 2.

The most important functions of *BE* as a **primary auxiliary** are to formulate the passive voice (e.g. *they were defeated*) and the progressive aspect (e.g. *we are coming*). The two can be combined, as in *I am being advised*. See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 2; **voice (1)**; and **aspect**.

As **copular verb**, *BE* serves to link the subject with its complement (noun, adjective, or adverbial):

<i>They are rebels.</i>	(noun)
<i>The air was humid.</i>	(adjective)
<i>The country is under water.</i>	(prepositional phrase/adverbial adjunct)

See further under **copular verb**.

Note that *BE* serves also as a quasi-modal verb when combined with a following *TO*-infinitive, as in:

<i>I am to visit the US next year.</i>
<i>He is to inherit the house.</i>

It expresses a complex form of modality, primarily **epistemic** but with an element of the **deontic** as well. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

BECAUSE

This subordinator (with its abbreviated form *'cos*) is by far the commoner of the two used to preface adverbial clauses of reason, in writing and speech (Biber et al. 1999). The other one, *SINCE*, is polysemous, which would account for its more limited use in this role (see further under **SINCE**).

BECAUSE is one of the few subordinators which does not also serve as a preposition. Its prepositional counterpart is the complex preposition *because of*. Compare:

<i>We stopped because it began to rain.</i>
<i>We stopped because of the rain.</i>

For more on subordinators and (complex) prepositions, see **subordinator**, section 1; and **preposition**, section 3.

BEFORE

This serves as a subordinator and preposition in English grammar. See **preposition**, section 1.

beneficiary

This is one of the thematic roles identified in case grammar, that of the person or entity intended to benefit from or incur the action of the verb. In English grammar the **beneficiary** is expressed by means of the indirect object or a prepositional phrase using *for*, as in the following:

<i>I bought her some flowers.</i>	<i>I bought some flowers for her.</i>
-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Some grammarians distinguish the beneficiary (or *benefactive*) role from that of *recipient*, i.e. the person or entity which actually receives something through the action of the verb:

I gave her some flowers. I gave some flowers to her.

The role of **beneficiary** is sometimes conflated with **goal**: see further under that heading.

BETWEEN YOU AND I

See under **I and ME**, section 2.

bigram

See under **collocation**, section 1.

bimorphemic

This is the morphologists' term for words that consist of two morphemes, whether a combination of free and bound morphemes (i.e. a *complex word*) or two free morphemes (i.e. a *compound word*). See further under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**; and **word**, section 6.

bipartite noun

This is the grammarians' term for a type of noun which conventionally ends in *-s*, although not plural in its meaning. Examples are *jeans, pants, pajamas*, and other items of clothing for the lower body, instruments for enhancing vision, such as *binoculars, glasses*, and tools with opposing arms, such as *calipers, scissors, tongs*. Grammatical agreement with them is in the plural (see **agreement**, section 5).

The *-s* ending on **bipartite nouns** seems to reflect the fact that each object consists of paired elements, and is therefore often referred to as *a pair of pants/glasses/tongs* etc. when counted. Likewise, to specify two or more of these objects, idiom requires us to use *two/three/four pairs of pants*, etc. They cannot simply be pluralized. See further under **suppletion and suppletive form**.

Singular forms of **bipartite nouns** are occasionally seen in advertising material for clothing or two-part instruments, as in *a shapely pant, high quality steel scissor* (Wickens 1992). The form without *-s* is also the one used as categorial modifier, as in *pajama top, scissor blade*.

blending and blends

This is a mode of word formation which creates a single new word by combining the front end of one with the back end of another. Well-established **blends** can be found in *brunch* ("breakfast + lunch"), *electrocute* ("electricity + execute"), *smog* ("smoke" + "fog"), *telecast* ("television" + "broadcast"), and others in the names of hybrid animals: *catalo* ("cattle" + "buffalo") and fruits: *plumcot* ("plum" + "apricot"). However, many blends created to combine two concepts are too obscure and disappear without trace, such as *incentivation* "incentive + motivation," *mastige* "mass prestige."

Note that in some **blends** (like *mastige*) the first syllable is actually a complete word. This is true also of recent examples like *fanzine*, *vodkatini*. Others begin with a part word and end with a full one, as does *cocacolonization*. It can even happen in the middle of the word, as in *ambisextrous*.

Blends are sometimes found in pre-existing words and exploited for their humor without regard to their derivation. Hence Woody Allen's remark that *incompatibility* in a marriage seems to occur when the man has lost his *income* and the woman her "patability."

The poet Lewis Carroll is remembered for his whimsical **blends** such as *chortle* (chuckle + snort) and *slithy* (slimy + lithe), in which the end of a one-syllabled word is inserted into a two-syllabled word. Carroll himself called them **portmanteau words**.

BOTH

This is a determiner and pronoun, indefinite or nonspecific as to the two items it refers to, yet universal in that it includes the whole of that set.

See further under **indefinite pronoun**; and **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.

BOTH also combines with **AND** to form a pair of **correlative conjunctions**. See further under **conjunction**, section 5.

bound base

See further under **base**.

bound morpheme and free morpheme

In introductions to English morphology, **morphemes** are often categorized as either **free** or **bound**. **Free morphemes** are words able to stand alone in a sentence, whereas **bound morphemes** are part(s) of words that cannot work alone but need to be attached to other, free morphemes. In sets of words such as *hope*, *hoping*, *hopeful*, the free morpheme *hope* contrasts with the bound morphemes *-ing*, *-ful* (both affixes). The free morphemes of English are often the *stems* or *bases* to which affixes are attached (see further under **stem**).

Yet *hoping* demonstrates one of the problems with this notion of **bound** and **free**: the fact that not all "free" morphemes appear in exactly the same form when combined with affixes (it can be *hope* or *hop-*), and the latter cannot stand alone in a sentence. In fact English has many such variant forms, created by standard alternations in the spelling system, where "e" is dropped before suffixes beginning with "i" or "e," and where "i" substitutes for "y." There's no standard name for them: some grammarians (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) call them **alternant bases**, while others put them under the general heading of **allomorphs** (see further under **allomorph**, sections 1 and 4).

Another set of morphemes which challenge the **bound/free** dichotomy are the **bound bases** often found as pairs in neoclassical compounds. See further under **combining form**.

brackets

Pairs of **brackets** are used to punctuate a grammatically independent string of words interpolated into a sentence. For example:

Zurich was my first (and last) destination in Europe.

The brackets represent an intermediate degree of separation from the rest of the sentence for the words they enclose. Compare the more substantial break created by *dashes*, and the slighter one made by paired commas. See further under **dash**, section 4; and **comma**, section 2.

Those brackets are also known as **round brackets** or *parentheses*, so as to distinguish them from other types used in linguistics and text editing:

- **slash brackets** used to mark speech sounds, e.g. /s/ vs. /z/ as the plural sound in *cats* and *dogs*. Note that slash brackets are used in linguistics to represent phonemes, and compare square brackets below.
- **curly brackets** or “braces,” used to enclose a morpheme, free or bound, e.g. the adverbial suffix {-ly}.
- **square brackets** used to mark editorial additions to the text, as opposed to things added by the author: *The book was published earlier [1925]*. In linguistics, square brackets are used to represent speech sounds at the phonetic rather than phonemic level.

branching

See **left-branching**, and **left- and right-branching sentences**.

bullets

These are the newest device in the punctuation inventory, used for the specific purpose of articulating the items in a list. **Bullets** appear in vertical sets, one at the start of each item. The end of the bulleted item can be marked with standard punctuation such as **comma** or **semicolon**, or the absence of punctuation in variable **line space**. For a nearby example, see entry for **BY**, section 1. For a list using bullets as well as semicolons with internally punctuated items, see **semicolon**.

A full stop is often put at the end of the final item in a **bulleted list**, especially by those who regard the list as completing the sentence. Yet sentence structure is effectively suspended by the vertical list of points. A colon is conventionally used to mark the end of the prefatory statement before a set of bullets, as in the next entry for **BUT**. The items marked by bullets may begin with a capital letter or not, depending on their length and whether they are fully fledged sentences themselves. Single words and phrases generally appear without capital letters.

BUT

This is one of the commonest English **coordinators**, used to join phrases and clauses of equal weight which are intended to contrast with each other, as in:

... cold hands but a warm heart

The sun was shining but there was a cold wind blowing.

In cases like these, *BUT* is the conjunction linking two constituents of the same sentence. *BUT* can also be used at the start of a sentence, where it forges a link with the previous sentence, as in:

He tried to reassure them. But everything he said made them more suspicious.

Using *BUT* at the start of a sentence was deemed ungrammatical by traditional grammarians, who assumed that – as a **coordinating conjunction** – it must conjoin items within the same sentence. Yet modern grammarians such as Quirk et al. (1985) recognize that it is perfectly idiomatic for *BUT* to occur at the start of a sentence, and in that position it operates as a connective adverb or **conjunct**. See further under **coordinator** and **conjunct**.

BY

-
- 1 **BY as a preposition**
 - 2 **BY-phrase in passive constructions**
 - 3 **BY in multiword verbs**
 - 4 **BY as a prepositional adverb**
-

1 **BY as a preposition**

This is its primary role, working in several semantic roles. Its range includes expressing meanings such as:

- *space*: closeness to an object (*put it by the door*), a passage through space (*came by the expressway*)
- *time*: an end point in time (*send it by Sunday*), and in phrases such as *by the time of*, *by the end of*
- *means/ instrument*: a mode of transport (*came by bus*); of communication (*by email*); of an abstract process or cause (*undo by neglect*; *excited by the news*)
- *authorship*: *a book by Crystal*, *picture by Monet*

In its more abstract meanings, *BY* is one of the **grammaticized prepositions**: see further under **preposition**, section 1.

2 **BY-phrase in passive constructions**

BY is the default preposition in the agentive phrase associated with a passive verb, as in:

The army was supported by lethal airstrikes against the rebel forces.

This agentive use of *BY* can be seen as an extension of its ordinary role in expressing means or instrument. Yet in passive constructions the **BY-phrase** is actually less common than the **agentless passive**, i.e. one in which the agent is left unstated. Note that *GET*-passives do not usually appear with agentive *BY*-phrases either. See further under **passive voice**, sections 2 and 3.

3 **BY in multiword verbs**

BY is a component in a number of multiword verb units, including phrasal verbs such as *get by* (“manage”), and prepositional verbs such as *come by*

(“acquire”), *swear by* (“rely on”). In this role it has traditionally been called a **particle**, because of its grammatical ambivalence in relation to the verb and its complement. See further under **particle**, and **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

4 **BY as a prepositional adverb**

The grammatical status of *BY* in examples like *They came by on Friday* and *They came by our place* has challenged grammarians not wishing to call it a particle. For Quirk et al. (1985) it is a **prepositional adverb**: it qualifies the meaning of the verb *came* in the first example (= adverb), but can also relate to the object complement as in the second (= preposition). Other grammarians simply analyze it as a special kind of preposition. For Biber et al. (1999), it's a **bound preposition**, and for Huddleston and Pullum (2002) an **intransitive preposition**. See further under **preposition**, section 4.

C

CAN

This is the third commonest **modal verb** (after *WILL* and *WOULD*), used primarily to express “ability” and “possibility” (like *COULD*). It also serves as an alternative to *MAY* in questions seeking permission. The three meanings of *CAN* are illustrated in the following:

You can do it.

It can happen.

Can I help you?

See further under **COULD**; **MAY**; and **modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 3.

capitalization

The use of **capital letters** interfaces with English grammar at several points:

- an initial capital letter identifies the first word in a sentence (in combination with the full stop marking the end of the previous sentence).
- an initial capital letter serves to mark words which are **proper nouns**, personal and geographical (*Kenneth, Kenya*), and all bar the function words in **proper names** when they are cited in full, as in *Department of Foreign Affairs*, the *Hundred Years War*: see further under **proper noun and proper name**.
- in word formation, full capitalization is used to mark **initialisms** forged out of proper names, such as *BBC* (*British Broadcasting Corporation*), as well as acronyms formed out of a string of common words: *AIDS* (“auto-immune deficiency syndrome”). However acronyms usually lose their capital letters once they become established. See further under **acronym**.

In other respects, **capitalization** is a feature of orthography and editorial practice, e.g. when used to mark the generic word of an abbreviated proper name, e.g. *the Department/department* as the second and subsequent reference to the *Department of Agriculture*.

capitonym

A **capitonym** is a word with the same spelling as another except that one is regularly capitalized and the other not (except at the start of a sentence), and they mean different things. For example: *china* “crockery” and *China*, the largest country in Asia; *march* “stride like a soldier” and *March*, the third month of the year. Capitonyms are a special type of **homography**: see further under **homograph**.

case

- 1 **grammatical case**
 - 2 **case in modern English nouns**
 - 3 **case and English word order**
 - 4 **case in English pronouns**
 - 5 **case in post-traditional English grammar**
-

1 Grammatical case

The concept of **case** is borrowed from classical grammar, where it referred to the changing forms of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, according to their grammatical roles in the syntax of a clause or sentence. The variant forms used to express case are illustrated in the following singular paradigm for one of the most common classes of noun in Latin:

Nominative	<i>dominus</i>	“lord” (as subject)
Vocative	<i>domine</i>	“O Lord” (= direct address)
Accusative	<i>dominum</i>	“lord” (as object)
Genitive	<i>domini</i>	“lord’s”
Dative	<i>domino</i>	“to/for the lord”
Ablative	<i>domino</i>	“by/with/from the lord”

The changing endings which make the distinct case forms for the noun are its **inflections** (see further under **inflection**).

In Old English, nouns were also marked by different inflections for their **case**, according to class they belonged to:

Nominative	<i>cyning</i>	“king” (as subject)
Accusative	<i>cyning</i>	“king” (as object)
Genitive	<i>cyninges</i>	“king’s”
Dative	<i>cyninge</i>	“to/for the king”
Instrumental	<i>cyninge</i>	“by/with the king”

See further under **genitive, nominative, accusative, dative**.

2 Case in modern English nouns

The older English case endings illustrated above were whittled away over the centuries, so that now only the genitive inflection remains for English nouns, as when *driver* becomes *driver’s* in *driver’s license*. Its most important syntactic function is to show the relationship between two successive nouns. The first noun marked with ‘s is in fact a *determinative* in the NP it forms with the second noun (see further under **determinative**). But the genitive inflection can also be attached to a longer NP, as in *the Duke of Edinburgh’s birthday*. This is part of the contemporary argument for regarding the ‘s as a **clitic** rather than an inflection. See further under **clitic**.

English nouns no longer have any case marking to distinguish the nominative and accusative cases of nouns taking on subject and object roles respectively. Compare:

The driver saluted the policeman.

with

The policeman saluted the driver.

Because English nouns have the same form for subject and object roles, grammarians refer to it as the **common case** (see further under that heading).

3 Case and English word order

As the contrasting examples of section 2 show, subject and object roles are indicated in modern English through their place relative to the verb in the ordering of the clause, hence the canonical SVO of declarative clauses (see further under **clause**, section 1). In traditional English grammar, the functional *role* of the S is sometimes referred to as “nominative” and that of the O as “accusative,” but this is not aligned with any case markings. Likewise the direct and indirect objects were once distinguished by their case endings as *accusative* and *dative*, but now by their order (indirect before direct object):

The driver gave the policeman his license.

The policeman gave his license a quick look.

As those examples of “license” show, the noun acting as head of the object NPs is the same in form (= *common case*) whether it is the **indirect object** or **direct object**. Those roles go with their order of appearance following the verb. See further under **object**.

Clausal relationships are also indicated in modern English by means of function words such as prepositions. So the first sentence above could be rephrased as:

The driver gave his license to the policeman.

Here the indirect object has been paraphrased with a prepositional phrase so the “the policeman” becomes object of the preposition, not the verb. Again there is no case ending to mark the change – only the fact that “the policeman” follows the preposition “to,” which separates it from the verb. Thus function words such as prepositions serve to mark the boundaries between successive constituents in English sentences, and to indicate their roles within the clauses or constituent phrases. See further under **prepositional phrase**.

4 Case in English pronouns

In modern English it is only the personal pronouns which retain a modicum of case marking which varies according to their grammatical role. For example, *WE* is the **nominative case**, used whenever it appears as the subject of a clause, but it becomes *us* as the object of a clause or preposition, i.e. the **accusative case**.

As possessor, *we* becomes *our* in the **genitive case**, although this is now treated independently as a **determiner** within the NP (see further under **determiner**).

Similar case marking can be seen in the changes of form for the personal relative and interrogative pronouns: *WHO*, *WHOM*, *WHOSE*. In such cases it is still useful to identify the different forms by their traditional names (nominative, accusative, genitive), but they may equally be called by their functional roles: subjective, objective, possessive, used by Quirk et al. (1985).

5 Case in post-traditional English grammar

The reinterpretation of **case**, in terms of structural and semantic relations between nouns and their neighbors in the clause, has been taken much further in contemporary English grammars. This has generated a number of new approaches, including *case grammar*, *generalized phrase-structure grammar*, and *lexical-functional grammar*. It has also led to fresh analyses of other grammatical concepts, such as **transitivity** and verb **valency** (see further under those headings). Though their nomenclature varies, these approaches all help to explain how the location of nouns/NPs within the English clause establishes their grammatical roles and meaning, without any formal case marking.

case grammar

This theory of grammar, first proposed by Charles Fillmore (1968) postulates a set of semantic functions or **thematic roles** as grammatical primitives in formulating sentences (rather than syntactic rules). These semantic functions such as *agent*, *patient*, *goal* are the various **deep cases** which are realized in the NPs of the clause. The **thematic roles** of case grammar underlie more recent theories of grammar such as **government-binding theory (GB)** and its **theta roles**. See further under **deep case**, **government-binding theory**, and **theta roles**.

cataphora and cataphoric

See under **anaphora**.

catenative verb

- 1 **catenative verbs and semi-auxiliaries**
 - 2 **complementation for catenatives**
 - 3 **meanings expressed by catenatives: Types I, II, and III**
 - 4 **catenatives and auxiliary verbs**
-

1 Catenative verbs and semi-auxiliaries

The category of **catenative verbs** has been recognized only quite recently in English grammars. Catenatives take other nonfinite verbs as their complements, hence the suggestion of “chaining together” embedded in their name. The catenatives underlined in *seemed to grow*, *want to come* look rather like *semi-auxiliaries* (as in *used to grow*, *had to come*), except that the *to* clearly belongs to the following infinitive in the case of catenatives, and has traditionally been associated with the semi-auxiliary (see further in section 4 below). The two differ also in the meanings they express (see section 3 below).

2 Complementation for catenatives

Catenative verbs can be complemented by either the *TO*-infinitive or an *-ing* *participle*, and in some cases both. The following examples show the two major types of complementation:

They seem to like the same things.

He began planning/to plan the summer holiday immediately.

I remember leaving the book on the table.

We love to visit/visiting your country.

The alternative constructions in some cases seem to carry slightly different nuances, in others their meaning is much the same.

► For more on the *ing-participle*, see **gerund-participle**.

3 Meanings expressed by catenatives: Types I, II, and III

Catenative verbs differ from semi-auxiliaries in the meanings they express. Instead of paraphrasing the senses of modal verbs, they provide a perspective on the verbal process (as do *seem*, *begin*), or express a mental or emotional perspective on it (as do *remember*, *love*). The first group like *seem* (Type I) includes:

<i>appear</i>	<i>cease</i>	<i>chance</i>	<i>continue</i>	<i>fail</i>	<i>finish</i>	<i>get</i>
<i>happen</i>	<i>help</i>	<i>keep</i>	<i>manage</i>	<i>stop</i>	<i>tend</i>	

The second group like *remember* (Type II) includes:

<i>attempt</i>	<i>consider</i>	<i>detest</i>	<i>endeavor</i>	<i>expect</i>	<i>forget</i>	<i>hate</i>
<i>hope</i>	<i>intend</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>prefer</i>	<i>regret</i>	<i>resent</i>	<i>risk</i>
<i>strive</i>	<i>try</i>	<i>want</i>				

Some of these catenatives take only a *TO*-infinitive, some only an *-ing* participle, while a minority can take either. In all of them the subject of the catenative is the implied subject of the complementary verb.

Some modern grammars include a wider range of verbs than those just listed under the heading of catenatives. The *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985) included only the first group (Type I) shown above, whereas the *Cambridge Grammar* (2002) includes both Types I and II as **simple catenatives**. It allows also for a third group of **complex catenatives** (Type III), where a noun phrase comes in between the verb and the *TO*-infinitive. It serves as the object of the catenative as well as the rank-shifted subject of the complementary verb. For example:

She advised the parents to come.

Other complex catenatives are:

<i>ask</i>	<i>entreat</i>	<i>invite</i>	<i>oblige</i>	<i>persuade</i>	<i>remind</i>
<i>request</i>	<i>teach</i>	<i>tell</i>	<i>urge</i>		

As is evident, these verbs can be used to communicate a particular kind of speech act, though they are not speech act verbs. See further under **performative verb**.

The *Longman Grammar* (1999) groups all three types (I, II, III) together with those which take a content clause as complement, and applies the term **controlling verb** to them. See further under **complement clause**.

4 Catenatives and auxiliary verbs

The separateness of the finite and nonfinite elements in **catenative constructions** like those illustrated above is part of Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) argument that both primary and modal auxiliaries should be analyzed as

heads of VP, rather than making them *dependent auxiliaries*. The infinitive complement to the auxiliary is treated as a subordinate nonfinite clause. See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7.

causative verb

Some lexical verbs are **causative** in the sense that they express a notion of causation or facilitation in the act of setting something in motion. They include verbs with a range of interpersonal nuances such as:

<i>allow</i>	<i>assist</i>	<i>authorize</i>	<i>cause</i>	<i>compel</i>	<i>enable</i>
<i>encourage</i>	<i>entitle</i>	<i>force</i>	<i>help</i>	<i>induce</i>	<i>influence</i>
<i>inspire</i>	<i>oblige</i>	<i>permit</i>	<i>prompt</i>	<i>require</i>	<i>tempt</i>

When construed with a following NP + TO-infinitive, they detail who/what caused or facilitated something to happen, as in:

He allowed/compelled me to come.

The advertisement will encourage/require them to apply for the job.

Verbs like these are treated by some grammarians as part of the larger set of **catenative verbs** (see further under **catenative verb**, section 3).

Many types of causation are expressed through causative constructions formulated with the verbs *have* or *get*. For example:

She'll have the committee endorse that decision.

We should get the house repainted.

In these cases, the subject of *have/get* is projected as prime mover(s) of the action, but it is actually carried out by some other party. That party is named in the first example (*the committee*), but left unnamed in the second example. Instead the object of the action verb (*repainted*) is **raised**, making it a passive construction. See further under **raising**; and **get**, section 4.

central determiner

See under **determiner**, section 3.

Chomsky

The name of Noam **Chomsky** is very much associated with American transformational–generative grammar, and its rule-based approach to the syntax of the clause. His foundation account can be found in *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). His work had a strong influence on both grammar and linguistics in the second half of the twentieth century. He is also known as a political activist. See further under **transformational–generative grammar**.

circumstance

In systemic–functional grammar, the **circumstance(s)** are the adverbial elements of the clause that contextualize the **process** and the roles of the **participant(s)**. Their function, like that of the **adverbial adjunct** in other grammars, is to enhance, extend, elaborate, and project the action/process

expressed by the verb (see further under **adjunct**, section 2). They consist of a single adverb or a phrase, especially a prepositional phrase, as illustrated in the list below. They contribute to the meaning of the clause in a variety of ways, expressing:

- extent (distance, duration, frequency) e.g. *through the winter*
- location (place, time) e.g. *down by the river*
- manner (means, quality, comparison, degree) e.g. *with a fork-lift truck*
- cause (reason, purpose, behalf) e.g. *due to the lack of space*
- contingency (condition, default, concession) e.g. *in case of emergency*
- accompaniment (comitative, additive) e.g. *along with his cousin*
- role (guise, product) e.g. *by way of an assistant*
- matter (topic) e.g. *with respect to his employment*
- angle (source, viewpoint) e.g. *according to his employer*

Many of these types of circumstance are associated with particular types of verb process (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The first seven are all found with **material** and **behavioral processes**, the last two with **verbal processes**. See further under **process** and **participant**.

classical compound

For the morphological structure of neoclassical compounds, formed in English using Greek and Latin stems, see **neoclassical compound**.

classifier

In systemic–functional grammar, **classifier** is the term for the premodifier which comes immediately before the head of the noun phrase, and specifies the class to which the head noun belongs. For example, the underlined words in the following: *a small beach house, the only surviving soldier from World War II*. Other grammars refer to classifiers as **categorial** or **defining adjectives**: see **adjectives**, section 2.

clausal order

The order of items within the English clause has evolved over the course of its 1500-year history, and is now almost invariably SVO (subject + verb + object/adverbial/complement) in written declarative clauses. This SVO order is now used 99% of the time, where it was only 86% around 1400, and 48% in Old English (Fries 1940). The much lower rate in the Old English period correlates with the much more extensive marking of grammatical case on all nouns, pronouns, and determiners (see further under **case**). This meant that the same clausal relations – subject, object (direct/indirect) – could be expressed whatever the order of items. Their interpretation did not depend on their position relative to the verb, as in modern English. English **clausal order** (or “word order” as it is often called) is now essentially predetermined by the function of the clause: whether it is declarative (SVO), interrogative (VSO), or imperative (VO). However, the selection of items following the verb tends to be determined by the type of verbal process built into it. See further under **clause**, sections 1 and 2.

Note that some grammarians (e.g. Dixon and Aikhenvald 2002) prefer the term *constituent order* to clausal order or *word order*.

clause

- 1 **clause patterns in declarative clauses**
 - 2 **variation of standard clause patterns**
 - 3 **obligatory and optional elements of the finite clause**
 - 4 **types of finite clause (main, matrix, and subordinate)**
 - 5 **nonfinite clauses**
-

1 Clause patterns in declarative clauses

The **clause** is the essential unit of English syntax. Any English sentence consists of one or more clauses with a set of grammatical constituents in a more-or-less fixed order. In *declarative clauses* (i.e. those that make a statement or proposition), there are seven essential patterns, correlating with different kinds of verb for which these are the obligatory constituents.

SV: subject + verb

He escaped.

SVO: subject + verb + object

He took his bag.

SVA: subject + verb + adverbial

He went away.

SVC: subject + verb + complement

He became a sailor.

SVOO: subject + verb + object (indirect) + object (direct)

He sent her a letter.

SVOA: subject + verb + object + adverbial

He put it in the post.

SVOC: subject + verb + object + complement

He made it his duty.

These are the kernel structures of declarative clauses, each of which can be elaborated with other optional adverbial (A) elements, as discussed further below. Each pattern tends to correlate with particular types of verb:

SV: verbs that describe movement or a continuing action

They departed. They were singing.

SVO: verbs that express an impact on something/someone else

I carried the suitcase. They drove me.

SVA: verbs that detail an action in space/time, or the way it was carried out

We ran down the road. The rain started unexpectedly.

SVC: verbs that link what follows back to describe the subject

Jane is a good teacher. John seems very knowledgeable.

SVOO: verbs that describe the transmission of something/person to another

He gave her the book. She sent him a thankyou note

SVOA: verbs that describe the placement of objects

She put it in the corner. They threw it out of the window.

SVOC: verbs that attach a mental or verbal assessment to something/someone

They thought it unwise. They named us their representatives.

Note that the V in all these patterns is *finite* (see **finite verb**). All of them contain the S + V sequence, whatever the structure after the verb. In traditional English grammar, this broad generalization is captured by the notion of **subject and predicate** (S + P), though there's considerable variation within the *predicate*. Predicates may be simple or complex, as the structural patterns show. See further below (section 3) for obligatory and optional elements of finite declarative clauses.

- ▶ For the different types of **transitivity** embodied in the different clause patterns, see further under **transitivity**, sections 1, 4, and 5.
- ▶ For the analysis of clause constituents in terms of **arguments of the verb**, see under **valency**, section 2.

2 Variation of standard clause patterns

The S + V (S + P) pattern of declarative clauses holds for well over 99% of modern English sentences (see **clausal order**). Nowadays the only variations in declarative clause word order are to be found in specialized inversions, such as:

- object (NP) fronting, associated with **topicalization** in spoken discourse:
Horror movies I avoid.

See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3.

- adverbial fronting, as in

Here comes the bus. (AVS)

Hardly had they arrived [when ...] (AVSv)

Never have I seen so many penguins. (AVSvO)

So do they all. (AVS)

See further under **inversion**.

- verb fronting in certain types of **subjunctive**, as in:

Were I still a student, [I would ...] (VSAC)

May he forgive you. (VSvO)

Should we become a republic, [Australians would be able to ...] (VSvC)

See further under **subjunctive**, section 4; and **hypothetical**.

Note that the fronted verb in those examples is usually an auxiliary or modal verb (annotated as V), while the lexical verb with which it combines is annotated as *v* (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 1; and **modality and modal verb**).

Those variations apart, the form of the English clause changes regularly when it is not a statement, as when it poses a question or issues a command:

Question:

Do you like it? (VSvO) *Can you call me tomorrow?* (VSvO)

Command:

Help me! (VO) *Take it to the cashier.* (VOA)

In the **interrogative syntax** used in those questions, the verb element is prioritized over the subject. The commands illustrate the use of **imperative syntax**, where the subject is usually omitted: see further under **interrogative** and **imperative**.

Note that the function of the clause is not necessarily aligned with the syntax in which it is formulated. Thus *Could you open the window?* is more likely to be a gentle directive than a question, despite its interrogative syntax. See further under **command**.

3 Obligatory and optional elements of the finite clause

The clause patterns shown above are the minimal structures required for the type of verb used. But many a clause consists of rather more than the obligatory elements, usually adverbial extras. These can be located at almost any point within the clause structure, depending on the type of adverbial. In everyday English they commonly occur as the first or last element:

Tomorrow I'll go to the market by car. (ASVAA)

Optional adverbials, especially modal or stance adverbials, may also occur in the middle of the core structure:

I certainly will go to the market tomorrow. (SAVAA)

They may indeed appear in the midst of a compound verb phrase, making it discontinuous:

I'll certainly go to the market tomorrow. (SVA_vAA)

For more on the mobility of adverbs and adverbials within the clause, see under **adverbial**, section 4.

4 Types of finite clause

(i) **Main and subordinate clauses** Clauses can be typed according to their status in the syntactic hierarchy. At the highest level is the **main clause** (known in traditional grammar as the **principal clause**). The lower clauses are termed **subordinate** by Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002): whereas they are **dependent clauses** for Biber et al. (1999) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). So in the sentence: *They rode bicycles along the track until it petered out in the sand*, the structure is as follows:

They rode bicycles along the track (main clause)
until it petered out in the sand. (subordinate clause)

Like the main clause, the subordinate clause has an expressed subject and a finite verb marked for tense or modality, but its status is (usually) signaled by the presence of a subordinator (or complementizer/relativizer): here it's "until".

In this case the main clause could stand alone as an **independent clause** in a simple sentence (see further under **sentence**, section 1). However a main clause whose dependent clause is **embedded** as its complement cannot be an independent clause. Rather it is a **matrix clause**, as in:

He knew (main clause, matrix clause)
that she was well qualified for the job. (subordinate clause complement)

Note that **matrix clauses** can also be **subordinate clauses**, as in:

We discovered (main clause)
he knew (subordinate clause, matrix clause)
that she was well qualified for the job. (subordinate clause complement)

A close relationship between a main clause and its subordinate(s) can also be seen when the latter is a relative clause attached to the subject, as in:

The job which was advertised did not mention professional experience.

Here the underlined embedded clause (subordinate) is very closely tied to the subject of the main clause. In fact it is a **defining** or **restrictive relative clause** (see further under **relative clause**, section 3). Note that the term **embedding** associated with **subordinate clauses** is applied more and less broadly by different grammarians. See further under **embedded clause**.

(ii) **Subtypes of subordinate clause** English grammarians usually identify four main types of subordinate clause:

- **complement clauses** or **content clauses** (traditionally called **noun clauses** or **nominal clauses**): see further under **complement clause**
- **relative clauses** (in traditional grammar **adjectival clauses**): see further under **relative clause**
- **adverbial clauses**: see further under **adverbial clause**
- **comparative clauses**: see further under **comparative clause**

The most diverse of the four groups is the adverbial clause, although Huddleston and Pullum (2002) suggest that much of its diversity can be analyzed in terms of a preposition + content clause complement, which goes with an enlarged conception of prepositions: see further under **preposition**, section 4.

Two other very specific types of subordinate clause are the **comment clause** and the **fact clause**: see further under those headings.

5 Nonfinite clauses

The clause patterns discussed in the previous sections all involve a subject and a finite verb, in accordance with the traditional definition of a clause. Yet modern English sentences often include dependent clause-like structures with nonfinite verb parts, as underlined in:

They wouldn't have wanted their children not to be there.
Being an anxious person, she kept the doors locked.
The office was tidy, papers piled neatly and books stacked in rows on the shelves.

The nonfinite clauses underlined in those sentences contain several kinds of nonfinite verbs: **infinitive** “be,” **present participle** “being,” and **past participles**

“piled, stacked.” By this they become dependents of the finite verb in an adjoining clause. They often borrow their grammatical subject from the adjoining clause. In the first sentence it is extracted from the object of the preceding finite clause; in the second sentence from the subject of the clause following. Only in the third sentence do the nonfinite clauses have their own independent subjects. Nonfinite clauses can also serve as constituents within a main clause, as in:

Having my photo taken took less time than I expected.

In this case the nonfinite clause is itself the subject of the clause.

- For the structuring of clauses into complex and compound sentences, see under **sentence**, section 1; **subordination**; and **coordination**.

clause complex

In systemic–functional grammar this refers to the syntactic structure created by one or more subordinate clauses and the main clause. See **clause**, section 4.

clefting

Clefting is a marked way of formulating a simple statement, so that one particular constituent is foregrounded in a separate clause, creating a *cleft sentence*. For example:

We met them at the airport.

becomes

It was at the airport that we met them.

They need a lot of support.

becomes

What they need is a lot of support.

or

A lot of support is what they need.

In each case, one or more constituents of the simple sentence is/are extracted (as underlined), and foregrounded in the complex sentence that paraphrases it. The cleft sentence divides otherwise integrated elements of the predicate to underscore the mutual relationship between them. Note that clefting can also occur in questions, as in:

Was it at the airport that we met them?

The examples illustrate three different types of clefting:

- the *IT-cleft* sentence
- the *pseudo-cleft sentence*, and not too surprisingly
- the *reverse(d) pseudo-cleft* sentence

Of the three types, *IT-clefts* are by far the most common (Biber et al. 1999). See further under **IT-cleft sentence** and **pseudo-cleft sentence**.

clipping

This term refers to the process of abbreviation by which shorter new words are formed by cutting off a part or parts of the full word. The *clipped form* may then be

- the front end of a word, e.g. *exam* from “examination,” *lab* from “laboratory”
- the back end of a word, e.g. *bus* from “omnibus,” *phone* from “telephone”
- the middle, e.g. *flu* from “influenza,” *fridge* from “refrigerator”

Of the three types, the first is by far the most common (Quirk et al. 1985).

Clipping contrasts with *contraction*, whereby a new word is derived from the front and back ends of the base without much of the middle, e.g. *dept* for “department.” See further under **contractions (2)**.

Note that **clippings** may themselves serve as bases for fresh derivations, and so hypocoristic forms such as *footie*, *cabbie* are derived from the clipping of “football,” “cab-driver.” See further under **base** and **hypocoristic**.

clitic

A **clitic** is a linguistic item which attaches itself to another word, either to its start, as a *proclitic*, or to its end, as an *enclitic*. It is a word, rather than a suffix, but cannot be stressed when bound to another. English has few *proclitics*, apart from the reduced form of *DO* which attaches itself to the start of a question, as in:

D’you want another suggestion?

English does have a number of *enclitics*, especially among modal verbs which are contracted and bound with pronouns, for example *will*, reduced to *’ll* in forms like *I’ll*, *we’ll*, etc. Another very common English enclitic is the contracted negator *n’t*, which is bound to auxiliary and modal verbs as in *isn’t*, *haven’t*, *don’t*, *won’t*. See further under **contractions (1)**.

Modern grammarians note that the genitive ending (*’s*) could be regarded as a **clitic** when it attaches itself to noun phrases, as in *the lord of the mansion’s privilege*. This is however a relatively rare construction, and the *’s* does not represent a reduced word there (as it does in *Dave’s returned*).

closed class

See under **word class**, section 3.

closed condition

See under **IF**.

closed question

This is one of the several terms for the question that requires a “yes” or “no” answer. See further under **question**, section 3.

closure

Borrowed from cognitive psychology, the term **closure** is used in information-oriented approaches to grammar to refer to the completing of

a given syntactic unit, and the sense of completeness it gives to listeners or readers of the sentence. It comes up in analyses of sentence structure, e.g. complex sentences in which the main clause is postponed (especially **left-branching** sentences). See further under **left- and right-branching sentences**.

The need for **closure** also explains the practical limits on the use of **recursive** structures, e.g. the theoretically open-ended string of adjectives used to premodify a noun, as in:

that very remarkable blue-green iridescent satiny Thai-silk ... fabric.

Every additional premodifying adjective delays the closure of the NP and the delivery of its head noun, which taxes the listener's or reader's short-term memory. The same holds for using multiple postmodifying relative clauses, although an unlimited number can in theory be attached to a preceding noun, as in the nursery rhyme:

This is the dog that chased the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

In both examples, the reiteration of a given element of the syntactic structure draws attention to its recursive possibilities, as well as the need for closure. See further under **recursion and recursiveness**.

cognate object

Cognate objects are the noun equivalents of the verb, which allow some intransitive verbs to be used transitively, as in the following:

She dreamed an embarrassing dream.

He is singing a wonderful song.

They died a painful death.

In all those examples, the cognate object is premodified by means of an adjective, which heightens the process that is projected by the verb. See further under **modifier**; and **transitivity**, section 1.

cognitive grammar

This is a one of the several late C20 grammars which distances itself from the rule-based approaches of transformational–generative grammar, and finds the basis of grammar in integrating it with semantics. Founded by Langacker (1987), **cognitive grammar** draws on psychological approaches to the way the brain processes language to explain its structure, postulating symbolic units and recurring image schemas which bond with each other to establish patterns of understanding and reasoning to be used in communicating.

cohesion

Connected discourse has the property of **cohesion**, i.e. its sentences are meshed together to create continuous meaning. Cohesion is achieved by a variety of **cohesive** mechanisms, including **reiteration**, **reference**, **substitution**, and **ellipsis** (Halliday and Hasan 1976). All these mechanisms make anaphoric connections with things mentioned elsewhere, usually earlier in the text,

whether by repeating a key word, or finding an alternative to refer to the same thing (= *coreference*). Even ellipsis relies on something being fully articulated before, on which the ellipsed reference depends. See further under **anaphora** and **ellipsis**.

Some *cohesive devices* are the grammatical or function words of the language, e.g. personal and demonstrative pronouns, conjuncts and conjunctions, and the definite article *the*. These provide coreference as well as certain logical connections. Other cohesive devices are lexical words which form chains of coreference in the text, through semantically and morphologically related words: words related by their meaning, such as *grisly, gruesome*; and by form: *destroy, destruction*. Words that tend to co-occur on the same context, e.g. *gardener, plant, shrubs*, also contribute to lexical cohesion in a text. See further under **collocation**, section 2.

cohyponym

See under **hyponymy**.

collective noun

This is the term for the type of noun that refers to a group rather than an individual member of it, e.g. *army, committee, flock, herd*. These **collective nouns** may be followed by singular or plural agreement: see **agreement**, section 5.

The term **collective noun** is also sometimes used to refer to collectives which have no plural inflections but are always found with plural agreement, e.g. *people, police*.

Note that both these types of collective nouns are defined by their patterns of agreement within the clause. Compare **mass nouns**, which are distinguished within the noun phrase by their inability to take plural inflections or be predetermined by *a/an*, and are always construed in the singular. See further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

colligation

As originally coined by Firth (1957), **colligation** referred to the tendency of particular grammatical categories, e.g. adjective and noun, to occur together. The term was then little used until the 1990s, since when it has acquired a variety of extended applications to other co-occurrence relationships, as between a particular word or set of them and a grammatical category (Hoey 1997). Many researchers into colligation took advantage of the data produced by computerized concordances, which brought to light examples such as the fact that the word *birthday* tends to be preceded by a personal pronoun (Esser 1999). Others found colligation in the strong tendency for certain nouns to be used as either subjects or as objects, or in prepositional phrases. More extended patterns of colligation were identified as elements of **pattern grammar** (Hunston 2001), e.g. the way the word *downside* is very often preceded by “on the,” or flanked by “the,” and “of.” Thus more generally, particular words may provide a kind of “lexical priming” for certain others in the contexts in which they appear (Hoey 2005).

The term **colligation** has been further extended by those associated with the COBUILD project to the semantic preferences shown by particular words, and their tendency to associate with a particular semantic category or set of semantically related words. One example is the verb *cause*, which mostly **colligates** with words expressing a negative notion such as *difficulties*, *problems*, *trouble*, etc., and only rarely with *delight*, *enjoyment*, *pleasure*, etc. This tendency for particular words to combine with either positively or negatively charged words is known more generally as **semantic prosody**.

- Compare **collocation**.

collocation

- 1 **collocation as the juxtaposition of certain words**
 - 2 **co-occurrence relationships among words in text**
-

1 **Collocation as the juxtaposition of certain words**

The use of the term **collocation** as the conventional juxtaposing of certain words was introduced by J. R. Firth (1951). It highlights the syntagmatic relationship between pairs of words, e.g. the particles used regularly in certain phrasal verbs, e.g. *arrive at*, *defer to*, *diverge from*. There is no particular reason why these words should pair up in modern English. The particles are simply selections from a circumscribed set which appear by convention in those pairs and seem to form a semantic unit. Likewise there are particular adverbs required by convention for certain verbs, for example: *fall flat*, *go quiet*; *dead set*, *sorely missed*. All these examples show that there are **collocational restrictions** on what goes with the verbs and adjectives in each set.

When two (or more) words are frequently juxtaposed in a text, they are not necessarily **collocations**. Corpus-based research can identify numerous high-frequency pairs such as *in the*, *of the* (bigrams); triplets such as *by means of*, *in no way* (trigrams); quartets such as *from the fact that*, *in the first place* (tetragrams); etc. These **lexical bundles**, as Biber et al. (1999) call them, are not necessarily grammatical units, nor do they necessarily show any idiomaticity to make them collocations.

2 **Co-occurrence relationships among words in text**

In systemic–functional grammar, the term **collocation** is applied to the fact that words belonging to a given semantic field often appear together in texts (written or spoken) that focus on issues in that field. For example, the following words:

cut dig fertilizer green plant shrub soil tree weed

tend to co-occur in texts about gardening. Though many words in such **collocating** sets are nouns, they can also be verbs and adjectives, as the garden set shows. Words related by collocation in a semantic field are scattered through it, and contribute to the **lexical cohesion** of a text (see further under **cohesion**). The strength of the association between words associated by co-occurrence

can be measured by *mutual information statistics*. See further under **mutual information**.

colon

This punctuation mark now has a limited role in relation to the grammar and information structure within sentences. The **colon** is simultaneously a separator, in that it marks the boundary between a specific set of words, and a connector, in that it indicates that what follows is a relevant extension to what went before. This applies in both its major syntactic functions:

- setting off a set of examples used to illustrate a previous concept, as in:

The treasurer is responsible for all records of financial activity: invoices of fees due, receipts of payments for meetings and workshops, payments of the Society's creditors.

Note the use of *asyndetic coordination* of the items in such cases, to avoid ambiguity with lower-level coordination within an item (see further under **coordination**, section 7). An alternative would be to use semicolons between each item.

- separating the words quoted, or the text of a sign from the preceding quotative device, as in:

Last week the Minister said: "No further concessions can be made to the mining industry."

A sign on her office door read: Only I know where I am.

This is one of several ways of punctuating direct speech. See further under **quotation**.

combining form

-
- 1 combining forms in neoclassical compounds
 - 2 combining forms and affixes
 - 3 dual roles for English combining forms
-

1 Combining forms in neoclassical compounds

Ordinary English compounds, e.g. *database*, *houseboat*, consist of parts that also function as independent words or *free morphemes* (see further under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**). The parts of *neoclassical compounds*, e.g. *geography*, *psychology*, differ in being *bound morphemes*, called **combining forms**. As those examples show, combining forms are often meaningful parts of classical loanwords, but they cannot stand alone – or at least not with the same meaning: the *psych(o)-* of *psychology* refers to the mind, not to a deranged person. For the non-etymological joining vowel in compounds such as *psychology*, see under **neoclassical compound**.

Being bound, combining forms have something in common with affixes in their positional preferences, and tend to be attached either at the front (like a prefix), or at the end (like a suffix). This is evident in the most productive

examples, so that *bio-*, *electro-*, *geo-*, *hydro-*, etc. always form the first base of the compound, and *-cracy*, *-icide*, *-ology*, *-scope*, etc. always the second. One of the few counterexamples is *graph-/graphy*, which preserves the Greek root meaning “writing” in the first component of *graphology*, *graphite* and in the second of *geography*, *hydrography*, *paleography*, etc. Another is *arch(a)e-* and *-arch(y)*, where the meanings of the two combining forms have diverged, so that *arch(a)e-* typically means “first” or “beginning,” and *-arch(y)*, “ruler” or “rule.” Yet both sets of variants in fact derive from the same Greek root, the verb *archein* meaning “be first; rule.”

2 **Combining forms and affixes**

Combining forms have much more specific meanings than affixes (see further under **affixes**). However not all grammarians agree on individual examples, such as *micro-*, *pseudo-*, as to whether their semantics are sufficiently generic to put them in the class of affixes or not. They are categorized respectively as a prefix of “size” and a *pejorative prefix* by Quirk et al. (1985), but as **combining forms** by Huddleston and Pullum (2002). On this hangs whether the words they form are to be classed as *complex words* or *compounds*: see further under **word**, section 6.

3 **Dual roles for English combining forms**

Some English combining forms do double as affixes, and thus contribute to the formation of both compounds and complex words. For example, *-self* in *myself* etc. is usually deemed a suffix and set solid with its base, whereas its counterpart *self-* in *self-control* is classed as a combining form, and very often hyphenated in dictionaries. The reverse holds for the English affix *in-*, which is set solid as a prefix in *inroad*, *instep*, but usually hyphenated like a combining form in noun compounds like *break-in*, *sleep-in*.

comma

- 1 **the comma as a syntactic separator**
 - 2 **paired commas**
 - 3 **sets of commas and the “serial” comma**
 - 4 **the comma splice**
 - 5 **reduced use of commas**
-

1 **The comma as a syntactic separator**

The primary function of the **comma** is to separate the core structure of the sentence from its periphery. Yet the use of a comma is discretionary in many sentences, depending on their length and internal constituency. The comma’s appearance with the various grammatical units and constructions listed below does not mean that it is mandatory in them, but in principle it can be used to separate:

- two coordinated clauses:

The thieves disappeared into the back of the shop, and managed to escape with the cash through the loading dock.

For the deletion of the subject in the second clause, see **coordination**, section 6.

- a main clause and a following subordinate clause:

The delivery will come on Friday morning, if you can guarantee there will be someone there to receive it.

- a preliminary adverbial phrase or clause before the main clause:

Before it turns to rain, let's try to do some gardening.

Before the first drop of rain, we should plant out those bulbs.

Research shows that writers are more inclined to use a comma in such cases with a preliminary clause, and with a preliminary adverbial phrase consisting of five words or more (Meyer 1990).

- the nonrestrictive (or supplementary) relative clause introduced by *which*, as in:

The officer handed in his resignation, which predated the incident.

See further under **relative clause**, section 3.

- a parenthetical clause following the main clause:

The idea was not new, I think.

2 Paired commas

These are used to separate a parenthesis or other supplementary material used in mid-sentence:

The idea was not, I think, a new one.

The paired commas set the parenthetical material apart from the host sentence. Yet when a parenthetical clause appears initially, most grammarians regard it as a matrix clause and no comma is used at all: *I think the idea was not a new one.* When the clause appears finally, the full stop or other final punctuation covers for the second comma:

The idea was not a new one, I think.

Paired commas are also used to mark off an appositional phrase following the clause constituent to which it refers:

My visit to Bangkok, city of temples, was cooled by a thunderstorm.

See further under **apposition**, section 1.

Note that where the supplementary material might be marked off with paired commas, the first comma but not the second is sometimes omitted.

In cases like this where the name is omitted, simply add coded initials.

This suggests an asymmetry with paired commas, in that the comma which marks the second boundary is weightier than the first (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

3 Sets of commas and the "serial" comma

Sets of commas are regularly used to coordinate items in a series, as in:

They came complete with paints, canvas, easels, and thermoses of hot coffee.

These commas are effectively **asyndetic** coordinators (see further under **asyndeton and asyndetic**). The presence/absence of the final comma in such a series is a matter of editorial convention (= the "**serial**" comma). In American editorial style the use of the serial comma is mandatory, whereas in

British style it is discretionary, to be decided on the semantic relationship between the last two items in the series.

Note that a set of commas is no longer required in a series of attributive adjectives, e.g. *shiny new sports car*: see further under **adjective**, section 2).

4 **The comma splice**

This phrase refers to use of commas in the asyndetic coordination of clauses, especially by novice writers. For example:

The problems of civil war were not encompassed by the UN, international conflicts were its terms of reference.

There are of course multiple ways in which those two clauses could have been linked, but the use of a comma is generally felt to be too slight, and in need of supplementing by an additional conjunction or heavier punctuation mark. This use of the comma as asyndetic coordinator of separate clauses is nevertheless accepted when they are short, as in *I came, I saw, I conquered*. The use of a comma before *however, so, yet* and other marginal coordinators between consecutive clauses is also asyndetic coordination, whether those words are seen as coordinators or conjunctive adverbs: see further under **conjunct, conjunction**, section 4; and **adverb**, section 3.

5 **Reduced use of commas**

The comma is now less freely used in editing English language texts than formerly. As discussed above, many of its applications are discretionary, especially in shorter sentences whose structure is unambiguous. This reduced use of commas is in line with the contemporary trend to use less punctuation generally. See further under **punctuation**, sections 2 and 3.

command

This is one of the four functional types of sentence recognized in traditional English grammar, along with the statement, question, and exclamation (see **sentence**, section 3). Like them, the **command** has its characteristic syntax, i.e. the *imperative*, as in

Quick march!

Consider the likely outcome.

Take it away!

See further under **imperative**.

Note that **polite commands** and directives may also be formulated as questions, using the fronted modal of interrogative syntax:

Would you mind waiting.

Could you please shut the door.

Why don't you open the window.

The third example, formulated as an open question, is more common in American English than British or Australian (see further under **question**, sections 2 and 3). In all such cases where the sentence's function and syntactic form diverge, the final punctuation mark can be selected to confirm the function

rather than conform to the syntax. In the examples above it can be seen in the use of the simple full stop rather than a question mark. See further under **question mark** and **exclamation mark**.

comment

For the use of **comment** as the complementary term to **topic** in relation to information delivery within the sentence, see **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 1.

comment clause

This is a term for various kinds of parenthetical clause very often found in conversation, which comment on the propositional content of the main clause, or the speaker's sense of his/her own communicative style. The most common type of **comment clauses** are quasi-formulaic mini-clauses, such as:

I think you know I mean I believe I guess I suppose
it seems they say

These can be inserted almost anywhere in a sentence.

We'd like to come, you know.

It's likely, I think, they'll accept our offer.

Such comment clauses are just loosely related to the main clause, and treated as a kind of stance or modal adjunct by most grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 5.

Apart from the quasi-formulaic **comment clauses**, the term is applied by Quirk et al. (1985) to include a variety of other finite and nonfinite clauses with similar commenting functions. They include:

- those introduced by *AS*: *as I said, as they say, as it appears, as is common knowledge*
- those introduced by a *WHAT*-clause juxtaposed to the main clause, as in *What's more surprising he didn't let us know.*
- those introduced by a *TO*-infinitive: *to be fair, to be honest, to be precise*
- those expressed with an *-ing* clause: *loosely speaking, speaking frankly*
- those expressed with an *-ed* participle: *put simply, said another way*

Sentences with a formulaic comment clause can be usually be reformulated, so that it becomes the main clause rather than subordinate to it. Compare the following pairs of sentences:

We'd like to come, you know.

You know we'd like to come.

It's unlikely, I think.

I think it's unlikely.

But the tentativeness of the meaning of the comment clause is then replaced by a more explicit cognitive meaning. This demonstrates how comment clauses typically function as **hedging** devices. See further under **intensifier and downtoner**.

common

In English grammar this descriptor may refer to:

- the default type of nouns like *bird, grass, road, window*, which designate a class of object, and contrast with **proper nouns**, which are the names of specific individuals. See further under **common noun**.
- the case of a noun in subject or object role: see **common case**.
- the gender attributable to nouns which may be followed by the masculine, feminine, or neuter pronoun: see under **gender**, section 4.

common case

English nouns no longer show their grammatical case when functioning in subject or object roles within a sentence – unlike most of the personal pronouns. Compare the nouns in the following examples with the pronouns which would be their substitutes:

The student submitted the assignments on time.

(S/he) (them)

The assignments were submitted by the student on time.

(They) (her/him)

The nouns in the example sentences remain the same (as singular or plural) despite their changed syntactic roles as subject or object of verb/preposition. These cases (nominative/accusative) are not marked externally, as with the matching personal pronouns. The form of the noun (singular or plural) which goes with all those syntactic roles is its **common case**.

Yet English nouns do show their case when it comes to the possessive/genitive case, by means of an apostrophe plus *s*: *student's assignment, time's winged chariot*.

See further under **apostrophe (1)**; **case**, section 3; and **personal pronoun**, section 4.

common noun

Ordinary nouns are termed **common** because they provide the name for instances of very large classes of objects: *book, chair, dog, house, light*, as well as more general concepts such as *business, information, pleasure, traffic, work*. Though they are often used to refer to a particular instance or case, they can be redeployed infinitely to refer to others of the same kind. **Common nouns** include **count nouns** like *book, chair*, etc., and **mass nouns** like *information, traffic*. See further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

Common nouns contrast with **proper nouns** which serve to name

- a particular person e.g. *Arnold, Confucius, Homer, Jane, Matthew, Sibelius*
- a particular nationality or cultural group e.g. *African-American, Amish, Arab, British, Celtic, Hebrew, Islamic, Israeli*
- a particular place or geographical feature: *Cambridge, Everest, France, Indonesia, Kilimanjaro, Manhattan*

See further under **proper noun and proper name**.

As the examples above show, **common nouns** are written in lower case, whereas proper nouns are distinguished by an initial capital letter. See further under **capitalization**.

- For other grammatical aspects of common nouns, see under **noun**, section 3.

comparative

- For the *comparative forms* of adjectives, see **adjective**, section 3.
- For the *comparative forms* of adverb: see **adverb**, section 4.
- For comparative clauses and the comparative element, see next entry.

comparative clause

-
- 1 comparative clauses in traditional and modern grammar
 - 2 the comparative element
 - 3 ellipsis and reduction in comparative clauses
 - 4 equal and unequal comparisons
 - 5 correlative comparative construction
-

1 Comparative clauses in traditional and modern grammar

In traditional grammar, the term **comparative clause** could be applied to any subordinate clause involving comparison, including:

They talked as if they had always been friends.

They talked as easily as long-term friends do.

The two sentences are similar but not identical in their structure. While the comparison in the first begins with the complex subordinator *as if*, in the second it is anticipated by the comparative adverb *as easily* in the matrix clause. The first sentence presents a self-contained **adverbial clause of comparison**; the second, a complement licensed by the comparative adverb of the main clause. Only the second is now called a **comparative clause**.

2 The comparative element

The “standard” of comparison is the **comparative element** or comparative phrase in the matrix clause, and can be almost any constituent of it apart from the verb:

More voters were expected to register than did in the last election. (Subject)

The candidates seemed better prepared than they were last time round. (Complement)

We distributed more how-to-vote pamphlets than we expected. (Object)

The volunteers worked more cooperatively than they had in the past. (Adverb)

While there is typically one **comparative element**, it is possible to have two or more:

My father knows more Swedish than my mother does German.

She has forgotten more placename histories than I ever knew.

The last example with its three standards of comparison in matched structures actually uses the verb as one of them.

3 Ellipsis and reduction in comparative clauses

Almost all **comparative clauses** show ellipsis of one or more elements of the matrix clause, with a gap where the comparative element might otherwise be repeated, as in each of the first four examples in section 2. In the final example with three comparative elements, just one (the object) is ellipsed. The examples all show other kinds of lexical reduction, e.g. the use of personal pronouns to replace the more explicit subjects of the matrix clause (*they* in the second and fourth examples); and use of the auxiliaries *BE*, *DO*, and *HAVE* as pro-forms for the full or more explicit verb phrase. Corpus-based research shows that the auxiliaries, along with modal and quasi-modal verbs, make up more than 70% of all verbs in comparative clauses with *than*, and about 60% of those with *as ... as* (Peters 1996). One other type of verb frequently found in the comparative clause is the mental process verb, e.g. *expected*, *knew*, as in two of the examples above.

The most radical kind of **ellipsis** in comparative clauses is that of the copular *BE* in examples such as:

Her daughter is younger than him.

This form of comparison is sometimes fully formulated as:

Her daughter is younger than he is.

This prompted traditional grammarians to postulate an elliptical comparative clause in all such cases, and to argue for the maintenance of the subject pronoun even when there was no verb, as in:

Her daughter is younger than he.

The argument for preferring the subject pronoun here and the “elliptical clause” explanation was interconnected with the view that *than* was a conjunction rather than a preposition (see further under **than**). The fact that the object pronoun is most common in spoken discourse added a stylistic justification for preferring the “elliptical clause” + subject pronoun in comparative clauses in formal writing. This position is also enshrined in the various **comparative deletion** rules of transformational grammar. However, many kinds of comparison are expressed through phrases and nonfinite clauses, especially in fiction and academic prose, as found in research associated with the *Longman Grammar* (1999).

4 Equal and unequal comparisons

Comparative clauses are taken to include those which express either the **equivalence** or **nonequivalence** of two items, with characteristic patterns of conjunctions. Those expressing equivalence are usually formulated with the subordinator *as*, as in the following examples:

We left the house as early as we could.

The sun was just as strong as we had experienced in the mountains.

It was the same answer as/that we'd heard before.

The third example presents a small point of variation, where *as* is sometimes paraphrased by *that*. For the question as to whether *that* is a relative pronoun or a subordinator, see under **relative pronoun**, section 2.

In unequal comparisons, the nonequivalence of the comparative element with whatever is being compared in the **comparative clause** is expressed either (i) through the use of *differ*, *different* etc. (ii) through a comparative form of the pronoun, determiner, adjective, adverb; or (iii) through negation of the comparative element:

It was a different answer from/than the one we'd heard before.

The visitors drank more than anyone had expected.

The joke created less amusement than it had before.

The sun was stronger than we had experienced at lower latitudes.

We left the place more quickly than our predecessors had done.

They did not leave the house as/so clean as we did.

The comparative element in all but the first and last examples involves either inflected comparative forms (e.g. *more/less*, *stronger*) or an analytic form (e.g. *more quickly*): see further under **adjective**, section 3; and **adverb**, section 4. These comparative adjectives/adverbs set up a scale of superiority and inferiority within the comparative clause. Corpus-based research shows that superior comparisons (with *MORE*, etc.) are far more common than inferior ones (with *LESS*). Note that the negative formulation of nonequivalence in the last example allows either *AS* or *SO* in the comparative element.

Sentences expressing excess or sufficiency also suggest levels of comparison, for example:

The plan encountered such resistance that it was discontinued.

The reception room was so hot that everyone took their coats off.

The room was hot enough that everyone took their coats off.

In these examples, the element marked by “such,” “so,” and “enough” sets up a kind of comparative element like that of other **comparative clauses**. They are discussed together by Quirk et al. (1985), though with the comment that comparisons of excess or sufficiency also resemble adverbial clauses of result (see under **adverbial clause**, section 1). Note that the use of a *THAT*-clause to complement “enough” in the third example is better established in American than British English: see further under **ENOUGH**.

5 Correlative comparative construction

This construction correlates two scalar comparisons, as in:

The more questions she asks, the less he responds.

He responds less, the more questions she asks.

In this case the two comparatives express a proportional decrease (*less*) in the matrix clause against an increase (*more*) in the **comparative clause**. The first version is syntactically marked, with the fronted clause prefaced by *THE*; it is also the more common of the two constructions, according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

complement

- 1 a structure required to complete a phrase or clause
 - 2 complement of the clausal subject or object
 - 3 any obligatory postverbal element of a clause (A, O, C)
 - 4 nonfinite complement for catenative verbs
 - 5 obligatory structure following prepositional verbs
 - 6 non-subject participants in the clause
-

1 A structure required to complete a phrase or clause

The term **complement** has multiple applications in English grammar. They have in common the fact that they refer to a structure which is usually obligatory, required by the syntax of the clause, and/or lexically determined by the *head* of the phrase, whether it is a:

- noun phrase, e.g. *an attempt to raise standards*
- verb phrase, e.g. *rely on their understanding*
- adjectival phrase, e.g. *fond of speculating*
- prepositional phrase, e.g. *without their enthusiasm*

Note that the nonfinite clause complements shown with *to* and *of* are licensed by the particular noun and adjective, and cannot be interchanged. Compare the alternative complement clause types available for some catenative verbs (section 4 below).

2 Complement of the clausal subject or object

The **complement** is most narrowly defined as the constituent which predicates something about the subject in an SVC clause or the object in an SVOC clause, as in:

He was very helpful.

They found him very helpful.

In each case, the C (complement) may be either an adjectival phrase (as shown), or a noun phrase (*a helpful person*). Both are **predicate complements**. Yet the way the complement attaches itself to the clausal subject or object serves to distinguish two of the seven essential clause patterns: see further under **clause**, section 1.

3 Any obligatory postverbal element of a clause

Some grammars use **complement** to refer to the constituent that is required to complete the clause, whether it is nominal, adverbial, or adjectival, and used to detail the object, subject, or the verb.

He helped the accident victim.

He brushed the broken glass away.

He was very helpful. He was a helpful person.

The term **complement** is thus applied in some grammars to the third element in all three essential clause patterns: SVO, SVA, SVC, so that all are SVC. The corollary is that SVOA and SVOC structures are deemed to require two

types of complement (SVCC), which loses some specificity. However some specificity is gained by the fact that the obligatory adverbial can be distinguished from any optional ones (i.e. *adjuncts*) in the notation. So the structure of a sentence/clause such as:

The bird flew off over the hill into the distance.

can be analyzed as SVCAA, to show that only the first adverbial (“off”) is obligatory: see further under **adjunct**, section 4.

4 Nonfinite complement for catenative verbs

The term **complement** is regularly used for various nonfinite clauses attached to catenative verbs. Many take the form of a *TO*-infinitive or an *-ing* form (or in some cases both), as shown below for the verbs *seem*, *begin*, *remember*, *love*:

They seemed to be expecting the performers.

They began to run. They began running.

They remembered to take their ID.

They loved to hear stories. They loved hearing stories.

Where both types of complement are possible, there can often be slight differences in meaning. Note also that some catenatives take nonfinite clauses formed with a past participle, as in:

They wanted it removed.

See further under **catenative verb**.

5 Obligatory structure following prepositional verbs

Examples of this type of **complement** can be found in the NP objects of prepositional verbs, as underlined in:

Will the dog answer to that name?

This play differs from the last one she wrote.

I know we can rely on your diplomacy.

See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

6 Non-subject participants in the clause

The term **complement** is used in Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to refer to the non-subject *participants* in the clause, i.e. the objects (direct and indirect) of the verb. This is based on the principle that either of them could be used as the subject NP in reconfiguration of the clause. Compare:

The clown gave the children balloons.

The children were given balloons by the clown.

The balloons were given to the children by the clown.

But the term is also used for the predicative complement of the subject (= section 2 above) – whether it is nominal or adjectival. See further under **object** and **participant**.

- ▶ Note finally that the complement for certain verbs and nouns may take the form of a finite **complement clause**, on which see next entry, section 2.

complement clause

- 1 complement clauses to complete a matrix clause
- 2 verb-complement clauses and noun-complement clauses
- 3 extraposition of complement clauses
- 4 finite and nonfinite complement clauses and controlling verbs

1 Complement clauses to complete a matrix clause

Modern English grammars use the term **complement clause** instead of the traditional *noun clause* (or *nominal clause*), or *content clause* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), to refer to the range of subordinate clauses, finite or nonfinite, required to complete the structure of the higher clause. The name **complement clause** foregrounds the syntactic bonding between a subordinate clause and the matrix clause. Examples are underlined in the following:

The minister said that an announcement would be forthcoming.

That he was about to make an announcement was clear to all.

As the examples show, the complement clause may serve as object or subject in the matrix clause. The use of the complement clause as clausal object (i.e. *post-predicate*), shown in the first example, is far more common than as subject (*pre-predicate*), shown in the second, according to Biber et al. (1999). In their research on the Longman corpus, they found that the most common **controlling verbs** taking object complement clauses are *think, say, know, see, find, believe, feel, suggest, show*. The subordination of the following complement clause is marked by the presence of *if, that, or whether* as **complementizer** (see further under **complementizer**).

2 Verb-complement clauses and noun-complement clause

Complement clauses are particularly frequent with words that embody mental and verbal processes, both verbs and nouns. Compare:

They claimed that the food was inedible.

Their claim that the food was inedible was dismissed.

The syntactic bonding between the matrix and the **verb-complement clause** in the first example is clearly stronger than that of the head noun and **noun-complement clause** in the second.

3 Extraposition of complement clauses

Pre-predicate **complement clauses** are not very common. Instead they are almost always rephrased with the aid of a dummy *it* subject and **extraposed** beyond the predicate of the matrix clause. Compare:

That an announcement would be made was clear to all.

It was clear to all that an announcement would be made.

As the second example shows, the extraposed complement clause typically goes with an adjective expressing an impersonal stance or attitude to its contents (Biber et al. 1999). By contrast, adjectives that express some human affective value (e.g. *afraid, amazed, grateful, worried*) or personal certainty (*confident,*

positive, sure) are likely to be construed with a human subject in the matrix clause which prefaces the extraposed complement clause, as in

I was positive that an announcement would be made.

Post-predicate (extraposed) complement clauses are very common in conversation, while pre-predicate complement clauses are mostly found in academic prose, and to a lesser extent in news writing. See further under **extraposition**.

4 **Finite and nonfinite complement clauses and controlling verbs**

The complement clauses discussed above have all been finite (*THAT*) clauses. Yet because of the interchangeability of finite and nonfinite complements with many controlling verbs, modern grammarians use the term **complement clause** for all types. They include:

THAT-clauses: *They requested that he come*

TO-infinitives: *They requested him to come*

wh-clauses: *We remembered where we put the key*

-ing forms: *We remembered bringing the key*

See further under **controlling verb**.

complementarity

This is the sense relation between *complementary antonyms* such as *pass/fail* etc. See further under **antonyms**.

complementizer

- 1 complementizers as a special set of subordinators
- 2 zero complementizer

1 **Complementizers as a special set of subordinators**

The term **complementizer** is used by grammarians such as Biber et al. (1999) to refer to the small set of *subordinating conjunctions* which preface a complement clause, primarily *THAT*, but also *IF*, *WHETHER*, and *wh*-words functioning in the subordinator role:

They claimed that it was freshly baked.

We wondered if/whether it was freshly baked.

We asked where it was baked.

Other grammarians (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) refer to these complementizers as *subordinators*. See further under **subordinators**, section 1; and **wh-word**.

Note that *TO* acts as a **complementizer** for nonfinite complement clauses: see **complement clause**, section 4.

2 **Zero complementizer**

Complement clauses can be juxtaposed to the matrix clause without any explicit complementizer, i.e. with *zero complementizer*. This works only where

the complementizer would have been *that*. It is also constrained by underlying rules relating to the head, especially if it is a noun; but less so if it is a verb or adjective. The closeness of the complement clause to the head is an additional factor (Kearns 2009). Use of the zero complementizer is everywhere a feature of spoken discourse, in fact the norm there (Biber et al. 1999). By contrast, retention of *that* as complementizer is characteristic of academic prose.

- Compare the use of the **zero relativizer** for *that* as relative pronoun for the object of the relative clause. See further under **relativizer**.

complex catenative

This is a type of catenative which licenses an NP before the following nonfinite verb. Compare

We'd love you to come.

We'd love to come.

The first sentence is a **complex catenative**, the second a *simple catenative*. See further under **catenative verb**, section 3.

complex conjunction

See under **subordinator**, section 2.

complex determiner

See under **determiner**, section 6.

complex preposition

See under **preposition**, section 3.

complex sentence

See under **sentence**, section 1.

complex transitivity

See under **transitivity**, section 4.

complex word

For the distinction between **complex words** and *compounds*, see under **word**, section 6.

compound preposition

See under **preposition**, section 3.

compound sentence

See under **sentence**, section 1.

compound verb

In traditional grammar this term was applied to several aspects of verb formation, including:

- 1 verb phrases which consisted of a combination of one or more auxiliary verbs and a main verb, e.g. *am working, will be going, could have been motivated*. See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 1; and **verb phrase**, section 1.
 - 2 verbs which consisted of a main verb plus a particle, e.g. *give up, refer to, turn off*. See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.
 - 3 verbs consisting of two free elements, e.g. *downgrade, handpick, shortlist*. See further under **compound word**, section 5.
- Only the third application remains current.

compound word

- 1 compounds as lexical units
 - 2 compounds and inflections
 - 3 compound nouns (or noun compounds)
 - 4 compound adjectives (or adjective compounds)
 - 5 compound verbs
 - 6 compound adverbs
-

1 Compounds as lexical units

Compounds are structured combinations of pre-existing elements of the language, as in *airborne, classroom, overturn, worldwide*. As in those cases, they typically consist of two *bases*, i.e. free-standing elements of the lexicon – or *free morphemes* (see **bound morpheme and free morpheme**). Compounds function as a single unit within the grammar of the clause, usually taking on the word class of their second *base*. They are usually associated with the open word classes, and are thus *compound nouns/adjectives/verbs/adverbs*. But there are also a few among the closed classes, including *compound pronouns* (e.g. *myself, nobody*), *compound determiners* (e.g. *whatever, whichever*), and *compound prepositions* (e.g. *into, upon*). See further under **word class**, sections 2 and 3.

Although the examples of compounds above are all written without a hyphen or space between their two components, many compounds do have them, as shown in the examples below.

- compound nouns: *car park, daylight-saving, makeover, videotape*
- compound adjectives: *childlike, home-made, icy-cold, three-legged*
- compound verbs: *baby-sit, cold-shoulder, overcome, snowball*
- compound adverbs: *downtown, online, overseas, upmarket*

Whether they are hyphenated, spaced, or set solid as a single word, compounds are perceived as having a unitary meaning, which modifies the meanings of its individual components. Thus the “park” in *car park* is unlike that referred to in *national park*. The unity of compounds is often expressed by the fact that the first component is more strongly stressed than the second. Though grammatically dependent, the first is semantically the more crucial of the two bases, and called the *determinant* (Marchand 1960). The difference can be

heard in the contrastive stress of *car park* versus the more equal stress on both components of *national park*.

2 **Compounds and inflections**

Noun and verb compounds can be inflected with the regular suffixes of the word class to which they belong, whatever their setting. So the tense inflections (regular or irregular) are added/inserted into compound verbs according to their second element (*baby-sat*, *cold-shouldered*), and the plural *-s* suffix is simply added to nouns, whether they are spaced or set solid: *car parks*, *videotapes*, and whatever their usual plural is, regular or not: *still lifes*, *sabretooths*, *walkmans*. The only exceptions are noun compounds which are (i) derived from phrasal verbs, e.g. *goings-on*, *passers-by*; (ii) formal titles, e.g. *editors-in-chief*, *ladies in waiting*; or (iii) formed according to foreign phrase patterns, e.g. *aides de camp*, *poets laureate*. In all three cases the head noun is usually pluralized, not the last word. See further under **plural**, section 4.

3 **Compound nouns (or noun compounds)**

These often consist of two nouns, e.g. *car park*, *daylight-saving*, *snowball*, where the first term acts as a modifier of the second (the *base*). The first noun is usually singular and generic in sense, although very occasionally it is pluralized, as in *burns unit*. In principal the two nouns are free morphemes, except in **neoclassical compounds** such as *geography*, *histology*, both of whose parts are **combining forms** (see further under **combining form**).

Other compound nouns consisting of free morphemes are combinations of:

- adjective + noun, e.g. *blackboard*, *hothouse*, *redhead*
- noun (subject) + verb (base), e.g. *landslide*, *rainfall*, *toothache*
- noun (object) + verb (base), e.g. *book review*, *haircut*, *handshake*

Many compound nouns consisting of noun + verb use inflected forms of the verb, especially *-er*, *-ing*, as in:

crime-reporter *shareholder* *window cleaner*
brainwashing *book-keeping* *letter writing*

The *-ing* form as verbal noun also serves as the first element in noun compounds:

cooking apple *dining room* *spending money*

Note also that some compound nouns are combinations of a verb base and particle, corresponding to a phrasal verb:

breakthrough *makeup* *takeaway* *workout*

All such compounds may be said to be **endocentric**, i.e. they contain within themselves a reference to the object or phenomenon they represent – as *take* does in *takeaway*, and *money* in *spending money*. A small but distinctive group of English noun compounds differ radically in being **exocentric**, i.e. they refer only obliquely to the person or object they represent. For example: *hardback* (a book format), *loudmouth* (a noisy person), *scatterbrain* (someone who can't concentrate). These are traditionally known as **bahuvrihi compounds**.

4 Compound adjectives (or adjective compounds)

Typically, these consist of an adjectival head preceded by an adverbial element, as in:

air-tight *duty-free* *oven-ready* *rock-hard* *worldwide*

Many other compound adjectives involve an inflected verb, preceded by its object or an adverbial, as in:

heart-stopping *life-giving* *record-breaking* *self-promoting*
easy-going *fast-moving* *high-flying* *well-meaning*
down-trodden *far-flung* *home-brewed* *long-awaited*

Almost all compound adjectives are hyphenated.

5 Compound verbs

These are often derived from combinations of a particle + verb:

bypass *offload* *outsource* *overtake* *understudy*

Others are derived by conversion from pre-existing noun compounds. They simply add verb inflections, as with adjective + noun combinations such as:

blacklist *fasttrack* *short-change* *whitewash*

A special subgroup of compound verbs are based on **backformations** of pre-existing compounds, as with *ghost-write*, *lip-read*, *sleep-walk*, *spray-paint*.

See further under **backformation**.

6 Compound adverbs

The least common of the four grammatical types of compound is the compound adverb. Most are condensed prepositional phrases with locative or quasi-locative meanings that serve as **adverbial adjuncts**:

downtown *offline* *overland* *underground* *upstream*

Other compound adverbs are combinations of two adverbs or adverb + preposition:

hereafter *meanwhile* *thereupon* *throughout* *whenever*

Their typical role is *as conjuncts*. See further under **adverb**, section 3.

concord

See under **agreement**, section 1.

concrete noun

See **noun**, section 1.

conditional

This term originates in the grammar of romance languages such as French, where it refers to a particular set of verb forms which express a conditional aspect, usually translated into English with the aid of the modal verb *WOULD*.

Thus the French verb *je voudrais* with its **conditional inflection** *-ais* is

“I would like.”

In English grammar, the term **conditional** is usually applied to sentences with a clause introduced by *if*, as in:

If it rains tomorrow, I won't do the washing.

Clauses introduced by *if* may express an *open* condition, as in that example, or an unlikely or impossible condition. See further under **IF** and **apodosis**.

conjugation

The term **conjugation** refers to any of the multiple paradigms of Latin and Greek verbs, each with a characteristic stem vowel to which the inflections for tense, person, and number were added. The term is not usually used in reference to the paradigms of verbs in Germanic languages such as English. Instead they were classified as **strong** and **weak**, now usually **irregular** and **regular** respectively. See further under **irregular verb** and **regular verb**.

conjunct

This is a term for the subclass of adverbs including *also*, *however*, *therefore*, *yet*, whose logical meanings connect with elements of the previous clause or sentence (see **adverb**, section 3). The meanings of **conjuncts** are like those of **conjunctions**, but they do not provide a syntactic link with the preceding clause. Compare:

The visitor arrived with her suitcase. She also brought her dog.

The visitor arrived with her suitcase, and she brought her dog.

Thus conjuncts and **coordinators** can provide the same logical connections between two clauses, in this case an **additive** relation (see further under **coordination**, section 2).

The interplay between **conjuncts** and coordinators can also be seen when coordinators take on the role of a conjunct at the start of a sentence, as in:

The visitor brought her dog without a lead. But it behaved remarkably well.

But quite often appears as conjunct at the start of a sentence to signal that a contrasting idea is about to follow. More than 20% of the instances of *but* in written material of the British National Corpus were sentence-initial. Conjuncts play an important part in **cohesion**, especially in written discourse: see further under **cohesion**.

Note that while **conjunct** is the name used for this type of adverb by Quirk et al. (1985), it is a **linking adverb** for Biber et al. (1999), and **connective adverb** for Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

conjunction

- 1 **from traditional word class to coordinators and subordinators**
 - 2 **polysemous and ambivalent conjunctions**
 - 3 **zero conjunction**
 - 4 **marginal and incipient conjunctions**
 - 5 **correlative conjunctions**
-

In modern English grammar, the *THAT* in the first example is now referred to as the **complementizer** and in the third the **relativizer**. Note that these two roles are sometimes difficult to separate, in ambiguous sentences like:

The proposition that few understood was accepted by the media.

In that example, “that” could be interpreted as relativizer (“the proposition which few understood ...”) or complementizer (“the proposition (suggesting) that few understood ...”). The ambivalence of *THAT* between these roles contributes to the argument that it should be analyzed as a complementizer when it serves as a relative pronoun (i.e. relativizer) in sentences like:

The man that we met at the station was a friend from way back.

See further under **complementizer; relativizer**; and **relative pronoun**, section 2.

3 **Zero conjunction**

The grammatical connections between clauses in compound and complex English sentences are not always identified by means of **conjunctions**, either coordinators or subordinators. In a set of coordinated clauses such as *I came, I saw, I conquered*, there are no overt markers of coordination. This use of **zero conjunction** all through a series of coordinated clauses or phrases is known as **asyndeton** (see further under **coordination**, section 7). **Asyndetic** coordination is normal in a set of three or more grammatical units (clauses, phrases, or words) for all but the last two items. For example:

The travelers arrived, took showers, changed their clothes and had a meal.

Where zero conjunction is most common in English grammar is as an alternative to *that*, in both its **complementizer** and **relativizer** roles: see further under those headings.

The use of zero conjunction in **complement clauses** such as the one underlined in *I said I would come*, makes them reversible: *I would come, I said*. This raises the further question as to whether the sentence structure is **paratactic** (a kind of asyndetic coordination) rather than **hypotactic** (i.e. subordination). See further under **parataxis**.

4 **Marginal and incipient conjunctions**

Despite the fact that **conjunctions** are essentially a closed class, new members are grammaticalizing out of adverbs, especially conjuncts, most notably *hence, however, so, therefore, thus, yet*. For example:

Too many people had called in, hence we decided to postpone our visit.

As non-central members of the coordinator class, they tend to be edited out of formal writing by adjustments to the punctuation (see **punctuation**, section 2). But they are used to coordinate main clauses in everyday speech and writing (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), representing combinations with **AND** (*and so, and thus*, etc.) as analogues of **BUT**. See further under **HOWEVER; SO**, section 3; and **YET**, section 3.

5 Correlative conjunctions

These are discontinuous pairs of words which draw attention to additive and alternative forms of coordination. The most familiar pairs are *both ... and*, *neither ... nor/or*, *either ... or*, all of which use a determiner to highlight the first coordinate, as in:

The recipe contains both eggs and milk.

Neither his religious training nor the advice of friends could dissuade him.

We could have lunch on either Tuesday or Wednesday.

The use of *either ... or* emphasizes the disjunctive meaning of *or*: see **coordination**, section 4.

Other correlative pairs consist of combinations of *NOT* and adversative or negative coordinators:

- *not (only)* with *but (also)*, as in:

They did not come but sent their apologies.

They not only brought food for the picnic but hired an umbrella for shade.

- *not* or other negative adverbs with *nor*, as in:

They did not forget her kindness, nor would they criticize her.

Their health could never be restored nor their self-confidence repaired.

While the correlative conjunctions illustrated so far all form coordinated sentences, others work to highlight subordination, as underlined in the following examples:

Rather would you die than admit defeat.

We did it not so much out of sympathy as to show ...

Just as they sow, so shall they reap.

Hardly had we arrived than/when we had to leave.

The faster they pedal, the more power they generate.

Other **correlative subordinators** identified by Quirk et al. (1985) include the obligatory pairs found in comparative sentences, in structures like: as beautiful as, less/more beautiful than; see further under **comparative clause**, section 4.

The *whether ... or* pair may also be regarded as correlative subordinators, since the two words are obligatory in conditional-concessive clauses such as:

Whether we buy or we sell, there's not much money in it.

Compare the use of *whether* in subordinate interrogative clauses:

Do you know whether the shops are open today (or will be tomorrow)?

In the latter case the *or*-clause is optional.

conjunction group

In systemic–functional grammar, this is the term for a **complex conjunction**, especially subordinators such as *as soon as*, *in case*, *if only*, *just as*. See further under **subordinator**, section 2.

connective adverb

See **conjunct**.

connotation and denotation

These are different aspects of the meaning of a word. While **denotation** is what the word refers to (i.e. its *referential* meaning), **connotation** is the associative meanings that go with it. For example, the word *mansion* denotes a place of residence, but its connotations are that it is a large and luxurious house, affordable only by those with a very large financial base. Some words are imbued with *affective connotations*, e.g. positive or negative ones. Thus *interfere* is negatively toned, whereas *intervene* has positive connotations about entering into someone else's problem. The tendency for certain words to associate with ones expressing either positive or negative affect is referred to by some as *semantic prosody* (Sinclair 1987).

Note that some words consist almost entirely of affective **connotation**, with very little clear-cut **denotation**, notably adjectives such as *fabulous*, *super*, *wonderful*. Euphemistic words and expressions e.g. *go to the bathroom* are also largely connotation, and exist mostly to mask their denotation (Allan and Burridge 1991).

constituent and constituency

See **immediate constituent analysis**.

constituent order

See **clausal order**.

construction grammar (CxG)

The term **construction grammar** covers a set of theories in which language is analyzed as consisting of an inventory of constructional units in which form and meaning are semiotically integrated, rather than consisting of atomic syntactic units and the rules that combine them into meaningful propositions. The constructions may be lexically fixed, like many idioms, or more abstract vehicles where a form is paired with a conventionalized meaning, e.g. the clausal schema [S V O(i) O(d)] expresses the semantic content X CAUSES Y TO RECEIVE Z. Construction grammars share many of the conceptual categories of *cognitive linguistics*, but are increasingly oriented towards usage-based models and inductive learning. The fact that construction grammar engages with meaning allows for natural integration of grammatical inquiry with semantic, pragmatic, and discourse research.

- Compare **cognitive grammar**.

constructional grammar

1 A type of grammar that elaborates on immediate constituent analysis (Hockett 1961).

See **immediate constituent analysis**.

2 An alternative name for **construction grammar**: see previous entry.

contact clause

This term was used by Jespersen (1927) to refer to the type of relative clause which is expressed without a relative pronoun (i.e. with *zero relativizer* for the object of the relative clause). The relative clause is typically a *defining relative clause*, and juxtaposed directly with the main clause, hence the name **contact clause**. For example:

It's the issue we were just talking about.

See further under **relative pronoun**, section 5; and **relative clause**, section 3.

content clause

This term coined by Jespersen (1927) is used in some modern English grammars for the *noun clause*, or subtypes of it. In Huddleston and Pullum (2002), **content clause** is used for subordinate clauses embedded in reported speech: *she said that they would come*, and for interrogative (*wh-*) clauses: *she asked whether they would come*. Other grammarians refer to these as (*verb-*) **complement clauses**: see further under **complement clause**, section 2.

content word

See under **word**, section 5.

continuous

See under **aspect**.

contraction (1)

In everyday talk we commonly run adjacent words together to form **contractions**, as in:

I'll go tomorrow if they can't.

The words **contracted** are usually function words in the utterance, either auxiliaries or modal verbs, or the negator *NOT*. The core sets are as follows:

- **Contractions with auxiliaries/modals**

<i>I'm</i>	<i>you're</i>	<i>s/he's</i>	<i>we're</i>	<i>they're</i>	BE present tense
<i>I've</i>	<i>you've</i>	<i>s/he's</i>	<i>we've</i>	<i>they've</i>	HAVE present tense
<i>I'd</i>	<i>you'd</i>	<i>s/he'd</i>	<i>we'd</i>	<i>they'd</i>	HAVE past tense
<i>I'd</i>	<i>you'd</i>	<i>s/he'd</i>	<i>we'd</i>	<i>they'd</i>	WOULD
<i>I'll</i>	<i>you'll</i>	<i>s/he'll</i>	<i>we'll</i>	<i>they'll</i>	WILL

- **Contractions with NOT**

Auxiliaries	Modals
<i>isn't aren't wasn't weren't</i>	<i>can't couldn't</i>
<i>doesn't don't didn't</i>	<i>mustn't</i>
<i>hasn't haven't hadn't</i>	<i>shan't shouldn't</i>
	<i>won't wouldn't</i>

As is clear in the first set, some contracted verbs would be ambiguous out of context, e.g. those for the past tense of *HAVE* and *WOULD*. However the accompanying verb usually serves to disambiguate the two. Compare *I'd said* with *I'd say* (where the first *I'd* is clearly a contraction of *HAVE*, and the second a contraction of *WOULD*).

Beyond these standard contractions, widely used in speech, there are many which occur ad hoc with other subjects, especially existential *THERE*, prop-*IT*, demonstrative and interrogative pronouns, but also short and longer NPs.

For example:

There's no time like the present.

It's raining.

That's right.

Who'd have thought it?

The word's getting around.

The Head of Department's on his way.

Note also the one contraction of a pronoun with a verb, in *let's*: see under **LET-imperative**. Such contractions are termed **enclitics** by grammarians: see further under **clitic**.

contraction (2)

The term **contraction** is also used to refer to the type of word abbreviation in which the first and last letters at least are retained, but much of the middle is cut out, e.g. *hwy* for “highway.” In British editorial practice, these are punctuated differently from other abbreviations by not being given full stops. Compare the use of stops with clipped forms such as *cont.* for “continued,” and see further under **clipping**.

control verb

This term is used in **government-binding theory** for verbs which take a nonfinite verb complement. It includes those where the subject is the same for both verbs, as in *we wanted to go back*; and those where they are different as in *we expected him to go back*. The first example shows “subject control,” the second “object control.” The term **control verb** covers both **simple** and **complex** types of **catenative verb**: see further under **catenative verb**, section 3.

- Compare **controlling verb**.

controlling verb

This is a cover term used by Biber et al. (1999) to refer to the range of verb types that take a **complement clause**, finite or nonfinite. **Controlling verb** thus includes:

- verbs which take **THAT**-clauses as complements, typically referring to verbal communication: *confirm, hint, postulate, say*
- verbs which take **WHAT**-clauses as complements, typically referring to mental processes: *guess, know, understand, wonder*
- verbs which take **TO**-infinitives as complements, i.e. **catenative verbs**, simple and complex (see **catenative verb**, section 3)
- verbs which take **-ing** complements, especially *begin, go, keep, start, stop* (see **catenative verb**, sections 2 and 3).

Note that many of the **controlling verbs** listed above can take more than one type of complement clause.

- Compare **control verb**.

convergent

See under **grammatical metaphor**.

converse

This term refers the relationship between antonyms such as *father/son* and *inside/outside*. See further under **antonymy**.

conversion

- 1 process of conversion
 - 2 alternative nomenclature
 - 3 direction of conversion
 - 4 conversion within the same word class
-

1 Process of conversion

This is the grammarians' name for a very common wordforming process of modern English, whereby a word takes on an additional grammatical role without any suffix to show its derivation. Compare the following:

Most adjectival compounds are hyphenated.

Most adjectival compounds are hyphened.

The verbs in those sentences are both derived from the noun *hyphen*, but they show alternative processes of word formation with it, both of which are listed in dictionaries. The first adds the suffix *-ate* to the stem to mark it as a verb, while the second has the same stem as the noun from which it was derived, and no *derivational suffix*. It does however take on the **inflectional suffix** associated with the past participle of any English verb, which shows the grammatical role to which it has been "converted" (see further under **suffix**). The verbs illustrate two of the basic processes in English derivational morphology: adding to the stem of an existing word, and using it as is. The third, i.e. cutting the stem back to derive a new word, is discussed under **clipping** and **backformation**.

This process of **conversion** is as old as Shakespeare, who made free use of it in the comment "It beggars belief." Conversion has added fresh dimensions to many words in the history of the language, and it happens naturally in spontaneous conversation. In fact it supplies some of the most durable lexical innovations in English (Ayto 1996). Some conversions are disputed as illegitimate formations, perhaps because of the lack of formative addition to the word's stem (see further below, section 3).

2 Alternative nomenclature

Apart from **conversion**, various terms for referring to this wordforming process can be found in accounts of modern English grammar. Others which foreground the word's shift from one word class to another are **functional shift** and **grammatical transfer**. Morphologists often use terms which focus on the lack of derivational suffixes used in the process, hence **zero derivation** or **zero affixation**. There are some theoretical arguments against those (see Huddleston

and Pullum 2002), yet from the descriptive point of view they identify the process more exactly for the layperson; and unlike terms involving *shift* and *transfer*, there is no suggestion of a permanent change in word class, which is certainly not entailed in the process.

Conversion is the term preferred by Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) for this wordforming process. They apply it to cases where the change of grammatical role is not indicated in any change to the (written) form of the stem – as well as cases where the change is reflected in phonological differences, either in (i) the sound associated with the spelling or (ii) the stress pattern.

- (i) The nouns *house* and *abuse* both have a final voiceless sound /s/, whereas the verbs are both pronounced with voiced sounds /z/. The noun *mouth* and its verb counterpart differ in exactly the same way. Most such words are derived from Old English.
- (ii) The nouns *ally* and *present* are both stressed on the first syllable, whereas their verb counterparts are stressed on the second syllable. Most such words are derived from Latin or French, including:

<i>abstract</i>	<i>conduct</i>	<i>conflict</i>	<i>consort</i>	<i>contest</i>	<i>contrast</i>
<i>decrease</i>	<i>discard</i>	<i>export</i>	<i>incline</i>	<i>insult</i>	<i>permit</i>
<i>produce</i>	<i>rebel</i>	<i>record</i>	<i>suspect</i>	<i>torment</i>	<i>transport</i>

Only when these words are inflected as nouns or verbs is their conversion evident in writing.

3 **Direction of conversion**

The **conversion** of nouns to verbs is more frequently seen and heard than the reverse, and can be found with a wide range of loanwords as well as native English vocabulary. Examples of such **denominal** verbs can be seen in *oil the wheel*, *nurse the patient*, *bottle the wine*, *muzzle the dog*, *position the house*. Compare the more limited range of **deverbal** nouns, seen in *a big ask*, *a good catch*, *a thorough search*, *their every want*, which are typically derived from simple verbs which go back to Old English. Despite their numbers, the denominal use of verbs, as in *access the library*, *impact (on) the population*, are more often questioned by conservative language users than deverbal nouns. The conversion of verb participles to attributive adjectives as in *melted snow*, *freezing temperatures* is so common as to pass unnoticed.

Conversions involving interchange between adjectives and nouns can be seen in various **de-adjectival** nouns such as *comic*, *daily*, *express*, *final*, *professional*, *supernumerary*. The reverse process, whereby nouns function as adjectives is far more common – if we focus on their use to premodify the head noun in the NP, as in *marble pillar*, *iron bar*, *cotton wool*, *vegetable garden*, i.e. **attributive** use (see **adjective**, section 5). Yet most grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) comment that these nouns (*cotton*, *iron*, *vegetable*, etc.) do not qualify as adjectives unless they can also be used **predicatively**. Very few examples satisfy this test: *The garden was vegetable* sounds ungrammatical,

and *The pillar was marble* is very marginal. Adjectives can however take on the full verb role, as in *The river dried up*, even inflected adjectives as in *They lowered the barrier*.

Although conversion usually involves the open-class words of English, there are a few examples involving the closed classes, e.g. prepositions: *ins and outs*, conjunctions: *ifs and buts*, pronouns: *them and us*. See further under **word class**, section 3.

4 Conversion within the same word class

The term **conversion** is extended by some (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985) to cases where words change their subcategory within a particular grammatical class. For example:

- nouns which are technically *proper nouns* may be used as common nouns, as in:

a real Hitler
a garage full of Bentleys
several Davids

Other nouns shift from being *count nouns* to *noncount/mass nouns*, or vice versa. Thus *turkey* as a count noun refers to a bird, but as a noncount noun refers to a type of meat. *Butter* is usually a noncount noun as the generic substance to spread on bread, but becomes a count noun when one speaks of *the choice of butters in the supermarket*. (See further under **noun**, section 4.)

- verbs sometimes shift from *transitive* to *intransitive* roles, or vice versa. Thus the transitive verbs *eat* and *sell* may be used intransitively:

Have you eaten yet?
The book is selling well.

The second type of construction (typically used with a third person subject), is discussed further under **ergative**. By contrast, intransitive verbs may be construed transitively, for example:

boil the kettle *run the bath*

Some such cases are more common in one variety of English than another. Thus transitive use of *cater* and *protest*, as in *cater a party*, *protest the war*, are both typical of American rather than British English.

- adjectives may shift from being essentially *nongradable* to *gradable*, as when someone is described as *very English* or *rather art deco*. A now-established example of this kind is the much debated *unique*. See further under **absolute**, section 1.

coordination

- 1 the syntax of coordination
- 2 semantic aspects of coordination
- 3 unitary or segregated coordinates with AND

- 4 **disjunctive coordination with OR**
 - 5 **grammatical case of pronouns in coordinated phrases**
 - 6 **ellipsis in coordination**
 - 7 **syndetic, asyndetic, and polysyndetic coordination**
-

1 **The syntax of coordination**

Coordination is the syntactic joining of two or more clauses or phrases as grammatical equals. The *coordinates* are usually the same type of grammatical unit, e.g.

verb phrases, as in *We danced and sang all the way.*

noun phrases, as in *They enjoyed morris dancing and folk singing.*

It is however possible for grammatically unlike units to be coordinated, provided they are functionally similar, as in:

He was exuberant and in the best of health. (adjectival phrase, prepositional phrase)

Coordination is also known as *parataxis*, except where this term is reserved for coordination without the use of *coordinators*: see further under **parataxis**.

- **Coordination** contrasts with *subordination*, in which clauses are syntactically linked as unequal in status: see **subordination**.

2 **Semantic aspects of coordination**

The individual coordinators normally used to mark coordinated structures signal a variety of semantic relationships between the coordinates: *additive* (with **AND**), *alternative* (with **OR**), *adversative* (with **BUT**), *negative* (with **NOR**). These are like those of *conjunctive adverbs*: see under **adverb**, section 3.

Yet **coordination** can carry other kinds of meaning along with its connective function. For example, the use of **BUT** can carry the sense of concession or condition:

They will come but would have to be on the road by noon.

The use of *and* can convey a resultative meaning, as in:

He won a scholarship and never looked back.

This resultative meaning is more explicit in various incipient/marginal conjunctions, e.g. *hence, so, therefore*. See further under **conjunction**, section 4.

3 **Unitary or segregated coordinates with AND**

The coordinator **AND** can conjoin items in several kinds of relationship:

- as a unitary concept, where the two coordinates are an integrated unit, as with *bed and breakfast, fish and chips, hammer and sickle*. On the agreement of the verb with *unitary coordinates*, see **agreement**, section 8.
- as persons in a reciprocal or mutual relationship or participating jointly in an action, as in *Janice and Tom are close friends, Albert and his wife played duets*.
- as segregated items, as in *Joe and Richard passed the exam*, about which independent predications could be made: *Joe passed the exam, Richard passed the exam*.

The *segregation* of the coordinates may be underscored by the use of *correlative conjunctions* (see **conjunction**, section 5):

Both Joe and Richard passed the exam.

Segregated coordination may also be emphasized by the use of *distributive* words:

Joe and Richard each gained a pass.

Note the alternative term *distributive coordination* used for *segregated coordination* by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), and their use of *joint coordination* for coordinates in a unitary or reciprocal relationship.

- On the agreement of the verb and subsequent pronouns/determiners with distributive subjects see **agreement**, section 4.

4 **Disjunctive coordination with OR**

The coordinates joined with *OR* are typically an either/or choice, as in

Will you have your coffee black or with cream?

Disjunctive coordination like that does not invite the answer “both,” and is therefore *exclusive disjunction*. Compare *inclusive disjunction*, as in

Your fitness can be improved by jogging or swimming.

where both coordinates (*jogging, swimming*) are valid suggestions. This may be underscored by the use of correlative conjunctions, as in:

Either jogging or swimming would improve your fitness.

Note that as subject of the clause, *disjunctive coordinates* typically take singular agreement, especially if they are exclusive. However when inclusive, they can become a notional plural, with *notional agreement* in the accompanying plural verb. See further under **agreement**, sections 2 and 8.

5 **Grammatical case of pronouns in coordinated phrases**

In principle, the case of any personal pronouns (i.e. nominative or accusative) in a coordinated phrase reflects that of the phrase itself within the clause, as its subject, or as object of the verb or complement of a preposition, etc. For example:

Jackie and I waved him goodbye. (subject phrase/nominative pronoun)

He waved goodbye to Jackie and me. (phrase complement to preposition/accusative pronoun)

See further under **case**. In everyday discourse, the case of the pronoun varies somewhat (Wales 1996), especially when it is the second coordinate, as in:

Jackie and me waved him goodbye.

He waved goodbye to Jackie and I.

See further under **I and ME**, sections 2 and 3.

6 **Ellipsis in coordination**

In coordinated sentences, elements that might otherwise be repeated, are omitted or *ellipted*. This affects the subject, especially if it would otherwise appear as a personal pronoun, and auxiliary and modal verbs. See for example:

The new dean came with lots of energy and [he] enthused us all. (ellipsis of pronoun)

The dean was ready to develop projects and [was] experienced in using the media.
(ellipsis of auxiliary verb)

Coordinated sentences which do repeat auxiliary verbs and insert pronouns in the second clause tend to sound emphatic, and the repeated items rather redundant. The ellipsis itself provides the necessary *cohesion*: see further under **cohesion**.

7 **Syndetic, asyndetic, and polysyndetic coordination**

Coordination is usually marked by the use of a *coordinator* between the clauses, phrases, or items coordinated. This is especially true of two items, although if there are more than two, it is customary to use commas between earlier items in the series, and a coordinator only between the last two. See for example:

We wanted a day with blue skies, low humidity, and a light breeze.

(On the presence/absence of a comma before the final *AND*, see **comma**, section 3.) The use of *AND* as an explicit marker of conjunction in a series is formally known as *syndetic coordination*. It is the most common and least stylistically marked form of coordination (Quirk et al. 1985).

A set of coordinated items can be articulated without any coordinator at all, as in:

We wanted a day with blue skies, low humidity, a light breeze.

This is *asyndetic coordination*, which suggests the open-endedness of the series. The contrasting option is *polysyndetic coordination*: repeating the *coordinator* between each coordinated item:

We wanted a day with blue skies and low humidity and a light breeze.

Polysyndetic coordination naturally tends to emphasize and add rhetorical weight to the series.

coordinator

This is the term for the small group of connecting words from the traditional category of conjunctions, also known as *coordinating conjunctions*. They include *AND*, *OR*, *BUT*, *NOR*, whose syntactic role is to join phrases or clauses and assign equal status to both:

bold and brave

bold or brave

They came and went.

They sang or played cards all night.

not easy but necessary

not easy nor necessary

They came but went yesterday

They brought no news nor made any.

The **coordinator** *AND* is the commonest of the four in all registers of discourse, by the evidence of the Longman corpus (Longman Grammar 1999). *BUT* is most frequent in fiction writing and in conversation, while *OR* is most common in academic prose. *NOR* is quite rare by comparison with all the others. Marginal and incipient coordinators such as *however*, *yet*, can substitute for *BUT*: see **conjunction**, section 4.

Coordinators express distinctive semantic relations between the grammatical units they conjoin, including an additive, alternative, adversative, and negative relationship, as illustrated in the examples above. Grammarians such as Peterson (2009) note that other semantic relations such as condition and consequence can be carried by coordinators such as *BUT* and *AND*. This contributes to the argument for marginal conjunctions such as *so*, *therefore* being accepted as coordinators rather than subordinators: see further under **coordination**, section 2.

Note that **coordinators** may express either a unitary or a segregated/disjunctive relationship, according to the nature of the *coordinates* and the sentence predication: see **coordination**, sections 3 and 4.

- ▶ For **correlative coordinators** such as *both ... and*, *either ... or*, see **conjunction**, section 5.

copula

In English grammar this usually refers to the verb *BE* in its role as the link between subject and complement, in clauses like:

Today is a great day.

The theatre was unusual.

Though it has little semantic content, the **copula** provides the finite predicator needed to operate the clause. See further under **copular verb**.

copular verb

A **copular verb** serves to link the subject of the clause with its complement. The verb *BE* is the prototype, and the commonest by far in all kinds of discourse, including both academic and fiction writing (Biber et al. 1999). But most grammarians extend the term **copular verb** to a variety of other **linking verbs**. They may express a current state, as do:

appear keep remain seem stay

Or a process or result:

become come get grow prove turn

Or sensory perceptions of things:

feel look smell sound taste

Data from the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999) showed that the frequency and distribution of these copular verbs varies with the type of discourse. In conversation, the resultative *get* and sensory verb *look* are the most common, whereas in academic prose the resultative *become* is the commonest by far. In fiction the sensory verbs *look* and *feel* outnumber the rest.

Copular verbs are distinguished from both transitive and intransitive verbs in the *Comprehensive Grammar* (1985) by the SVC clause pattern that they instantiate (see further under **clause**, section 1). Yet many of those listed above also function as intransitive and/or transitive verbs. For example:

It was growing dark.

He grew in stature.

They grow vegetables.

See further under **transitivity**, section 5.

Note that Huddleston and Pullum (2002) restrict the term *copular* to clauses where *BE* is used to form SVC structures. Those formed with other verbs they call **complex transitives**. Their terms for the first two types of **copular verbs** listed above (those expressing a state, and a process or result) are **non-agentive static** and **dynamic intransitive** respectively.

Alternative names for **copular verbs** (other than *BE*) are **intensive verb, linking verb, relational verb**.

coreference

This term refers to the relationship between two NPs that refer to the same entity. It holds between a pronoun and the NP which is its antecedent, as in:

The eagle tried to catch a salmon which was too heavy for it to carry.

In that sentence the subject NP “the eagle” and the pronoun “it” are **coreferential**.

Coreference is an important aspect of **cohesion** in texts, achieved through a variety of **pro-forms** including pronouns (see further under **cohesion**). In expository and straight narrative texts, these are typically in the third person; whereas in narratives which tell the story through dialogue, the first and second person pronouns are used as well. **Coreferentiality** is more complex, and can involve switching between third person reference and first or second person pronouns (Stirling 2010). Two examples of this kind of **coreferencing** are shown by the underlined in:

The hunter(1) pointed his spear at the kangaroo(2) with the murmur “Now I(1) have you(2).”

Coreference is also a crucial factor in **apposition**, where synonymous paraphrases are used to explain and detail the same referent. See further under **apposition**, section 1.

correlative comparative clause

See **comparative clause**, section 5.

correlative conjunction

See **conjunction**, section 3.

COS or 'COS

These are the abbreviated forms of *BECAUSE*, commonly heard in informal conversation.

COULD

This is a common modal verb, used to express past **ability** and **epistemic possibility**. See further under **modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 3; and compare **CAN**.

count noun, mass noun, and countability

- 1 count and mass nouns
 - 2 countability
-

1 Count and mass nouns

Within the noun phrase, the head noun may be constructed as a **count noun** or a **mass noun**. Count nouns are items consisting of one unit or more than one, and they normally have a singular and a plural form:

berry/berries larva/larvae nucleus/nuclei tax/taxes thought/thoughts

Singular count nouns are prefaced by a variety of determiners, including *A*, *AN*, or *THE*. When pluralized, they can be used without any determiner at all. The presence of the singular determiners (*A*, *AN*) or plural inflections shows that they are **countable**.

Mass nouns such as *education*, *furniture*, *honesty*, *keenness*, *mud* differ in their semantics and their grammar. They are unbounded concepts, whether they are **concrete** or **abstract nouns**, as the examples show. Lacking plural forms, they are always construed in the singular, either without a preceding determiner, or else with *THE* or one of a quite restricted set of determiners (see under **determiner**, section 4). Mass nouns are like the typical **collective noun**, in that they always take singular agreement. In everyday texts, mass nouns occur less often than count nouns (Biber et al. 1999).

- ▶ For more on the various types of nouns, see under **noun**, sections 1, 5, and 6. For plural-only nouns like *police*, *scissors*, *trousers*, see under **agreement**, section 5.

2 Countability

The terms **count noun** and **mass noun** might suggest that **countability** is an inherent property of some nouns and not others, as in all the examples so far. Yet some English nouns enjoy dual usage as count or mass nouns according to the context. So for example, *turkey* can be heard used as a mass noun when served as meat on the festive table (*Would you like some turkey?*). Meanwhile the person buying it out of season will probably have to ask for *a frozen turkey* (focusing on the individual bird as a count noun). So the same noun may be used **countably** or **noncountably**, according to the meaning intended. The noun *damage* is ordinarily used as a mass noun, while in legal contexts it becomes a **count noun**, as when *damages* must be compensated for. The countability of some nouns depends on the variety of English. So *accommodation* is a mass noun in British English, but can be used **countably** in American English, as when booking *accommodations* at your holiday destination.

Alternative terms for **noncountable/noncountably** are **uncountable/uncountably**. Mass nouns are also known as **noncount** or **uncount nouns** in some grammars and dictionaries.

cute quotes

See under **quotation marks**.

CxG

See **construction grammar**.

D

dangling participle

This is the traditional name for a participial clause at the start of a sentence which is unattached to the subject NP of the following finite clause. It may involve a present or past participle, as underlined in the examples:

Wondering irresolutely what to do, his alarm went off.

Now injured in the stern, the captain steered the ship straight back to the port.

Despite its position in the sentence, the **dangling participle** does not relate semantically to the juxtaposed subject. In the first example, it connects with a notional *he*, which is only obliquely there in the determiner *his*. In the second, it relates to the object of the clause. In neither case is it directly related to the subject, as might be expected in ordinary English syntax, which earned it the label of **dangling participle** from prescriptive grammarians, or **unattached participle** from more descriptive ones. Such syntactically independent constructions (known as the **ablative absolute**) were nevertheless endorsed in classical Latin grammar as a way of adding extra information into the sentence. See further under **ablative absolute**.

When presented in isolation, **dangling participles** like those exemplified above make for unintended comedy. However they are less conspicuous when embedded in continuous narrative:

He lay awake all night going over her revelations. Wondering irresolutely what to do, his alarm went off.

As in that example, the dangling participle is often semantically attached to the subject or **theme** of the previous sentence (see further under **theme**, section 2). This is also true of stereotypical examples which serve as continuity markers, such as:

Having said that, the plan is unlikely to be approved.

Excepting that, we mean to consider all possible steps.

Given that, there can be no further objections.

Formulaic dangling participles are rarely objected to, as they play their part in effective **topical progression**. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 4.

dash

- 1 terminology relating to dashes
 - 2 single dash to show break in syntax
 - 3 en-dash/rule or long hyphen to span separate words
 - 4 paired dashes
-

1 Terminology relating to dashes

The **dash** is a sentence punctuator, not a word punctuator like the *hyphen*. Traditionally the *en dash* was twice as long as the hyphen, and the *em dash* three times as long, though the ratios vary somewhat with individual fonts. The terms *en dash* and *em dash* are used in North America, while in Britain and Australia the corresponding ones are *en rule* and *em rule*. The term *long hyphen*, used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), refers to the *en dash/en rule*.

2 Single dash to show break in syntax

The **dash** is often used to indicate a break in the syntax of a sentence, as in:

Let's now move on to the next problem – not to linger on ones we have solved.

Let's now move on to the next problem—not to linger on ones we have solved.

In both sentences the dash separates the finite clause from the add-on elliptical one which lacks a finite operator. The first sentence shows the *spaced en dash* used by Canadian and some British editors. In the second it is an *unspaced em dash*, used also by British editors, as well as those in the US and Australia (Peters 2004). This use of a single dash is deprecated in formal writing, whether or not it reflects erratic syntax. Abrupt breaks in syntax are however a common feature of conversational dialogue: see further under **anacoluthon**.

3 En dash/rule or long hyphen to span separate words

A single en dash (unspaced) is used to link words which between them express span in time or space, as in:

the July–September quarter

the Sydney–Hobart yacht race

4 Paired dashes

Either spaced en dashes or unspaced em dashes may be used to mark off an interpolated item or parenthesis in mid-sentence, as in:

When you come next – may it be soon! – we'll do that bicycle ride over the bridge.

In that sentence, the total independence of the mid-sentence exclamation means it could only be punctuated with *paired dashes*. Less independent parentheses can also be punctuated with parentheses (parenthetical brackets), or paired commas. For example:

When they come again (in May or June), we'll do that bicycle ride.

The three punctuation alternatives can thus be scaled in terms of three degrees of separation. See further under **brackets** and **comma**, section 2.

dativ

In Latin and Old English, nouns and pronouns carried distinctive inflections to mark their grammatical case, and their roles within the clause. The **dativ case** marked a noun or pronoun which was the **indirect object** of a verb, as opposed to its **direct object**. In modern English, there is no such marking of nouns; and pronouns no longer distinguish the two types of object. They are the same in *She sent me her love* (where “me” is the indirect object) and *She loves me* (where “me” is the direct object). Some traditional grammarians nevertheless apply the term **dativ** to the first “me,” although its role as indirect object is only indicated by the syntax/word order.

The lack of dative inflections in modern English, plus the fact that the indirect object of English pronouns has the same form as the direct object, leads some modern grammarians (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985) to use the term **objective case** for both dative and accusative case. Others (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) use the term **accusative** for both. This also covers the use of the accusative pronoun as an oblique subject, as in:

For me to get there would be easy.

See further under **case**, section 1; **object**; and **oblique**, section 3.

In traditional grammar, the term **dativ** was also applied to paraphrases of the dative case, as when *She sent me her itinerary* is rephrased with a *TO*-phrase:

She sent her itinerary to me.

In modern English grammars, the *TO*-phrase is usually analyzed as a prepositional phrase serving as adverbial complement to the verb “sent” (see further under **complement**, section 3).

dativ shift

This term, and its alternative **dativ movement**, refers to the fact that English grammar allows the indirect object to be shifted ahead of the direct object following a ditransitive verb. Thus *I gave an apple to my love* is formulated as *I gave my love an apple*, in the words of the Irish folksong. This **dativ shift** is in fact very common in English, moving the indirect object in from its more peripheral location as a prepositional phrase (“to my love”) and positioning it without the preposition next to the verb. The term **dativ shift** draws attention to the underlying grammatical case of the indirect object and its different status from the direct object (in the accusative case). See further under **dativ** and **object**.

daughter node

In immediate constituent analysis, this refers to the formal relationship between two nodes in a tree diagram, i.e. that of the subordinate (**daughter node**) to the immediately dominating superordinate (**mother node**). See further under **immediate constituent analysis**.

de-adjectival

This term is used by morphologists to identify the fact that a given word is derived from an adjective, as are the verb *brighten* and the noun *brightness* from the adjective *bright*. See further under **derivation**, sections 1 and 2; and **conversion**, section 3.

declarative

This term refers to the type of clause used in making statements, as opposed to questions or commands. In *declarative clauses* the order of constituents is almost always subject (S) followed by verb (V) followed by the complementary O (object), A (adjunct) or C (subject complement). See further under **clause**, section 1; and **sentence**, section 3.

declension

The classical term **declension** was applied to the set of case inflections for a given class of noun/pronoun, as in Latin and Old English. Declension is also used to refer to the particular inflection associated with a given case, for example the 's attached to modern English nouns in the genitive case. See further under **case**, section 1.

deep case

In case grammar, this is the underlying semantic or thematic role of any of the arguments of the verb. They include Agent, Patient, Goal, Recipient, Source, Path, Instrument, Place, Time, Event. However the inventory of **deep cases** and their application in analyzing a sentence is often debatable.

In a sentence like:

The waiter refilled our glasses.

the underlined item is variously analyzed as Patient, Place, or Goal. See further under **case grammar**.

deep structure

In transformational–generative grammar, **deep structure** is the notional structure underlying the *surface structure* of a sentence, embodying its base constituents and their essential grammatical and logical relations in neutral form, i.e. active rather than passive, positive rather than negative. For *The snake had bitten the dog*, the deep structure would include *snake* [noun subject], *bite* [past perfect verb], *dog* [noun object]. The negative transformation rule would add *NOT* as well as *DO*-support for the verb: see further under **transformational–generative grammar**.

The equivalent concept in government–binding theory is the *D-structure*, from which the surface structure is derived. See under **government–binding theory**.

defining relative clause

This is an alternative name for the *restrictive relative clause*. See further under **relative clause**, section 3.

definite article

This is the term in traditional grammar for *THE*, now usually treated as a type of *determiner*. See further under *THE* and *determiner*, section 1.

degree adverb

See under *intensifier and downtoner*.

degrees of comparison

These are the comparative and superlative grades which are marked by inflection or *MORE/MOST* paraphrases in many adjectives and some adverbs. They form part of the system of *gradability*. See further under *adjective*, section 3; and *adverb*, section 4.

deixis and deictic

In the grammar of Greek, this term was used to refer to the “pointing” function of certain kinds of words, i.e. their ability to locate the speaker in terms of time, place, and in relation to other communicators (as speaker or listener). These three types of *deixis* can be seen with demonstrative adverbs such as *here/there, now/then*, and personal pronouns such as *I/YOU* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). Demonstrative determiners and pronouns (*THIS/THAT*) are also *deictic* in indicating closeness or greater distance from the speaker/listener’s reference point. Deictic words are “indexical” in that they take their meaning from the context, and have little inherent meaning themselves.

Note that in systemic–functional grammar, *deictic* is the general term for the *determiner* in the noun phrase. See further under *determiner*, section 2.

deletion rule

In transformational–generative grammar, *deletion rules* are used to explain how regular constituents of the clause may disappear from its formulation in the surface structure. Thus in clauses coordinated with the same subject pronoun, the second is normally deleted. Thus:

John went and he returned without delay.

becomes

John went and returned without delay.

In other grammars this would be analyzed as a form of *ellipsis*. See further under *ellipsis*, section 1.

delexical verb

See *light verb*.

demonstrative adverb

Several English adverbs have a *demonstrative* role, including:

- adverbs of place: *here* and *there, hence, and thence*
- adverbs of time: *now* and *then*
- adverbs of manner: *thus*

Like **demonstrative pronouns**, the contrasting adverbs of place and time represent relative closeness to or distance from the speaker/writer or his/her reference point. While *here* and *now* are anchored in the immediate context of an utterance, they point the listener/reader out to more remote *there* and *then*. This is their **deictic** role. See further under **deixis and deictic**.

demonstrative pronoun

This is the traditional name for the pronouns *THIS*, *THAT* and their plurals *THESE*, *THOSE*, which identify something or someone by their relative closeness. *THIS/THESE* indicate closeness either in physical space or in the discourse, while *THAT/THOSE* indicate greater distance.

The **demonstratives** have two grammatical functions in English:

(i) as determiners:

This/That house is just about right for them.

(ii) as pronouns (i.e. as substitutes for a full noun phrase):

This/That is their house on the right.

Demonstrative determiners both singular and plural can be used to delimit references to material objects, ideas, and people. **Demonstrative pronouns** (in sense (ii)) are also used of both inanimate and animate references in the plural. In the singular they normally refer only to objects and ideas – not people, except when used with the verb *BE*. Compare:

This is your new lecturer.

**This will teach your class in second semester.* (not idiomatic English)

Both demonstrative determiners and demonstrative pronouns work as **deictic markers**, i.e. they point out something relative to the speaker/writer's situation, and are thus exponents of **deixis**. See further under **deixis and deictic**.

denominal

This term is used by morphologists to identify the fact that a given word is derived from a noun, as the verb *crystallize* is from the noun *crystal*. See further under **derivation**, sections 1 and 2; and **conversion**, section 3.

denotation

This is the meaning of a word in terms of the class of items it refers to, i.e. its **referential meaning**. See further under **connotation and denotation**.

deontic

This adjective is used to refer to several types of **extrinsic modality**, varying somewhat with the analyst but always including obligation and permission. The two are illustrated in the **modal verbs** underlined in the following sentences:

I must leave before sunset.

You may leave now.

In both cases the modal expresses a **deontic** meaning, implying that some external force effectively requires or mandates the action. **Deontic modality** is

sometimes referred to as **root modality**. Both terms are used in contrast with **epistemic modality**, which expresses the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition stated:

We must have overlooked the offer.

The house may be worth revisiting.

As the examples show, modal verbs like *MUST* and *MAY* can be used to express either deontic or epistemic modality. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

dependent

This is a cover term for any subsidiary structure which is licensed by the head of a phrase. So an NP may license a preceding determiner and one or more adjectives, as well as postpositional adjectives or adjectival phrases. It thus includes both **complements** and **modifiers**: see further under **complement**, section 1; and **modifier**.

dependent clause

This term is used by some grammarians, e.g. Biber et al. (1999) for what others call the **subordinate clause**. See further under **clause**, section 4.

derivation

- 1 **derivation by changing the form of an existing word**
 - 2 **additions to the word's meaning or grammatical scope**
 - 3 **derivation by compounding and blends**
 - 4 **acronyms and initialisms**
-

1 Derivation by changing the form of an existing word

Derivation refers to the process whereby new words are formed out of other pre-existing elements in the language (see **word formation**). Derivation often involves the addition of affixes (prefix, suffix) to an existing word stem, as when the word *prenatal* is derived from *natal*, or *teacher* is derived from *teach*. Occasionally English words are derived by subtracting part of the stem, in **clippings** like *exam* (from *examination*); and others called **backformations**, where the abbreviated stem takes on a new grammatical role, for example the verb *liaise* derived from the noun *liaison*. See further under **affixation**, **clipping**, and **backformation**.

2 Additions to the word's meaning or grammatical scope

Words formed by affixation, abbreviation/clipping, or backformation all show the process of **derivation** by the changes made to the stem. Yet new meanings are continually added to the existing stems of words, as **semantic extensions**. Late C20 examples are the use of *menu* to refer to the set of choices for action provided by your computer; and the fresh application of *wireless* (originally the word for a radio receiver) to the way in which cable-free internet connections can be made via computer. In such cases there is no change in

the form of the word to reflect its new meaning, and the *derivational* process is invisible. This is also true to some extent with *zero derivation* or *conversion*, when a word takes on an additional grammatical role (e.g. the use of *run* as a noun as well as verb) without any visible change to the stem. It does however show the new grammatical role by taking on the inflectional suffixes of its adoptive word class, as well as its normal place in phrase or clause structure. Compare:

They had run the marathon the year before.

The team had plenty of runs on the board.

In its verb role, *run* appears following the auxiliary *had* in the verb phrase of the first sentence. In the second sentence, it appears as the noun complement of *plenty of*, and takes the usual plural inflection (-s). See further under **conversion**.

3 Derivation by compounding and blends

New words can be formed by *compounding*, i.e. structured combinations of two or more pre-existing elements (morphemes) of the language, as in:

car park cold-shoulder database ivy-covered worldwide

In these, the process of **derivation** is shown by the juxtaposition of the two words, and their greater or lesser degree of integration, according to whether they are spaced, linked by a hyphen, or set solid, i.e. without intervening space. There is however considerable variation in the use/non-use of the hyphens, especially with compound nouns (see further under **compound word**, section 3). Whatever the spelling and setting, the compound noun or verb operates as a single grammatical unit, and takes on the regular inflections for that word class. So the compound verb *cold-shoulder* is inflected as *cold-shouldered* and *cold-shouldering*.

Blends are a special subclass of compound, in which the two words involved are both shortened, with some reduction of the back end of the first and the front end of the second. Examples are the verb *guestimate* (from “guess” + “estimate”), and the noun *brunch* (from “breakfast” + “lunch”). See further under **blending and blends**.

4 Acronyms and initialisms

Both acronyms and initialisms are derived from the first letters of a string of words, such as *scuba* (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) and *PVC* (polyvinylchloride). They differ in that the letters of an acronym combine to form a pronounceable word, whereas those of the initialism have to be sounded out individually. See further under **acronym**.

Note that of all the ways of deriving new words, compounding and affixation are the most common in modern English (Ayto 1996).

derivational affix

Affixes which combine with pre-existing stems used to create new words are *derivational* – as are all those underlined in the following examples:

demist enslave farmer humbleness motivational

As the examples show, derivational affixes may be prefixes (*de-*, *en-*) or suffixes (*-er*, *-ness*, *-al*). They may be associated with the formation of verbs, as in the first two examples, or with nouns as in the third and fourth, or with adjectives as in the fifth example. In all cases they change the grammatical class of the word.

Derivational affixes can also create new words by radically changing the meaning of the stem to which they are attached. So negative prefixes such as *dis-*, *im-/in-*, *un-* apply the opposite polarity to the pre-existing stems of verbs, adjectives, and nouns:

<i>disconnect</i>	<i>disinterested</i>	<i>disown</i>	<i>distrust</i>
<i>impartial</i>	<i>impossible</i>	<i>inability</i>	<i>insensitive</i>
<i>unavailability</i>	<i>undo</i>	<i>unlike</i>	<i>unmake</i>

Derivational affixes contrast with **inflectional** ones, which mark changes in the grammatical subcategories of the word according to the class it belongs to. For example the suffix *-ed* marks the past forms of the verb *demist(ed)* and *enslave(d)*. The *-s* on *farmers* marks it as a plural noun. Note that inflectional suffixes appear after all the derivational have been added, as in: *brutalized*, *confectioners*. See further under **inflection**.

Note that the border between derivational and inflectional affixes is fuzzy and debatable in some cases, for example the *-ing* of the **gerund-participle**, and the *-ly* suffix which marks certain kinds of adverbs (see further under those headings). The border between derivational affixes and **combining forms** in modern English is also debatable: see further under **combining form**, section 2.

derivational morphology

See under **morphology**, sections 1 and 3.

descendant

Another term for the **daughter node** in **immediate constituent analysis**. See further under that heading.

determinative

The terms **determinative** and **determiner** are used in contrasting ways by modern English grammars. In the *Comprehensive Grammar (1985)*, **determinative** is used for members of any word class whose function is to introduce the noun phrase, including the definite and indefinite articles; numbers, both ordinal and cardinal; quantifiers such as *all*, *many*; various types of “pronoun”; indefinites such as *any*, *every*; demonstratives such as *this*, *that*; interrogatives/relatives such as *which*, *what*; possessives such as *my*, *your*; and possessive forms of proper and common nouns such as *John's/the team's (best hope)*. Thus many types of words can serve as determinatives, whereas only a relatively small number can be classed as determiners, because their distinctive function is to mark the start of a noun phrase. In the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language (2002)*, the applications of the two terms are reversed so that the syntactic function of

introducing the noun phrase is referred to as *determiner*, and members of the closed class of words which perform this function are called **determinatives**. See further under **determiner**, section 1.

determinative phrase

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to combinations such as *very few*, *far more*, where the determiner head is modified by its own adverb. The **determinative phrase**, along with any adjectival phrase, serves to modify the head of the *noun phrase*. See further under **determiner**, section 3; and **noun phrase**, section 2.

determiner

- 1 **determiners as a word class**
 - 2 **syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions of determiners**
 - 3 **sequences of determiners**
 - 4 **determiners and countability**
 - 5 **semideterminers**
 - 6 **complex determiners and open-class quantifiers**
-

1 **Determiners as a word class**

The term **determiner** is a relative newcomer in English grammar, first used by Bloomfield (1933), and taken up after WWII to refer to members of the word class which preface a noun phrase and put semantic bounds on it – as the name suggests. The determiner class includes a mix of words which were differently classified in traditional grammar, for example:

- definite article (*the*) and indefinite article (*a* and *an*)
- possessive pronouns/adjectives (*my*, *your*, *his*, *our*, etc.)
- demonstrative adjectives (*this*, *that*, etc.)
- interrogative and relative pronouns (*what*, *which*)
- quantifying adjectives (*all*, *both*, *either*, *each*, *many*, *some*, etc.)
- numerals: cardinal (*one*, *two*, *three*, etc.) and ordinal (*first*, *second*, *third*, etc.)

In fact other types of words such as possessive nouns can also act as determiners or fulfill the *determinative* function. See further under **determinative**.

2 **Syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions**

Determiners typically appear as the first item in an NP, as underlined in the following:

My old aunt sold both those valuable pictures for a mere \$100.

As the example shows, the determiner comes before any adjective that precedes the noun. There may indeed be more than one determiner, as above with “both” “those”. The role of the determiner(s) is to signal what bounds are to be put on the following noun.

- “my” limits the range of aunts who are in question (only those related to the speaker/writer)

- “both those” makes it just the two pictures which we (you and I) are thinking about in this physical or mental context
- “a” (indefinite article) leaves the noun \$100 very open: the sum could come from anywhere

Some determiners show number agreement with the noun that heads the phrase, as can be seen above in the plural agreement of “both those” with “pictures”. The same applies to other demonstratives, quantifiers, and ordinal numbers which normally agree in number with the head noun.

In general terms, **determiners** indicate how specific or otherwise the noun head is intended to be. The definite article, demonstrative, and possessive determiners make it specific, whereas the indefinite article and indefinite determiners make it nonspecific, whether they are unrestricted in their application (*any, every*), partial (*many, some*), or total (*no*). As shown in the example, the determiners reflect something of the pragmatics of the discourse, and are often *deictic* (see further under **deixis and deictic**). In any extended text, the determiners play an important part in its cohesion. See further under **cohesion**.

3 Sequences of determiners

When there is more than one **determiner** in an NP, they occur in a more or less fixed order before the noun and its premodifiers, as in:

all those recent developments

a few early birds

our first English dictionary

the first two dates

Those noun phrases show the three notional “slots” occupied by different types of determiner: as *predeterminer*, *central determiner*, *postdeterminer*, illustrated in the table below:

<i>Predeterminers</i>	<i>Central determiners</i>	<i>Postdeterminers</i>
universal quantifiers	demonstratives/possessives/ indefinites/ <i>wh</i> -determiners, definite/indefinite articles	numerals: ordinal, cardinal/relative quantifiers
<i>all, both, half, neither</i>	<i>this, that, my, your, its, any, some, which, what, the, a, no, enough</i>	<i>another, second, two, many, few, several</i>

There may be up to three different determiners in a *determiner phrase*, as illustrated above in “the first two dates”. The second and third are both selected from the postdeterminer group, normally ordered with the cardinal coming second, although the opposite order is sometimes used in referring to particular rankings, e.g. *two first prizes*.

The various types of central determiner are mutually exclusive, so that combinations of specific and nonspecific determiners, or of demonstratives and possessives, never occur. Note however the formulaic *what a (day)* and *many a (time)*, where central and postdeterminers take up the predeterminer role. For combinations such as *such a (climax)*, *the next (night)*, see section 5 below on **semideterminers**.

Several of the postdeterminers offer degrees of comparison (absolute, comparative, superlative), like adjectives:

- *few fewer fewest*

They received few applications/fewer applications/the fewest applications ever.

- *little less least*

They had little time/less time than before/the least time ever to prepare.

- *many more most*

Many applicants were caught.

More applicants might write in.

Most applicants could not comply with the deadline.

As shown in those examples, the gradable determiners can combine with a central determiner, such as *the*. For more on gradability see further under **LITTLE**, and **MANY, MUCH, and MORE**. For the *degrees of comparison*, see **adjective**, section 3.

4 Determiners and countability

Some **determiners** are selected in accordance with properties of the noun following, i.e. whether it is **countable** or not, and so whether it can be pluralized. The indefinite article in *a seat, an armchair* indicates that the noun is countable, and that the phrase refers to one of a number of possible items (*seats, armchairs*). Countable nouns can also be prefaced by *the* in the singular or plural. Whereas nouns that are not countable can only be prefaced by the definite article, as in *the furniture* (not *a furniture*), and they do not have plurals. See further under **count nouns, mass nouns, and countability**.

Like the definite and indefinite articles, other **determiners** form complementary pairs to be used according to the countability of the noun. For example:

<i>every seat/armchair</i>	<i>all furniture</i>
<i>several seats/armchairs</i>	<i>some furniture</i>
<i>many seats/ armchairs</i>	<i>much furniture</i>
<i>few seats/armchairs</i>	<i>little furniture</i>
<i>fewer seats/armchairs</i>	<i>less furniture</i>

Note that *every*, and other distributive determiners such as *each* and *both*, can only be used with countable nouns, while *all* and *no* can be used with countable as well as noncountable nouns.

- ▶ For the relatively recent distinction between *fewer* and *less*, see under **LESS**, section 2.

5 Semideterminers

This term is used by Biber et al. (1999) to refer to certain quasi-adjectival phrases, which function like **determiners** to specify an aspect of the head noun, in combination with the indefinite or definite article. They include *a certain (smile)*, and others often construed with *the*, which can be used in pairs:

- *the same eye/the other eye*
(specifies that the referent is the same/is the alternative)
- *the former policy/the latter policy*
(indicates that the first of a pair/second of the pair is being referred to)
- *the next issue/the last issue*
(specifies a following item or person in a series/the final item or person)

Note that those with the definite article can also be used as NPs, whereas those with *a* cannot, unless they are coupled with a number: *a dozen (eggs)*, *a million (miles)*. The classifications and specifications provided by these semideterminers are unlike those of ordinary adjectives, and comparable to those of demonstratives or postdeterminers.

6 **Complex determiners and open-class quantifiers**

The determinative function is performed by a variety of more or less fixed complex determiners, the most frequent of which are *a lot of/lots of* and *plenty of*. Both can take singular or plural complements (mass or plural count nouns), and the verb will agree in either case. Compare:

A lot/lots of money is being spent

A lot/lots of tourists are in town.

Plenty of cargo/visitors is/are being held up at the airport.

The fully grammaticalized complex determiner is thus **number transparent**. It does not set the pattern of agreement itself, but yields to the number of the complementary noun, making it the syntactic **head** of the phrase. See further under **head and headedness**, section 4.

Less fully grammaticalized are the open-class quantifiers, i.e. more or less fixed idioms using quantificational terms drawn from the general lexicon:

a (large) amount of

a good/great deal of

These two have in common the fact that their complements are always mass nouns, where others regularly take count nouns (like those discussed in section 4 above). Examples of the latter are:

a (large) group of

a (large) number of

However, like complex determiners, the open-class quantifiers show somewhat variable patterns of number agreement, especially when not premodified with *large* etc. Without premodification they are usually number transparent, and sometimes even with it: see further under **number transparency**.

Apart from these open-class quantifiers, there are numerous informal quantificational phrases (Smith 2009b). These are headed by nouns which have specific meanings in the general lexicon, but are semantically bleached when used in informal discourse to refer to quantities of items or people:

a bucket of/buckets of (money)

a heap of/heaps of (visitors)

a load of/loads of (work)

Like *a lot/lots of*, these show number transparency for both singular and plural forms of the determinative phrase. Some other examples present one form only (e.g. singular), as with *a spate of (thefts)*; yet they too can combine with a singular or plural verb. See further under **agreement**, section 7.

deverbal

This term is used by morphologists to identify the fact that a given word is derived from a verb, as the noun *activation* is from the verb *activate*. See further under **derivation**, sections 1 and 2; and **conversion**, section 3.

diminutive

English grammar provides a few affixes which serve as **diminutives** to indicate that the referent is relatively small in size compared with the archetype. They include prefixes such as:

<i>mini-</i>	<i>miniseries</i>	<i>miniskirt</i>
<i>micro-</i>	<i>microclimate</i>	<i>micro-manage</i>

And suffixes such as:

<i>-ette</i>	<i>cigarette</i>	<i>kitchenette</i>
<i>-let</i>	<i>piglet</i>	<i>starlet</i>

Note that the connotations of these affixes are stylistically neutral, and neither condescending nor familiar. Compare **hypocoristic**.

direct and indirect speech

Direct speech and **indirect speech** are contrasting ways of projecting the spoken word. The most direct and dramatic way is to quote the speaker's exact words:

Captain Oates said as he went out into the blizzard: "I may be away for some time."

In direct speech, the speaker uses the first person ("I"), and the (present) tense of the verb is set by the speech situation. Although the words put between quotation marks purport to be those of the speaker, in fact they may not be – as often in newspaper reporting. Yet quoting a remark in direct speech gives it verisimilitude, projecting it in the form of a live utterance.

Indirect speech differs in its syntax, and reports the utterance more obliquely as in:

Oates said as he went out into the blizzard that he might be away for some time.

In indirect speech the quotation is put in the third person ("he"), and the tense is **backshifted** into the past ("might"), in line with the canonical **sequence of tenses** (see further under **sequence of tenses**).

In fact there are several intermediate forms of quoting between **direct speech** and **indirect speech** (Leech and Short 1981). They include:

- narrative reporting of speech

Oates indicated that that he might be away some time.

- free indirect speech

Oates said he would be away for some time.

- narrative interpretation of act

Oates voiced his expectation that he would be away a long while.

These alternative ways of representing what was said make use of different paradigmatic choices for quoting and interpreting what was said. The substitution of modal “would” for “might” loses the understatement but brings the meaning of the quotation to the surface. See further under **modality and modal verb**.

direct condition

See **IF**.

direct object

See under **object**.

direct question

See under **indirect question**.

discourse marker

Modern grammarians recognize that there are recurrent lexicogrammatical items which play a part in the structuring of discourse in addition to their ordinary syntactic role. In written discourse they include formal and informal enumerators such as *firstly, secondly; next, then, further*, as well as contrastive, alternative, affirmative, and concessive indicators such as *however, in other words, in fact, anyway*, which relate segments of text to each other (see further under **cohesion**). Focusing words like *also, even, too* put extra emphasis on a neighboring constituent in a sentence, to connect it with larger ongoing themes.

In spoken discourse, words like *well* serve to indicate that the speaker intends to take up the conversational turn, while *like* has a number of different **discourse marker** roles, among them to signal that examples or explanations are about to come (Miller 2009). *Of course* may be used by either speaker or listener to signal affirmation of or agreement with whatever statement has just been made. They also serve the pragmatic purpose of expressing the listener’s attitude and orientation (solidarity with the speaker), and thus serve as **pragmatic markers** as well. The pragmatic function is clearly distinct in the case of sentence/stance adverbs such as *hopefully, regrettably*, which express attitude and opinion without contributing to inter-sentence cohesion, and are therefore pragmatic markers. But where the pragmatic and cohesive functions are merged, especially in interactive discourse, the term **discourse marker** can cover both.

- For more on **sentence/stance adverbs**, see under **adverb**, sections 2 and 3. See also under **metafunction of language**.

disjunct

This term is used by Quirk et al. (1985) for the type of adverb which stands outside the core elements of the clause, and comments on whole predication.

Disjuncts indicate such things as the likelihood of something happening (*maybe*,

perhaps), or the speaker/writer's attitude to the event (*fortunately, regrettably*).
See further under **adverb**, section 3.

disjunction

A syntactic disjunction is a coordinated structure which presents a choice between alternatives, as in:

Was she born in 1908 or 1910?

More strictly this is an **exclusive disjunction**, i.e. one between mutually exclusive alternatives. Though this is the typical pattern, a coordinated structure can also express **inclusive disjunction**, as in:

Either Tim or Jane could tell you.

In this case it is logically possible for both persons to satisfy the need for information: either could do so, despite the coordinator *or* being between them.

See further under **coordination**, section 4.

dislocation

This term refers to the displacement of a syntactic constituent (especially the subject or object) from its normal place within the clause to a position at either end, and its replacement within the clause by a personal pronoun (underlined). For example;

That neighbor of yours, I met him at the supermarket.

I met him at the supermarket, that neighbor of yours.

In the first example, the **extraposed** object is said to be **left-dislocated**; in the second it is **right-dislocated**. While the typical function of **right dislocation** is to clarify, that of **left dislocation** is to topicalize an item. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**.

distributive

This term is used to refer to certain kinds of determiners and pronouns whose role is to indicate each member of a set individually and exhaustively, for example **EACH, EVERY, BOTH, NO/NONE**. See further under **determiner**, section 4; and **indefinite pronoun**.

- ▶ For the impact of **distributive** words on the agreement between subject noun phrases and the verb and subsequent pronouns, see **agreement**, section 4.
- ▶ For their use in **segregative coordination**, see **coordination**, section 3.

ditransitive

See under **transitivity**, section 4; and **valency**, section 3.

DO

The verb **DO** can be traced back to Old English, with some of its current meanings e.g. “make,” “perform” operative back then. Its uses as a **primary auxiliary verb** are much more recent, evolving in early modern English, and contributing to its high frequency in spoken discourse today. Its best known functions are in formulating negative and interrogative VPs, for example:

I like coffee ⇒ *He doesn't like coffee.*
Do you like coffee?

These two functions are referred to as **DO-support** or **DO-insertion**.

Two additional functions of **DO** are to:

- make a finite verb emphatic, as in *I do like the taste of coffee.*
- substitute for a verb and its complement which would otherwise have to be duplicated: *You like coffee as much as they do.*

These are the four **NICE** properties characteristic of all English auxiliaries: see further under **NICE**.

Apart from its role as an auxiliary, **DO** functions as an ordinary lexical verb with a range of meanings, depending on its complement. It participates in a number of transitive phrasal verbs, including e.g. *do away with*, *do down*, *do in*, *do over*, *do up*, *do without*: see further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

DO also forms idiomatic constructions directly with its object NP. For example, one can *do the dishes* ("wash up"), *do the books* ("reconcile the accounts"), *do time* ("spend a term in jail"), *do South America*, etc. ("travel in South America"). In constructions like these, its meaning is diffused in the whole construction, and **DO** is effectively **delexicalized**. See further under **light verbs**.

dominance

This term is used in immediate constituent analysis to refer to the relationship of a higher node to any beneath it in the tree structure. Thus the S node (= *sentence*) **dominates** all other nodes below. See further under **immediate constituent analysis**.

double comparative

These are adjectival phrases which embody both **synthetic** and **analytical** forms of comparison for the same adjective, as in *more brighter*, *more easier*, *more lovelier*. Expressions like these can occasionally be found in literature from previous centuries, where they serve rhetorical or literary purposes. Strictly speaking they are redundant, and not regarded as part of standard English grammar, though occasionally heard in impromptu speaking. See further under **adjective**, section 3; and **redundancy**.

double genitive

This term refers to the doubling up of genitive markers in NPs with **OF**-phrases, as in:

a friend of Ruth's
that nephew of ours

Though **double genitive** implies some kind of redundancy in its expression, the presence of both the **OF**-phrase and the possessive form of the proper noun/pronoun is idiomatic and purposeful. It adds a measure of distance

and indefiniteness to the phrase; compare the definiteness of the standard genitive equivalents: *Ruth's friend, our nephew*. See further under **redundancy**.

double negative

See under **negative concord**.

double superlative

These are adjectival phrases which embody both *synthetic* and *analytical* forms of the superlative for the same adjective (see **adjective**, section 3). Literary examples can be found in Shakespeare with *the most unkindest cut of all*, and in millennial advertising: *the most trendiest shoes in town*. Though the “most” is in each case redundant, and not regarded as standard English grammar, its rhetorical purpose is clear. See further under **redundancy**.

dual

Some languages including Old English have alternative forms of the first person plural pronoun, so that they can distinguish between

we (just you and me) = dual

and

we (more than two people including me) = plural

In modern English there is no formal distinction between them, and we take the number of persons involved from the context. In fact this means that the “medical *we*” is actually a **dual** use of the pronoun. See further under **WE and US**, section 3.

dual gender

See under **gender**, section 3.

dummy subject

See under **IT and ITS**, section 2.

durative

See under **aspect**.

dyadic predicate

This is an alternative name for the *two-place predicate*. See under **valency**, section 3.

dynamic modality

This is a type of modality which some grammarians distinguish from both *deontic* and *epistemic* modality, though the name needs explaining. **Dynamic modality** takes its ground from the “properties and dispositions” of the subject of the clause (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), rather than the speaker’s orientation to the proposition (epistemic), or an external deontic force. See for example:

She can run rings around them.

He could play games on the computer for hours.

As the second example shows, dynamic modality can refer to the past, and is not necessarily timeless, like other forms of modality. The “predicative” aspect

of this kind of modality (making it a kind of factual statement), prompts some grammarians to include it among the various subtypes of epistemic modality. Others align it with deontic modality. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

dynamic verb

This term is used of verbs which express an action, movement or change, for example:

develop dive increase laugh point run swim

Dynamic verbs contrast with **stative verbs**, which refer to a condition of mind rather than an event, for example:

comprehend hate know love remember understand

It used to be said that while dynamic verbs could be freely used with the *-ing* participle, this was impossible for stative ones – at least in standard English. This did not hold in postcolonial varieties such as Indian English, where *I am remembering when . . .* has long been idiomatic. Casual observation shows that in everyday standard English *-ing* is also occasionally found with stative verbs, as in the McDonald's advertisement for the world's best known fast food: "I'm loving it." Arguably, this gives the stative verb a more dynamic meaning. See further under **progressive aspect**.

E

EACH

This is an indefinite pronoun and determiner. See under **indefinite pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 1.

- For the question of agreement with *EACH* when it serves as a pronoun, see **agreement**, section 4.

-ed

This is a standard inflection for the past tense and past participle of the vast majority of English verbs:

alarm(ed) depart(ed) frighten(ed) start(ed) wish(ed)

It alternates with the *-t* suffix in some verbs, for example:

burned/t dreamed/t leaped/t learned/t spelled/spelt spoiled/t

This alternation is particularly evident in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand (Peters 2004). In other verbs, the *-t* is mandated. For example:

built dealt felt kept meant slept

See further under **inflection**; **tense**, section 1; **regular verb**, section 1; and **irregular verb**, sections 3 and 5.

The past participle forms with **-ed** are also often found as adjectives, as in

built environment burnt toast departed friend frightened child

In such cases, the adjective might be derived by conversion from the verbal past participle (see further under **conversion**, section 3). Yet *-ed* is very clearly a derivational (rather than inflectional) suffix in a variety of **compound adjectives** which could not be derived by conversion: for example:

blue-eyed cod one-armed bandit red-haired boy three-legged race wide-eyed fear

None of these can be inflected forms of a **compound verb** “blue-eye,” “one-arm,” etc., since they do not exist. Rather they must be derived from noun phrases: *blue eye(s)*, *one arm*, *red hair*, etc., and so the *-ed* in them is a nominal suffix capable of generating adjectives. So in these various adjectives, *-ed* can be analyzed as a derivational rather than an inflectional suffix. See further under **derivational affix**.

-ed participle

Modern English grammarians such as Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999) use this term to refer to the past participle, whether the verb is regular or irregular. The term **-en participle** is also sometimes used in this way. See **-en participle**.

EITHER

This is a determiner and indefinite pronoun, which refers to one of an unspecified pair. See further under **indefinite pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 1.

- For the question of agreement with *EITHER* as a pronoun, see **agreement**, section 4.

EITHER serves in combination with *OR* as a correlative conjunction. See **conjunction**, section 5.

ellipsis

- 1 **ellipsis in coordination**
 - 2 **ellipsis in comparative clauses**
 - 3 **ellipsis in dialogue**
-

In grammar, **ellipsis** is the omission or notional deletion of an item or constituent which is recoverable from elsewhere in the sentence or the immediate linguistic context. It is remarkable as a structural feature of certain types of sentences and of cohesive discourse.

1 Ellipsis in coordination

Ellipsis is a feature of coordination since it happens regularly with the subject of the second of two coordinated clauses, whenever it is identical with that of the first:

The inspector came and saw for himself.

The subject for the second clause can be recovered from the previous clause. This subject ellipsis is not generally possible when the second clause is subordinated:

The inspector came so that he could see for himself.

But in coordination other common elements, for example the verb or the object, can also be **ellipted** in the second or third coordinate:

The inspector came, and the senior inspector, and the inspector-general.

See further under **gap and gapping**.

2 Ellipsis in comparative clauses

Comparative clauses usually ellipst recoverable elements of the main clause, as in:

She played the part more outrageously than her sister (did).

In that example the object of the comparative clause is ellipted because it would otherwise duplicate that of the main clause. The same goes for the verb of the comparative clause, if it is not replaced by the pro-verb *do* (see further under **DO** and **comparative clause**, section 3).

Note also that the subject of the comparative clause may be ellipted, especially when it is passive:

The audience seemed more enthusiastic than was expected.

The subject ellipsis in such cases is standard English. Yet in informal speech it is quite often supplemented by *WHAT*, as in “The audience was more enthusiastic than what was expected.” This addition of a *wh*-pronoun suggests that speakers find the subject gap uncomfortable. See further under **THAN**.

3 Ellipsis in dialogue

Ellipsis is a regular feature of conversational exchange, in successive speaker turns. For example:

When are you leaving?

On Saturday morning.

The ellipsis in such exchanges is very considerable: it includes ellipsis of both subject and the verb phrase (recoverable from the stimulus question), as well as the unspoken shift from second to first person. It nevertheless takes place in countless *adjacency pairs* like that, forming strong cohesive bonds between the fully fledged utterance and the fragmentary sentence. It is reduced to elements that are *new* rather than *given*. See further under **adjacency pair, cohesion**, and **given and new**.

em dash or em rule

See under **dash**.

embedded clause

This term is more and less broadly applied, depending on the grammar. In transformational–generative grammar, and that of Quirk et al. (1985), **embedded clause** is used for all subordinate clauses. This makes *embedding* equivalent to *subordination*, and the antonym of *coordination*.

More recent grammars (Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) confine the term **embedded clause** to those that are required to complement the matrix clause, i.e. complement clauses, *embedded questions*, and restrictive relative clauses, as well as comparative clauses. Other kinds of relative clause and adverbial clause are not regarded as **embedded**.

emergent grammar

This understanding of grammar (Hopper 1988) takes the view that it is continually evolving out of language in use, rather than existing as a stable grammatical system (see further under **grammaticalization**). Hopper’s approach sets itself apart from grammars based on pre-existing sets of rules (e.g. transformational grammar), and from the notion of universal grammar, by which underlying features of syntax are somehow innate. With **emergent grammar**, language is learned and constructed on the basis of experience, without any a priori inputs. Discourse is the medium in which new grammatical elements are forged and *grammaticalize* out of everyday usage in the speech community. This approach is consistent with current views of *construction grammar*, in which features of the syntactic system become established by

their relative frequency in usage (Bybee and Hopper 2001). See further under **construction grammar**.

empty

An *empty category* is an abstract element postulated in government-binding theory which does not appear in the surface grammar, but is understood as occupying one of the NP roles in the sentence. For example:

The result was clearer than we expected [it ...]

In the same way various grammatical analyses allow for an *empty node* in a tree diagram, e.g. when representing the structure of a complex sentence with **zero complementizer**. It is annotated as shown in the example below:

The scientist said [COMPe] it could be published.

See further under **complementizer**, section 2.

- For the so-called *empty subject* and *empty object*, see under **IT and ITS**, section 2.

en dash or en rule

See under **dash**.

-en participle

English grammars sometimes use **-en participle** to refer to the past participle of both irregular (strong) and regular (weak) verbs. It is apt for those past participles of irregular verbs like *spoken, thrown, written* which do end in *-(e)n*, but less so for others whose past participles are not distinguished in that way, e.g. *sang/sung*, or not distinguished at all from the past tense, as with *brought, caught, found, got*, etc. The same issue arises with regular verbs, whose past participle and past tense are both formed with the same *-ed* inflection: *conveyed, scripted, talked*. See further under **tense**, section 1.

enclitic

See under **clitic**.

end weight

This term draws attention to the way in which material at the end of a sentence gains attention and emphasis by virtue of its position, as in:

I do want to come, really.

What you need is a good holiday.

The examples represent two ways of moving key words and phrases into final position to give them **end weight**. The first exploits the mobility of adverbial adjuncts, especially sentence adverbs (see further under **adverbial**, section 4). The second uses a **pseudo-cleft**, which adds weight to the *comment* of the sentence (see further under **pseudo-cleft sentence**; and **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 2).

Note that the final position in the sentence is also a useful location for the bulkiest constituents of the sentence, especially extended prepositional phrases

and nonfinite clauses, for ease of reading. The classical *periodic sentence* was designed to exploit end weight in a different way, by saving up the main clause for the final position in a lengthy sentence. See further under **left- and right-branching sentence**, and **information focus**.

ending sentence with a preposition

See under **stranded preposition**; and **preposition**, section 5.

ENOUGH

As a determiner, *ENOUGH* is unusual in that it can appear either before or after the head noun:

We had enough replies for a statistically valid finding.

We have replies enough for a statistically valid finding.

See further under **determiner**, section 3.

ENOUGH is complemented by a *TO-infinitive* clause in all standard varieties of English, as in:

The room was big enough to seat 100 guests.

Compare:

The room was big enough that it could seat 100 guests.

This mode of complementing *ENOUGH* with a *THAT*-clause is established in American English, though still relatively uncommon elsewhere in the English-speaking world (Peters 2004).

epenthetic

An **epenthetic** consonant or vowel is one added into the stem of a word, or the junction between it and one with which it frequently collocates, in order to ease pronunciation. Historical examples are the *d* in “thunder,” and the *an* form of the indefinite article, where the additional *n* smooths the transition to the following noun if it begins with a vowel sound. See further under **A or AN**.

epistemic

This is a type of **modality** that reflects the speaker’s/writer’s perceptions of the possibility, likelihood, or certainty of the action formulated in the clause. For example:

They will bring the children with them.

It can be their weekend outing.

These two **epistemic** modals underlined both make a kind of prediction about what is to happen, but with very different levels of conviction. The straightforward affirmation of the modal in the first sentence contrasts with the noncommittal statement of the second. Both express **intrinsic modality**.

Compare **deontic**, and see further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

epithet

- 1 **a conventional adjective/adjectival phrase attached to a name**
- 2 **the adjective(s) used as premodifiers of a noun**

1 A conventional adjective/adjectival phrase attached to a name

Epithet, as traditionally used, refers to the postmodifying adjective/adjectival phrase attached by convention to a proper name, e.g. *Ethelred the Unready, Ivan the Terrible*.

2 The adjective(s) used as premodifiers of a noun

As now used in systemic–functional grammar, **epithet** refers to any adjective or adjectival group, apart from the *classifier*, which premodifies the head of a noun phrase, as in:

<i>wonderful</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>steam</i>	<i>engines</i>
epithet	epithet	classifier	noun

<i>very old</i>	<i>1950s</i>	<i>furniture</i>
epithet	classifier	noun

As the examples show, the term **epithet** includes both evaluative and descriptive types of adjective: see further under **adjective**, section 1; and **noun phrase**, section 2.

eponym

Eponyms are common words that are based on personal proper names, as are all of the following:

<i>braille</i>	<i>diesel</i>	<i>doily</i>	<i>grog</i>	<i>leopard</i>	<i>macintosh</i>
<i>morse</i>	<i>sandwich</i>	<i>shrapnel</i>			

All examples listed so far take the exact form of the proper name, apart from the lack of initial capital. As common nouns they take plural inflections if they refer to countable objects: thus *doilies*, *sandwiches*; but not *braille*, *morse* which refer to very particular systems. As a set they represent word-formation by **conversion**: see under **conversion**, section 4.

The term **eponym** is also applied to words derived by affixation from proper names. For example:

bowdlerize *chauvinism* *galvanize* *mesmerize* *nicotine* *pasteurize* *sadism*

These eponyms all make use of common **derivational affixes** for creating verbs (-ize) and nouns (-ism, -ine). See further under **derivation**, section 1.

equi-verb

This is the name used in government–binding theory for a type of **catenative** or **controlling verb**, i.e. one which takes a following nonfinite verb construction as its complement. The subject of the **equi-verb** may act as the implied subject of the nonfinite construction, as in *They promised to come* (making it a **subject-control** type of equi-verb). In other cases the equi-verb shows

object-control, as in *They persuaded me to come*, where the object of the verb is the subject of the nonfinite complement. See further under **catenative verb**, section 3.

-er

The *-er* suffix has two major roles in English, as:

- the comparative suffix for adjectives and adverbs, as in *cleaner, sooner*: see **adjective**, section 3; and **adverb**, section 4.
- the agentive suffix for nouns, as in *farmer, player*: see further under **derivational affix**.

-er is thus one of the homonymous suffixes of English (see further under **homonym**). In the first case it is an inflectional suffix, in the second a derivational suffix. See further under **suffix**.

ergative

- 1 **ergative languages**
- 2 **ergative case**
- 3 **ergative verbs in English**

This term has multiple applications in linguistics: to languages, nouns, and verbs.

1 **Ergative languages**

An *ergative language* has different case markers for nouns which are the subject of a transitive verb and an intransitive verb. This is found in far-flung languages such as Basque, Georgian, and Balinese. English is not an ergative language, although at more abstract elements of syntactic analysis it seems to display some ergative characteristics, in the flexibility with which meaning may be formulated within the clause (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

2 **Ergative case**

The *ergative case* (in an ergative language) is the case of the noun which is the subject of a transitive verb only. The case of the intransitive subject is marked in the same way as that of the object of the transitive verb.

3 **Ergative verbs in English**

The term **ergative** is also used by some English grammarians to refer to intransitive verbs whose subjects are not agents but “patients” of the action because of an implied cause (see further under **case grammar**). The number of *ergative verbs* like those illustrated below seems to be on the rise:

The ice melted.

The back door opened.

This hotel is renovating.

The ergative construction sits between the active and passive voice, which is why it is sometimes referred to as the *mediopassive* or *middle voice*, in keeping with other languages (such as Greek) whose grammars include this third voice (see further under **voice (1)**, section 3). Because the construction sits

somewhere between transitive and intransitive uses of verb, the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002) calls it the *middle intransitive*. Yet another name is the *unaccusative* verb.

- ▶ Compare **mediopassive**, and see further under **middle construction**.

-est

This is the superlative suffix found on gradable adjectives of one or two syllables, and some adverbs. See further under **adjective**, section 3; and **adverb**, section 4.

EVERY

This is one of the *distributive determiners*. See under **determiner**, section 4.

EVERYBODY, EVERYONE, and EVERYTHING

See under **indefinite pronoun**.

exclamation

In traditional grammar, **exclamation** was one of the four functional types of sentence, the others being *statement*, *question*, *command*. An **exclamation** is a clause or fragmentary sentence expressing a more-or-less emotional feeling about something, for example:

No way!

What a sight to see!

Isn't it a lovely morning!

You're coming too!

As the examples show, exclamations can take a variety of forms, as NPs, nonfinite clauses, and finite clauses with interrogative or declarative syntax. Their *exclamatory function* is usually marked in written texts with an **exclamation mark/point** – especially if they are not expressed in *exclamative* syntax, as in the third and fourth examples. See further under **exclamative**.

exclamation mark or exclamation point

In general terms, the **exclamation mark** or American English **exclamation point** marks the end of a sentence which is phrased in *exclamative* syntax or has an *exclamatory* function (see **exclamative** and **exclamation**). Exclamation marks/points are crucial in communicating the pragmatic function of the utterance, because exclamations can be expressed in such a variety of syntactic forms. They include the canonical forms prefaced by *What ...!* or *How ...!*; an exclamatory NP *Nice work!*; a question (*What will they want next!*); or a command (*Go away!*). The exclamation mark/point may thus override the grammatical form of the utterance to support information delivery in written text, drawing attention to the intensity of emotion embedded in the string of words it punctuates. See further under **pragmatic**.

exclamative

The term is used by many modern grammarians to refer to the characteristic syntax of an *exclamation*, i.e. a string which begins with a *wh*-interrogative word: *what* or *how*, introducing a phrase or clause (finite or nonfinite). For example:

What a brilliant performance!

What a brilliant performance it was!

How fantastic!

How fantastic to do that!

As the examples show, exclamations expressed in **exclamative** syntax typically foreground an emotively charged adjective or NP. For other ways of phrasing *exclamations*, see further under **exclamation**.

exclamatory

In traditional grammar, **exclamatory** was used to refer to the syntactic form and the discourse function of an exclamation. Recent grammars (e.g. Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Aarts 2010) reserve **exclamatory** for the sentence function, and use **exclamative** for the most common syntactic form of exclamations.

existential *THERE*

See **THERE**.

experiential function

This is part of the ideational function of language, along with the logical function. See further under **metafunction of language**.

extraction

This term refers to the case where a grammatical constituent appears out of its canonical place in the clause or sentence, as in *cleft sentences*, *left-dislocation* and *right-dislocation*, *open questions*, etc. See further under **clefting**; **dislocation**; and **question**, section 2.

extraposition

This term refers to the displacement of a complement clause that is the notional subject or object of a clause to the end, and its replacement in the main clause by a non-referential *IT*.

It's clear that you like doing it.

He found it strange that the car was still in the garage.

Extrapositions like these are actually more common than their *non-extraposed* counterparts like *That you like doing it is clear*, according to research on the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999). See further under **complement clause**, section 3; and **IT and ITS**, section 2.

extrinsic modality

See **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

F

fact clause

In systemic–functional grammar, the **fact clause** is one of three types of projecting clause, distinguished from those that embody reported statements and thoughts, and involving *verbal* and *mental process verbs*. The fact clause projects its content impersonally, using either an extraposed *IT*-clause:

It is likely that it will rain.

Or a clause depending on nouns such as *chance*, *case*, *proof/evidence*, *need/requirement* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). For example:

There's a chance that it will rain.

It is the case that the skies are leaden.

The evidence is that the first drops are falling.

There's now a requirement that all houses have rainwater tanks.

See further under **projection**, section 3.

In other grammars, fact clauses are treated as a subtype of nominal or *complement clause*. See further under **complement clause**, section 3.

FEWER and LESS

See under **LESS**, section 2.

finite

This word is used by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) as a noun (*the finite*), to refer to the finite element of a verb phrase, which indicates tense or modality. It may be contained within a simple finite verb such as [*the zoo*] *closed*, but is often expressed through auxiliary or modal verbs in a typical *verbal group* (complex verb):

The zoo had been closed for a week.

The zoo will be closed for months.

The rest of the verbal group (*been closed*, *be closed*) is termed the *predicator*.

Note that this makes the predicator nonfinite in Hallidayan grammar, whereas in other grammars it includes the *finite verb*. See further under **finite verb** and **predicator**.

- For the use of **finite** as adjective in *finite clause*, see next entry.

finite clause

A **finite clause** contains a *finite verb* and its arguments, as well as other optional elements. For the essential patterns of finite clauses: SVO, SVA, etc., see **clause**, section 1.

- Compare the *nonfinite clause*, discussed under **clause**, section 5.

finite verb

A **finite verb** is one which is normally marked for tense and accompanied by an explicit subject, as in:

The band marched steadily ahead.

Here the verb carries the past tense inflection, and is preceded by its subject (“the band”), as is usual in declarative clauses (see further under **clause**, section 1). These two factors (tense marking, specified subject) are not however visible for every finite verb, because of other factors in English morphosyntax. For example, verbs in the present tense do not carry tense marking unless they are the third person singular. Modal verbs are also unmarked for tense, as in

We march on Sunday and would like you to come.

Note also how in coordinated clauses with the same subject (in that case “we”), the subject is omitted from the second clause. See further under **ellipsis**, section 1.

- Compare **nonfinite verb**.

first person pronoun

The singular **first person pronoun** *I* is inflected for case, with *ME* as accusative/dative and *MY* for the genitive form, used as a determiner. For standard, idiomatic, and informal uses, see further under **I and ME**.

The plural **first person pronoun** *WE* is also inflected for case, with *US* as accusative/dative; and *OUR* for the genitive, used as a determiner. For exclusive/inclusive and other special uses, see further under **WE and US**.

FOR

This is one of the very common and highly **grammaticized prepositions** of English, because of its use in postmodifying phrases (*a cure for malaria*) and beneficiary phrases (*brought it for him*), and in various kinds of complementation, especially **phrasal verbs**. See further under **preposition**, section 1; **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**; and **beneficiary**.

FOR also has a minor role in modern English as a subordinator, as in:

His father warned him not to accept the offer, for no good would come of it.

In traditional grammar, *FOR* was sometimes regarded as a coordinator, and it shows some such properties in older narrative, in its ability to combine with other conjunctions:

For when he reached the house, he found the master was lying on the floor.

But it lacks most other coordinator properties, e.g. the ability to combine phrases, or to coordinate multiple clauses (see **coordination**, section 1).

formal agreement

See **agreement**, section 2.

frame semantics

Fillmore’s **frame semantics** (1976) developed a fresh dimension in the construction of meaning in sentences. He emphasized that word meanings are

best understood in terms of the conceptual frameworks that support them, and that these *frames* are like stereotypical scenarios in which certain things are expected to occur. Individual words and phrases may evoke particular frames of real-life experience, and instantiate particular elements of them. Thus lexical semantics is interconnected with encyclopedic knowledge. Fillmore argued that this knowledge, acquired over the course of time, is what allows us to interpret sentences, and to extract the difference in meaning between similarly constructed examples, such as:

They bought the horse with the best pedigree.

They bought the horse with their lottery winnings.

Yet differentiating between them is no easy task for artificial intelligence, without recourse to *frame elements* and stock scenes associated with the *frame*. The challenge of detailing them is being tackled by extracting volumes of examples embodying a particular frame from large computer corpora, identifying the frame elements, and using them to interpret the syntax and semantics of sentences in text.

free morpheme

See **bound morpheme and free morpheme**.

free relative

These are relative clauses with no lexical head in the main clause, but functioning as a nominal constituent within it.

Whatever they do is likely to succeed.

Whoever comes last will miss out on cake.

What you say I can scarcely believe.

In the first two examples, the **free relative** functions as the subject of the main clause; in the third as its object. See further under **nominal relative clause**.

Note that some free relatives are actually adverbial in their relationship with the main clause, e.g.:

I'll go wherever you go.

They will come whenever you call.

An alternative term for the **free relative** is *headless relative*.

FROM

This is one of the very common, highly *grammaticized* prepositions of English, used freely in expressing spatial relations (*from A to B*), and found in many *phrasal* and *prepositional verbs*. See further under **preposition**, section 1; and **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

fronting

In declarative sentences the default word order has the subject first, followed by the finite verb and its complement: SVO, SVA, SVC (see **clause**, section 1). But it's not at all uncommon for other constituents, especially adverbs and

adverbial adjuncts, to be moved to the front of the sentence, ahead of the subject. For example:

They will come by train next time. ⇒ *Next time they will come by train.*

This **fronting** of any constituent to the beginning of the sentence puts the spotlight on it, and **topicalizes** it, shifting attention from the subject “they” to the temporal issue (“next time”). See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3.

Fronting of constituents of the unmarked clause may be achieved through **clefting**, using hypotaxis to alter their order. Thus:

She saw him yesterday. ⇒ *It was yesterday that she saw him.*

She wants security. ⇒ *What she wants is security.*

In the first example, the adverb “yesterday” is the focus of the prefatory main clause (an *IT*-cleft) and the rest subordinated. In the second the object is prefigured in the *WHAT* of a nominal relative clause, ahead of the main clause. In both cases, fronting is marked by a particular syntactic frame (see further under **clefting**). In the second case, the object also gains extra emphasis by means of the **end weight** attached to being in final position. See further under **end weight**.

In conversation, **fronting** of the clausal object or complement may be achieved simply by promoting it to the start of the clause, as in:

Raw egg for breakfast I can't stand.

Wonderful it was indeed!

While the **fronted** position gives the object prominence, it is further emphasized in **left-dislocation**, when underscored by means of a **resumptive pronoun** in its normal clause position. See for example:

The last owner, I heard he had moved overseas.

See further under **dislocation**.

full stop

-
- 1 end of sentence punctuation
 - 2 other sentence-final punctuators
 - 3 full stop as punctuator of abbreviated words
 - 4 when the full stop as word punctuator occurs sentence-finally
-

1 End of sentence punctuation

The **full stop** is both the regular punctuation mark for the end of a sentence, and the occasional marker of certain kinds of abbreviated words. In North America the term **period** is used to refer to both functions.

The **full stop** at the end of a sentence effectively works in conjunction with the capital letter with which the first word of the next sentence begins. Together they provide a compound signal for marking sentence boundaries. This also means that the full stop cannot appear in mid-sentence where it otherwise

would, as when marking the end of a quoted sentence. Instead it is replaced there by a comma, as in:

The director said "It's my last day," as he dashed off to the pub.

The full stop marks the end of a declarative sentence, whether it is syntactically complete, or a fragment: *"It's my last day. Today."*

2 **Other sentence-final punctuators**

In sentences with interrogative syntax the final **full stop** is normally replaced by a question mark, and in those with exclamative syntax by an exclamation mark. However, these default practices may be varied according to the pragmatic function of the sentence: see further under **punctuation**, section 2.

3 **Full stop as punctuator of abbreviated words**

Abbreviated words are usually punctuated with **full stops** if they are words whose last few letters have been clipped, e.g. *cont.* ("continued"), *fig.* ("figure"), *incl.* ("included/including"). For other types of **clipping** which do not take full stops, see further under **clipping**. In American English full stops/periods are also applied to words which have been abbreviated by omission of their middle letters, while retaining one or more letters at each end, as in *dept.* ("department"), *Dr.* ("Doctor"), *hwy.* ("highway"). In British English these **contractions** do not take full stops (see further under **contraction (2)**). Initialisms rarely have full stops these days in either British or American English, thus:

BBC IOU RSI UNICEF

See further under **acronym**.

4 **When the full stop as word punctuator occurs sentence-finally**

Note that when an abbreviation punctuated with a **full stop** occurs at the end of a sentence which would itself be marked with a full stop, only one is used, as in:

Please let me know the cost of the airfare, all taxes incl.

However when the sentence ends in a question mark or exclamation mark, the abbreviatory full stop is included: *Could you tell me the cost of the airfare, all taxes incl.?*

full verb

This is the term used by Quirk et al. (1985), among others, for **lexical verbs**. See **lexical verb**.

functional grammar

See (1) **lexical-functional grammar (LFG)** and (2) **systemic-functional grammar (SFG)**.

fused head

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to various constructions in which one NP is syntactically or notionally embedded in another. They include:

- partitive NPs consisting of a quantitative pronoun followed by an *OF*-phrase with another pronoun, where the oblique determines number agreement with the following verb, as in

Some of us like rhubarb cheesecake.

All of it has gone.

Apart from the visible agreement of the verb with the second pronoun in each case, the potential *fusion* with “all” can also be seen when the oblique is formulated with an NP. Compare *all of the cake* with its common alternate *all the cake*, where “all” becomes the determiner and “cake” is clearly the head. See further under **partitive**, section 2; and **oblique**, section 3.

- appositional structures which are restrictive, for example *the poet Tennyson*. See further under **apposition**, section 2.
- NPs in which an adjective serves as an elliptical head, as in:

The rich suffer as much as the poor.

In this case the adjective can be said to be *fused* with the notional NP head “people.” See further under **noun phrase**, section 1.

fused participle

See under **gerund-participle**, section 3.

fused relative clause

This is the name used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) for relative clauses headed by *WHAT*, for example:

What the garden needed most was more rain.

Such clauses are called **nominal relative clauses** by Quirk et al. (1985): see further under **nominal relative clause**.

futurate

This term is applied to the present tense used with future reference, as in:

My plane leaves at noon tomorrow.

As in that example, the **futurate** is usually underpinned by a temporal adverb or adverbial phrase referring to future time.

future

In traditional grammar, English was said to have a **future tense** for referring to future time by combining *WILL* or *SHALL* with a lexical verb, as in *will/shall speak*. These compound forms provided the third tense, contrasting with the simple present and past verb forms (*speak/spoke*). This gave English the three tenses found in modern Romance languages such as French and Italian, where they are all marked by contrasting sets of inflections. Because English is a Germanic language, it has only two tenses marked by inflection: past and present: see further under **tense**, sections 1 and 3.

Yet English grammarians from the late C17 on recognized that the “future tense” formed with *WILL* and *SHALL* expressed more than simple futurity, and

in fact held variable shades of prediction and intention/volition. This awareness produced the prescriptive rules about the complementary roles of *WILL* and *SHALL* with the different grammatical persons (first, second, third): see further under **WILL and SHALL**, section 1. In fact these distinctions prefigure some aspects of modality recognized in modern grammar. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3.

There are multiple ways of referring to future time in the English verb phrase, for example:

be about to *be bound to* *be going to* *be likely to*

These various periphrastic modals all refer to events which are expected to happen, with individual orientations to them (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 4). It is also possible to refer to future time by means of the present progressive or the simple present tense: see further under **futurate**.

G

gap and gapping

The syntactic **gap** is a grammarians' construct, used to refer to an unfilled slot in the structure of a clause or sentence, left by the movement of constituents and/or the notional ellipsis of common elements. Marked below by [], the gap is where a syntactic element would be located, if the clause/sentence were articulated in normal word order, e.g.

Which movie did you see []?

The movie we saw [] was very powerful.

As the examples show, the foregrounding of an object in questions and relative clauses regularly creates such gaps. See further under **relative clause**, section 2.

Gapping is often associated with **coordination**, where elements shared by successive clauses are deleted from all but the first. For example:

I'm writing poetry, you [] a first novel, and they [] a travelogue, so there's no time for TV.

The gapping in these coordinated clauses involves ellipsis of the whole verb phrase, both the alternative forms of the auxiliary and the main verb. See further under **coordination**, section 6.

In some grammars, gapping is confined to obligatory elements of the clause, and so optional adverbial adjuncts are not considered (Quirk et al. 1985). Others (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) note its association with stranded prepositions, and with adjuncts in cleft constructions:

Which movie did you go to []?

It was on the desk I found my watch [].

Biber et al. (1999) specifically allow for **adverbial gaps**, created when an adjunct of a main clause is juxtaposed to the following subordinate clause without either a relativizer (*in which*) or complementizer (*that*):

They don't make bread the way [] they used to.

Adverbial gaps are found after *the way* preceding adverbial clauses of manner in all kinds of discourse, including academic prose, according to *Longman Grammar* research. The gapped construction is fostered by the fact that there is no relative adverb for *the way*, as there is for other adverbial phrases expressing time, place, and reason. For them both gapped and **ungapped** formulations are available. Compare:

The park was fun the time [] we went with the children.

The park was fun the time when we went with the children.

See further under **relativizer**; **complementizer**; and **clause**, section 2.

GB

See **government-binding theory**.

gender

-
- 1 **grammatical gender**
 - 2 **gender in English grammar**
 - 3 **gender-specific words**
 - 4 **common gender**
-

1 Grammatical gender

In grammar, **gender** is a formal system for distinguishing two or three classes of noun, and for marking the agreement of other elements of the phrase or clause with them. Two genders (masculine, feminine) are distinguished in languages such as French and Italian, and three in German (masculine, feminine, neuter). In such languages, all nouns are identified with the available gender classes, but mostly arbitrarily, since relatively few nouns express natural gender (male and female). Admittedly the French word for “boy” (*le garçon*) is masculine and “girl” (*la jeune fille*) is feminine; and in German, those for “man” and “woman,” *der Mann*, *die Frau*, are also masculine and feminine respectively. But the masculine/feminine classes in French consist largely of nonhuman/inanimate nouns, i.e. neuter objects and abstracts: *le mur* (“wall”), *la fenêtre* (“window”), *le temps* (“time”), *la jeunesse* (“youth”). The arbitrariness of the classifications is clear also from the fact that a given concept, e.g. “cloud” is masculine in French (*le nuage*), and feminine in German (*die Wolke*). Like most ordinary nouns, they have no natural gender, but share a grammatical class with ones that do. As the examples show, the masculine and feminine nouns take distinctive forms of the determiner (in French *le/la*, in German *der/die*), and the corresponding masculine or feminine form of any adjective that agrees with them.

2 Gender in English grammar

In modern English there are no such classes of nouns associated with distinctive forms of the determiner and adjective, leading some grammarians to conclude that it has no **grammatical gender**. Others (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) allow that there is a modicum of grammatical gender in the third person singular personal pronoun (*he, she, it*: masculine/feminine/neuter) and in the relative and indefinite pronouns (*who, which; anybody/anyone, anything* etc.: masculine/feminine vs. neuter). Although it's agreed that **gender** is expressed in these English pronouns, it does not correlate with the class of noun (or proper noun) to which the pronoun refers, but rather to the gender of the person or object denoted. This is **natural gender** rather than grammatical gender.

3 Gender-specific words

English morphology does include a number of **gender-specific** (i.e. masculine/feminine) suffixes, which help to create male–female pairs of words, for example

actor/actress, host/hostess, waiter/waitress, widower/widow. The lexicon also provides masculine and feminine compound elements such as *-man/-woman* (as in *spokesman/spokeswoman*) and *-son/-daughter* (as in *stepson/stepdaughter*), which mark the noun with one gender or the other. But this is far from systematic, and there are many more nouns with **dual gender**, i.e. inclusive of male and female, such as *doctor, lawyer, teacher, writer.*

4 Common gender

A very few English nouns may be said to embed all three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter). These common gender or **triple gender** nouns are those like *baby, child* which may be followed by *he* or *she*, according to natural gender; or by *it*, if the reference is distanced from them, as in a treatise on early childhood. Nouns representing young animals or pets (e.g. *puppy, kitten*), or animals closely observed by farmers, zoologists, or ecologists, can similarly be followed by any one of the three third person singular pronouns, according to the speaker's relationship with them.

generalized phrase structure grammar (GPSG)

This type of grammar, formulated by Gazdar et al. in (1985) aimed to describe natural language in terms of a context-free grammar. It avoids postulating underlying syntactic rules and transformations as in transformational–generative grammar, and uses instead **feature structures**, which are attribute–value pairs on which operations like unification may be performed, as in the grammatical notion of agreement. Because it operates on the surface of language, GPSG lends itself to computational approaches to grammatical parsing. The syntactic innovations of GPSG were subsequently incorporated into **head-driven phrase structure grammar**. See further under that heading.

generative grammar

See **transformational–generative grammar**.

generic pronoun

The only English pronoun which is always **generic** rather than person-specific is **ONE**, as in: *One does what comes easily.* See further under **ONE**.

Yet most of the **personal pronouns** can be used generically, so that they refer to people generally rather than specific individuals. For example:

We are less inclined to challenge the status quo than before.

You'd think they would understand.

Things will improve, they say.

In such examples, the primary grammatical meaning (first, second, or third person) is eclipsed by inclusion in a larger and less specific reference group. For more on generic use of these pronouns, see under **WE and US; YOU; THEY and THEM**.

Generic use of **HE** (where it includes both male and female referents) can be found in older English texts, as well as proverbs and sayings. In *He who hesitates*

is lost, the referent is not to be taken as exclusively masculine. However feminist critiquing of genderized elements of the English language (e.g. Lakoff 1975; Thorne and Henley 1975) made this generic use of *HE* much more contentious, especially in legislation and bureaucratic documents: hence the term **pseudo-generic HE** (Wales 1996). Legal drafting practice nowadays pre-empts the problem with a statement in the schedule that the use of *He* should be taken as referring to both male and female persons (see further under **HE and/or SHE**).

The long-established generic use of *HE* has prompted calls, especially by feminists, for generic use of *SHE* as a proactive strategy: see further under **SHE and HER**, section 3.

genitive

- 1 **genitive case and the apostrophe**
 - 2 **genitive of possession and other relationships**
 - 3 **group genitive**
 - 4 **subjective and objective genitive**
 - 5 **elliptical and independent genitives**
 - 6 **local genitive**
 - 7 **postgenitive**
-

1 Genitive case and the apostrophe

The term **genitive**, borrowed from Latin grammar, refers to the *case* of a noun which takes a following noun as its **complement**, as in:

a policeman's whistle
this new car's styling
our nation's leader

The **genitive** is the only case for which English nouns still carry an inflection, although it takes one form with singular nouns ('s) as in *the nation's leader*, and another with plural nouns (') as in *these nations' leaders*, where the apostrophe alone marks the genitive. Of course this plural genitive marking only shows in the written medium, and has no impact on the pronunciation of the noun itself. See further under **case**, section 2; and **inflection**.

The **genitive case** is unusual in that it doesn't itself constitute an argument of the verb. Instead it usually functions as a determinative within an NP: see further under **determinative**.

2 Genitive of possession and other relationships

The English **genitive case** often represents a kind of ownership, as in *a child's bicycle*, *the bird's nest*, hence its alternative name: *possessive case*. But in NPs like *the book's cover*, *the truck's headlights*, the relationship between the two nouns is really **partitive**, with the genitive case expressing the whole of which the following noun is a part (see further under **partitive**). Some genitives have a classifying function, as in *a bird's nest*, *housemaid's knee*. The relationship in *plumbers union*, *teachers college* is associative rather than any of those mentioned so far,

hence the increasing trend to omit the plural apostrophe in such structures. See further under **apostrophe (1)**, section 5.

3 Group genitive

In modern English the **genitive** case marking can be attached to the end of a postmodified NP, as in:

someone else's problem

our old director of music's voice

These examples of the **group genitive** show how the genitive case marker attaches to the whole NP with its premodifiers as well as posthead dependents, not just the head noun. The question as to whether the genitive marker ('s) in such cases should be regarded as an **enclitic** rather than an inflection is raised by Huddleston and Pullum (2002): see further under **clitic**.

4 Subjective and objective genitive

Some genitive phrases can embed two different constructions especially when the second is a verbal noun. Consider the phrase *Lee's appointment*, which could refer either to someone appointed by Lee (**subjective genitive**), or to the appointment of Lee by others (**objective genitive**). Though both are perfectly possible, research by Biber et al. (1999) suggests that the first is preferred over the second, which is more often expressed by an *OF*-phrase (*the appointment of Lee*).

5 Elliptical and independent genitives

The **elliptical genitive** occurs without a following noun, though the missing noun is usually recoverable from the immediately preceding context, as in *It wasn't a man's belt, it was a woman's*. Those which occur without a recoverable noun are **independent genitives**, for example: *See you at Harriet's*, often used to refer to someone's home, as in that case.

6 Local genitive

This term is used to refer to expressions like **independent genitives** which typically identify a particular workplace, as in *taking it to the chemists/drycleaners/printers*. These are often assumed to be elliptical, through the omission of a predictable word like "shop" or "place." An alternative explanation is that the final *s* is actually a collective marker, in which case no apostrophe is needed: see further under **-s**, section 4.

7 Postgenitive

This term is sometimes used to refer to expressions like *a relative of David's*: see **double genitive** and **apposition**.

gerund

In Latin grammar this was the name for the verbal noun which expressed generalized or uncompleted action, for example in the legal phrase *ratio decidendi* ("the reason for deciding," i.e. the judge's explanation of his judgment). In English grammar, **gerund** also serves as the term for the verbal noun,

especially ones which take verbal arguments (subject, object, adverbial adjunct). The following example shows a gerund with its object:

Cutting wood warms you twice.

(see further under **valency**, section 2). Some English grammarians extend the term **gerund** to any verbal noun which functions as the head of a noun phrase, with pre- and post-modification, as in:

The cutting of wood warms you twice.

See further under **noun phrase**, section 1; and **gerund-participle**, sections 1 and 2.

gerund-participle

- 1 gerund-participles and the verbal–nominal scale
 - 2 syntactic roles of the gerund-participle
 - 3 semantic–syntactic interplay with the gerund-participle
-

1 Gerund-participles and the verbal–nominal scale

Gerund-participle is a functional term for the *-ing* forms like *hunting*, *fishing*, *shooting*, which can take on either verbal or nominal roles, as in:

The Indians were hunting caribou (an ordinary sentence)

the hunting of the snark (the title of Lewis Carroll's poem)

Those constructions show the two extremes of the gerund-participle scale from verbal to nominal on which *-ing* forms can operate, with some ambiguity or indeterminacy in the middle of the scale, where examples such as in *I don't like hunting* would sit. In such a sentence *hunting* would be nominal if it referred to hunting by other people, and verbal if it meant the speaker's disinclination to hunt. The *-ing* form is the modern merger of two distinct historical forms, one nominal (a verbal noun) and one verbal (the participle). See further under ***-ing* form**.

2 Syntactic roles of the gerund-participle

The dual identity of the ***-ing* form** gives it remarkable grammatical mobility. As a verbal noun/**gerund**, it takes its own argument(s), for example an object in:

Catching whales is the focus of environmental activism in the Antarctic.

It thus makes a nonfinite clause for the subject of the main clause. It can also function as the head of a noun phrase, and can then be premodified by **THE** and postmodified by a prepositional phrase:

The catching of Antarctic whales is contentious.

Environmental activists are challenging the catching of Antarctic whales.

As those examples show, the gerund within the noun phrase can take its place as subject, object, or other argument of the main verb.

At the participial end of the scale, an **-ing participle** often creates a nonfinite clause as adjunct to the main clause:

They ran into thick fog, following the path of the albatross.

Like many adverbial adjuncts, the **participial clause** can be moved to the head of the sentence:

Following the path of the albatross, they ran into thick fog.

Note how the nonfinite clause attaches itself to the subject of the main clause (*they*). It thus avoids becoming a **dangling participle** or **unattached participle**. See further under **dangling participle**.

- ▶ For more about **nonfinite clauses**, see **clause**, section 5.

3 Semantic–syntactic interplay with the gerund-participle

The interplay of verbal and nominal meanings in the **gerund-participle** supports different meanings or interpretations of very similar structures.

Compare:

His brothers didn't react well to his singing.

His brothers didn't react well to him singing.

In the first sentence, where “singing” is nominalized by the determiner “his,” it can be taken as referring to the particular way in which the person sang. In the second sentence, “singing” forms a nonfinite clause with its own rank-shifted subject (“him”), and seems to refer to a particular instance or occasion of singing. The same applies to the use of other personal pronouns/determiners before the gerund-participle (*MY/ME, YOUR/YOU, OUR/US, THEIR/THEM*). The difference in meaning legitimizes both constructions, though the second version (using the accusative pronoun) was queried and long stigmatized in usage commentary on the **fused participle**. Both versions are now generally accepted in **object territory** after a finite verb, in both northern and southern hemisphere varieties of English (Peters 2009a). However only the nominalized version with the determiner seems to be acceptable when the gerund-participle takes on the role of subject NP. Compare:

His singing was what the brothers reacted to.

Him singing was what the brothers reacted to.

The second version is unlikely to appear in edited writing, and the slightly different meanings of the two constructions is overridden. See further under **subject territory**.

gerundive

This was the name used in Latin grammar for the verbal adjective. The **gerundive** was declined like an adjective (with suffixes *-us/-a/-um* in the singular and their plural counterparts *-i/-ae/-a*). Gerundives conveyed the sense that something not only could be done but should be done. This sense of obligation is embedded in Latin gerundives which have been taken over into

English. Thus *agenda* means literally “things which have to be done”; and *Quod erat demonstrandum* (“This was what had to be demonstrated”).

GET: get/got/gotten

- 1 **GET as a lexical verb**
 - 2 **GET as a phrasal/prepositional verb**
 - 3 **GET as a copular verb**
 - 4 **GET as a causative verb**
 - 5 **GET-passives**
 - 6 **have got to**
 - 7 **GOT and GOTTEN**
 - 8 **GOTTA**
-

GET is one of the most versatile verbs in English, in its meanings and the various syntactic structures it supports. In the *Longman Grammar* corpus, it is the most common of all verbs in conversation. This is why it has informal overtones, why some prose stylists avoid using it, and why primary school teachers in some nameless parts of the English-speaking world used to symbolically “bury” it (written on a piece of card), to impress on children that it was not to be used. But how could they or we do without it? It is the functionary in a number of complex verb constructions as outlined in sections 2 to 6 below, apart from being embedded in idioms such as “Get into trouble” and “Get a life!”

1 **GET as a lexical verb**

GET has numerous uses as a simple *lexical verb*. It acts as a brisk synonym for transitive and intransitive verbs such as:

- *buy, fetch, obtain* as in *We can get potatoes from the supermarket.*
- *receive* as in *They'll get the payment tomorrow.*
- *own* as in *He's got a lot of money.*
- *take* as in *I could get a taxi.*
- *arrive, reach* as in *She got to Paris on Sunday.*
- *understand* as in *Did he get the joke?*

These various meanings are differentiated by the immediate linguistic and situational context. The use of **GET** for those various alternatives makes for an informal style, or at least one without pretensions to formality.

2 **GET as a phrasal/prepositional verb**

It forms complex units with various particles to paraphrase other lexical verbs, as in the following phrasal verbs, transitive or intransitive:

<i>get by</i>	“cope”
<i>get in</i> (by the window)	“enter”
<i>get into</i> (a club)	“join”
<i>get on</i>	“succeed”
<i>get out</i>	“leave”
<i>get up</i> (in the morning)	“rise”

Examples of *GET* as a phrasal-prepositional verb are:

<i>get away from</i>	“escape”
<i>get back to</i>	“report back”
<i>get on with</i>	“busy oneself”
<i>get out of</i>	“disentangle oneself”
<i>get up to</i>	“venture”

As is evident by the sometimes rather approximate “translations” in that list, some uses of *GET* as head of a complex verb are quite idiomatic, and difficult to paraphrase except in rather formal language. See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**, section 3.

3 **GET as a copular verb**

GET is used to express an evolving state or condition attained, as in:

The air around a lightning strike gets extremely hot.
The play got better and better.

As in those examples, copular *GET* takes an adjectival complement to detail its meaning, and is rather difficult to paraphrase, except by the verb *become*. See further under **copular verb**.

4 **GET as a causative verb**

In causative structures *GET/GOT* combines with nonfinite clauses and their subject or raised object to explain that an action was carried out, but not by the subject of the sentence. For example:

I got my hair done for the party (GET + object/subject + past participle)
I'll get James to sign the letter.
Their documentary gets people talking.

In the first two cases the use of “got”/“get” shows that its subject arranged for the action to take place, but did not do it himself/herself. Again it is slightly more informal than the nearest alternative for a causative construction, i.e. *have/had*: as in *I had my hair done*; *I'll have James sign the letter*. In the third case, the grammatical subject of *GET* initiates the action which seems then to have a life of its own. It cannot be paraphrased with *has/had*, but rather a lexical verb such as *start*. See further under **causative verb**.

5 **GET-passives**

GET serves as a less formal alternative to the auxiliary *BE* in a variety of passive constructions, where it has an explicit *by*-agent or one that is recoverable from the immediate context. See for example:

She got struck by lightning.
He was using a circular saw when his finger got cut off.

These core **GET-passives** make up about one third of all constructions consisting of *GET* complemented by past participle (Collins 1996). In examples like *get arrested* they imply that some responsibility for the event lies with the subject of the verb. In some cases the *GET* construction is reflexive or reciprocal in its meaning, and may be idiomatically preferred, as with:

I'm getting married in the morning.

They got divorced.

In these constructions the subject is as much agent as patient in the process, thus quite removed from the passive in its pragmatic implicature. See further under **passive voice**, section 2.

Note that the **GET-passive** coincides with constructions where the past participle is adjectival rather than verbal, as in *get bored/excited/worried*, which are instances of **GET** as a copular verb (section 3 above).

6 **Have got to**

In this structure, **GOT** works in combination with the auxiliary **HAVE** as a quasi-modal verb expressing obligation and necessity (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 5). The construction **have got to** is strongly associated with conversational English, and much more common in British than American speech (Biber et al. 1999; Collins 2009b).

7 **GOT and GOTTEN**

Both of these are past participles of the verb **GET**. They are however somewhat specialized in their applications:

- **GOT** is used everywhere in the English-speaking world in the quasi-modal *have got to*. It is the standard form for the past participle of **GET** in Britain and Australia:

She has got a place to live.

He had got angry.

They have got a reprieve.

Nevertheless **gotten** is also used in spoken discourse in both places, especially by younger people (Collins and Peters 2008).

- **GOTTEN** is an alternative for **GOT** as the standard past participle in North America. According to Quirk et al. (1985), *got* is used by Americans for things continuously possessed (... *got a place to live*), and *gotten* for changes of state (= "become" as in ... *gotten angry*) and things acquired (... *gotten a reprieve*).

8 **GOTTA**

This contraction of the **(have) got to** construction (see section 6 above) is recognized in most dictionaries, and therefore increasingly used in scripted speech or speech-like narrative. With its obligatory meaning it paraphrases the modal verb *must*, and some grammarians suggest that it is itself an incipient modal (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 5). Note that *gotta* is not used to render *got to* in utterances like *We got to the airport rather late*.

given and new

Information structure theory suggests that readers of a text respond to information units in terms of a rough dichotomy of their being either **new** information, or something already articulated within the text (i.e. **given**). An alternative term for given information used by some grammarians is **old**.

In ongoing text, the default clause pattern structure (subject + verb + complement) means that the subject will often be a **given**, while the rest of the clause is **new** information. For example:

James Bond strode into the room. He had a martini in his left hand ...

The use of a pronoun “he” as subject in the second sentence signals that it is given rather than new information, since it is **anaphoric** (i.e. refers back) to the man named in the first sentence (see further under **anaphora**).

Note that **givenness** is a matter of the referent rather than what is said about them. So the reformulation of the subject (underlined) in the second sentence:

James Bond strode into the room. The celebrated sleuth had a martini in his hand

is still given, in the sense of referring to an entity already introduced. It is nevertheless a way of commenting on the **topic**, and adjusting what is **topicalized** from sentence to sentence (see further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3).

Issues of givenness like the one discussed in the previous paragraph raise the question of how far it depends on information already explicit in the text, and whether to allow for a third category of **inferable** information (Brown and Yule 1983). In fact this is what allows for additional encyclopedic information to be brought to bear on topic/subject in the second example above (“the celebrated sleuth”), and thus for it to be presented as given. An additional parameter of information delivery recognized by some discourse analysts is the distinction between that which is “old” to the hearer or addressee of the text, and that which is likely to be “new” to them (Prince 1992).

goal

This is one of the thematic roles recognized in case grammar, and in systemic-functional grammar. It is variously applied to the entity which undergoes the verb’s action, and the location or direction of the action. It thus overlaps with **patient** and is sometimes conflated with **beneficiary**. See further under those headings.

GONNA

See **auxiliary verb**, section 5.

GOTTA

See **GET: get/got/gotten**, section 8; and **auxiliary verb**, section 5.

government-binding theory (GB)

Descended from transformational-generative grammar and developed by Chomsky in the early 1980s, GB is concerned with elucidating the principles of grammar rather than the formulation of grammatical rules. Its theory is derivational in that sentence structure is represented as an ordered set of tree diagrams (see further under **tree diagram**). GB involves a set of semi-autonomous modules, including **X-bar theory**, **theta theory**,

bounding theory, government theory, case theory, binding theory, control theory. See further under **X-bar**; and **valency**, section 4.

GPSG

See **generalized phrase structure grammar**.

gradability

This grammatical concept reflects the fact that many adjectives and some adverbs can be *graded* for the purposes of comparison, either by adding an inflection or using a comparative adverb:

pretty > prettier > prettiest
beautiful > more beautiful > most beautiful

fast > faster > fastest
speedily > more speedily > most speedily

See further under **degree of comparison**.

Gradability also allows that adjectives and adverbs may be qualified by an adverb (such as an *intensifier* or a *downtoner*), so as to suggest a notional scale.

very pretty *quite beautiful*
very fast *quite speedily*

See further under **intensifier and downtoner**.

- For the various types of nongradable adjectives, see **adjective**, section 4.

grade

See under **degrees of comparison**.

gradience

Grammatical categorizations are not necessarily clear cut. Rather they may represent a point on a cline or gradient between two categories, as with the *gerund-participle*, which embodies properties of both verb and noun which are exercised according to the syntactic contexts in which it occurs (see further under **gerund-participle**, section 1).

Gradience can also be seen within a given grammatical category, e.g. verbs, whose core members are defined by prototypical criteria, such as being marked for tense and aspect while functioning as finite operators of the clause. More peripheral members of the category satisfy only the last of those criteria. This is *subsective gradience* (Aarts and Haegeman 2006), as opposed to the *intersective gradience* of the gerund.

The concept of **gradience** underscores the process of grammaticalization, showing the process by which emerging members of a category assume their new grammatical roles, e.g. the marginal conjunctions, such as *SO* and *YET*. See further under **SO**, section 3; and **YET**, section 3.

grammar

The **grammar** of a language is a codified system consisting of grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.) and ways of assembling them into phrases and

sentences (= *syntax*); as well as the expression of grammatical concepts such as polarity, number, tense, modality, etc. Both word classes and concepts such as number and tense may be expressed in the *morphology* of words. See further under **morphology**, and **syntax**.

Numerous different approaches to English **grammar** have been developed since the later C20. See further under **cognitive grammar**, **construction grammar**, **frame semantics**, **government–binding theory**, **GPSG**, **HPSG**, **lexical–functional grammar**, **systemic–functional grammar**, **transformational–generative grammar**.

grammatical metaphor

Systemic–functional grammar highlights the fact that elements of meaning articulated through the grammatical system can be expressed by alternative means, i.e. through **grammatical metaphor**. The alternative may exploit syntactic and/or lexical options within the language. A simple example is the way in which the tentative meaning of the modal verb *MAY* can be paraphrased through adverbs such as *maybe*, *possibly*, *perhaps*.

They may buy the apartment. > *Perhaps they will buy the apartment.*

Likewise the certainty expressed in *will* can be embodied in the adverb *definitely*:

They will buy the apartment. > *They are definitely buying the apartment.*

A more adventurous example is the transformation of:

On Saturday they will arrive at the summit.

into

Saturday will see them at the summit.

Using “Saturday” (an inanimate) as the subject requires metaphorical interpretation of “see,” though one which is a well-established idiom. In all those pairs, the first sentence is grammatically the more **convergent** of the two (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The second demonstrates the interplay of grammar and lexis within the resources of the *lexicogrammar*. See further under **lexicogrammar**.

grammaticalization

While *grammar* is usually taken to mean a more or less stable linguistic system, language historians are only too aware that modifications and additions to it can be seen over the course of time. Some grammarians also take the view that grammar is continually evolving; and that this continuous process of **grammaticalization** (or *grammaticization*) correlates with the principle that grammar is **emergent** (see further under **emergent grammar**).

Descriptive grammarians who observe local and short-term variations in language also note **grammaticalization** in the process whereby linguistic elements take on a grammatical role which is different from their individual lexical bases. For example *a lot of* has **grammaticalized** into a complex determiner

in modern English; and *provided that*, into a complex subordinator (see further under **determiner**, section 6; and **subordinator**, section 3). In systemic–functional grammar, the fusion of lexicon and grammar within the notional *lexicogrammar* allows for alternative expression of grammatical meanings, in more and less grammaticalized form (see further under **grammatical metaphor**). This view of language makes grammaticalization a facility within the dynamics of the system, rather than an occasional historical process.

In the grammar of languages other than English, word classes and grammatical properties may be grammaticalized in different ways. While plurality is grammaticalized in the inflections of English nouns, there is no marking for grammatical gender as in many European languages through the alternative forms of the definite article: see further under **gender**.

grapheme

This is a unit of *orthography*, i.e. the writing system of English. It may refer to a single letter of the alphabet, or a conventional combination of two or sometimes three letters, as with *sh*, *tch*, *th*, and *wr*, all representing a single sound value.

The sound values of **graphemes** can vary with their position in word. So *b* represents /b/ in *bet*, *bond*, but is silent when combined with *m* at the end of word, as in *dumb*, *lamb*. For some graphemes like *sc*, their sound value correlates with the following vowel so that it's /sk/ in *scant* and /s/ in *science*. The sound of *th* varies according to its use in function words like *this*, *the*, *those* and in content words such as *thermal*, *thigh*, *thin*. **Graphemic** variation occurs both in the sounds represented, and in the fact that more than one grapheme can represent the same sound. The consonant /f/ is represented by four different graphemes in the words *cliff*, *loaf*, *graph*, *laugh*. In terms of English orthography, *f*, *ff*, *gh*, and *ph* are all **allographs** for the sound /f/. The allographs used are in each case dictated by the history of the words. Of course *gh* is also an allograph of /k/ in a few words, such as *hough* /hok/ and names like *McLaughlin*. See further under **allograph**, section 2.

group

The term **group** is used in systemic–functional grammar in some cases where other grammars use the term *phrase*. Thus:

adverbial group	corresponds to <i>adverb phrase</i>	(AdvP)
nominal group	corresponds to <i>noun phrase</i>	(NP)
verbal group	corresponds to <i>verb phrase</i>	(VP)

Each type of group has as its head a word of the class named in it. In systemic–functional grammar the group is seen as an expansion of the headword, whereas *phrases* are seen as reduced clauses. See further under **adverb phrase**, **noun phrase**, **verb phrase**.

The *conjunction group* and *preposition group* correspond to the *complex conjunction* and *complex preposition* of other grammars. See further under **conjunction**, section 2; and **preposition**, section 3.

group genitive

This term refers to cases where a whole noun phrase carries the genitive case marker, as in *the King of Spain's daughter*. See further under **genitive**, section 3.

group noun

This is an alternative term for certain types of noun which are singular by their form, but notionally plural in that they are made up of more than one entity. They include:

- **collective nouns** such as *clergy, crowd, flock, herd, mob, team*
- **proper nouns** referring to a collective entity, as in:

England are all out for 195.

Canberra has not yet commented on this development.

They have in common the fact that they vary in their patterns of agreement (singular/plural) with the following verb and anaphoric pronouns. See further under **agreement**, sections 5 and 6; and **anaphora**.

GROUP OF

This quantificational phrase is on the way to becoming a complex determiner, as is evident when it is construed with a plural verb in agreement. Compare:

A group of vociferous bystanders was challenging the police in their inquiry.

A group of vociferous bystanders were challenging the police in their inquiry.

The second example illustrates the not uncommon use of notional (plural) agreement rather than formal (singular) agreement, suggesting that “bystanders” rather than “group” governs the agreement, and that **A GROUP OF** is becoming grammaticalized as a non-numerical quantifier and complex determiner, just like *a lot of*. See further under **determiner**, section 6; and **agreement**, section 7.

Note that when the word **GROUP** is premodified, as in:

A vociferous group of bystanders was challenging the police ...

it resists notional agreement, and its status as head of the NP is underscored. It thus dictates singular agreement in the following verb.

H

HALF

This is a quantificational determiner, pronoun, adverb, and noun as illustrated in the following:

<i>Half the apples were made into cider.</i>	(determiner)
<i>Half of the apples were made into cider.</i>	(pronoun)
<i>The apple pie was half cooked.</i>	(adverb)
<i>I will have the other half.</i>	(noun)

Note that as determiner/pronoun, *HALF* is number transparent, in that the following noun determines the number of the NP it occurs in. Compare

Half the apples were eaten.
Half the cider was drunk.

See further under **number transparency**; and **determiner**, section 3.

As a noun, *HALF* readily forms compound nouns, e.g.

halfback half-caste half-life half sister half title half-truth

As an adverb, *HALF* is frequently found in compound adjectives, e.g.

half-baked half-cocked half-hearted half-sized half-timbered

In these compounds it functions like an English **combining form** – although that term is usually applied to neoclassical combining forms (see further under **combining form**, section 3). Some grammars (Quirk et al. 1985) prefer to treat *HALF* as a quantitative prefix, like *semi-*.

See further under **prefix**.

Halliday

Among the major British grammarians of the later C20, Michael **Halliday** developed an original approach in relating grammatical features to the larger functional parameters of discourse, drawing on the work of J. R. Firth. His early **scale-and-category grammar** of the 1960s evolved into one which emphasized the selections made from grammatical systems by speakers and writers in their communicative contexts. From this **systemic grammar**, Halliday developed his first accounts of **systemic-functional grammar**, published in 1985 and 1994. See further under **systemic-functional grammar**.

HAVE

- 1 the forms of *HAVE*
 - 2 *HAVE* as an auxiliary verb
 - 3 *HAVE* as a semi-modal verb
 - 4 *HAVE* as a lexical verb
 - 5 *HAVE* as a light verb
-

1 The forms of *HAVE*

The verb *HAVE* appears in several forms, much like those of a regular English verb, its past tense and past participle being formed with a dental consonant /d/.

present tense	<i>has, have</i>	present participle	<i>having</i>
past tense	<i>had</i>	past participle	<i>had</i>

HAVE is irregular only in the assimilation of the *v* of its stem with consonantal inflections, which disappears in *has, had*. See further under **irregular verb**, section 1.

2 *HAVE* as an auxiliary verb

The role of *HAVE* as a primary auxiliary verb is to combine with a past participle to formulate the perfect aspect. This is the form of the verb which expresses completed action, as in:

has arrived have been here before had walked all the way

This use of *HAVE* to express the “past in present” is hedged about in standard British and other varieties of English by constraints on the adverbs with which it can combine, specifically not using *yesterday, last week, long ago* or other adverbs relating to a point in time. So *The president has arrived in London yesterday* is said to be ungrammatical. The overriding of this constraint has however been observed in the British broadcast media and in radio talk elsewhere (Elsness, 2009; Ritz 2010). It can be regarded as specialized grammatical usage of that register and medium of discourse.

3 *HAVE* as a quasi-modal verb

When combined with *TO*, *have to* becomes a quasi-modal expressing obligation and necessity, as in:

We have to go early tomorrow to catch the ferry.

In British English, especially in speech, *have to* is very often *have got to*, with contraction of *HAVE*, as in *I've/she's got to go ...* In American English, both spoken and written, *have to* prevails (Biber et al. 1999). See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 4.

4 *HAVE* as a lexical verb

HAVE expresses a variety of relationships as a lexical verb:

- ownership (alienable and inalienable): *have a car/dark hair/a warm personality*
- family relations: *had a sister/a wife and family*
- association with an abstract quality: *had a good lifestyle/other goals to achieve*
- causation: *have him arrested* (see further under **causative verb**)

In all but the last of those applications, *HAVE* is a **stative** verb, and so does not usually take the *-ing* form. See further under **dynamic verb**.

5 **HAVE as a light verb**

HAVE is one of the several **light verbs** which can combine with a basic verbal noun (identical with the base form of a verb) to express a single action, e.g.

have a bath have a break have a look have a walk

Expressions like these can also be formulated with *take* (another of the **light verbs**), especially in American English (Algeo 1995). While they are strongly associated with informal spoken discourse in their simple form, they are also found in elaborated forms (*have a really quick look at ...*) in more formal speech and writing (Smith 2009a). See further under **light verb**.

HE and HIM

1 **HE/HIM and gender**

2 **HE/HIM and case assignment in syntax**

3 **Generic HE**

1 **HE/HIM and gender**

HE/HIM is the third person singular masculine pronoun, which contrasts with *SHE/HER*, the feminine form. The same gender contrast is made by the possessive form *HIS*, whether it works as a determiner or an independent possessive pronoun (see **possessive pronoun**). *HE/HIM* and *HIS* and *SHE/HER* are the only elements of English grammar which provide this **gender** contrast: see further below, section 3; and **gender**, section 2.

2 **HE/HIM and case assignment in syntax**

In standard English *HE* and *HIM* are used as the nominative and accusative/dative forms of the pronoun respectively, corresponding with their roles in the sentence:

He boarded the train in the suburbs. (nominative – subject)

The train brought him to the city. (accusative – direct object)

The conductor gave him a ticket. (dative – indirect object)

However in informal conversation (especially among young men), *HIM* comes to be used in subject roles where *HE* might be expected:

James and him were at school together.

Him and James both did sport.

These examples show *HIM* substituting for *HE* in coordinated subjects, as first or second coordinate. This substitution of pronouns for the first coordinate (“him and James”) is more common than for the second (Biber et al. 1999; Peters 2009a). *HIM* also takes on the subject role in nonfinite clauses and fragmentary sentences:

For him to drop out would be a pity.

I was keen to meet James. Him being the only other survivor.

See further under **sentence**, section 2.

- ▶ For the use of *HIM* in comparative sentences like *She is taller than him*, see **comparative clause**, section 3.
- ▶ For the use of *HIM* rather than *HE* as the complement of the clause (*It's him*), see **object territory**.

3 Generic HE

Despite the primary association with masculine gender, *HE/HIM* and *HIS* also have a history of **generic** or **dual gender** use, representing both male and female in the singular. It is still current in aphorisms and sayings such as:

He who pays the piper calls the tune.

The feminist critique of the later C20 challenged the use of generic *HE*, especially when it refers to activities or roles which are not exclusively male. See further next entry and under **generic pronoun**.

HE and/or SHE

The English pronoun system provides a gender contrast (*HE* or *SHE*) which is vital for the purposes of reference and cohesion. It neatly distinguishes the two persons in:

Henry VIII and his first wife Catherine were married for 18 years. After that he married for ever shorter periods, and she not at all.

But this gender specificity is a problem for writers seeking a pronoun which is gender-free, or rather **common gender**, a means of including both genders (*HE* and *SHE*):

Every teacher must ensure that he or she manages his or her class without being too heavy-handed.

Spelling out the inclusive meaning by means of a phrase – *HE* or *SHE*, *HIS* or *HER*, *HIM* or *HER* – quickly becomes cumbersome and tedious. Alternative strategies are therefore needed, as shown in the following:

- **HE/SHE**

Every teacher must ensure that he/she manages his/her class.

This can be done systematically for all forms of these pronouns (nominative, accusative, genitive), but makes them bulky and underscores the gender-equality issue everywhere.

- **S/HE**

Every teacher much ensure that s/he manages her/his class.

This is a neater and less conspicuous way of expressing gender-neutrality, but only works for the nominative case.

- **THEY** as singular gender-free pronoun

Every teacher must ensure that they manage their class.

This is now very widely used and accepted, except perhaps by those whose grammar is traditional (Peters 2004).

- **Generic HE**

Every teacher must ensure that he manages his class.

Even if this formulation is intended to be generic *HE*, its readers may not take it that way but interpret it as meant only for the male teacher. This problem arises anywhere that men and women work in the same roles.

- ***SHE*** alternating with ***HE***

Every teacher must ensure that he manages her class??

This alternation may be motivated by the desire to be even-handed, but its impact on the meaning of the sentence is bizarre and disconcerting for the reader. It violates the basic principle of cohesive discourse, whereby pronouns are selected for maintaining consistency of reference (see further under **cohesion**). Alternating the gender of the pronouns suggests a continual switching of the identity of the referent.

- **Generic *SHE***

Every teacher must ensure that she manages her class.

This use of generic *SHE* was recommended by some feminist writers as affirmative action against the prevailing use of generic *HE* (see **generic pronoun**). But in contents where men and women both play their part, generic *SHE* has the same exclusive effect on the meaning of the utterance as generic *HE*. Only when the roles being described are characteristically female (e.g. breast-feeding, knitting), does generic *SHE* seem natural and therefore less distracting than otherwise (Allan and Burridge 2006). See further under ***SHE and HER***.

- **Generic *YOU***

As a teacher you must ensure that you manage your class.

The generic *YOU* tends to revert to the ordinary second person *YOU* when used repeatedly, as in that example. See further under ***YOU***, section 2.

The number of alternatives listed above reflects the fact that there is no simple unmarked gender-free or dual gender singular pronoun: see further under **gender**, section 3. All those shown are grammatically, semantically, or stylistically encumbered in some way.

head and headedness

- 1 **heads and noun phrase heads**
 - 2 **adjectival and adverbial phrase heads**
 - 3 **verb and prepositional phrase heads**
 - 4 **headedness and agreement**
-

1 Heads and noun phrase heads

In English syntax, various types of phrase have been identified by their **heads**. In traditional grammar this was explained by the fact that the obligatory constituent of the phrase would, if standing alone, have the same grammatical function. See for example:

Their glorious house on the hilltop has been sold.

The underlined constituent in that sentence is classed as an NP because its core constituent (“house”) functions as a noun, whether or not it is flanked by premodifying and postmodifying elements. Elaborated or not, “the(ir) house” is the subject NP of the sentence, and the noun “house” is the head of the NP. The noun is said to *license* both premodifiers (determiners and adjectives) and postmodifiers, i.e. prepositional phrases and relative clauses. See further under **licensing**.

2 Adjectival and adverbial phrase heads

Adjectival and adverbial phrases may be identified and explained as for NPs. The underlined **heads** of the following phrases have the same grammatical function as the whole:

Adjectival phrase:

most timely utterly honest very likely indeed very likely to resist

Adverbial phrase:

more besides most highly quite soon very warmly

Both adjectives and adverbs license premodifying adverbs.

3 Verb and prepositional phrase heads

The traditional understanding of **headedness** was extended by structural grammarians to verb and preposition phrases as a way of explaining their syntactic function as well as their internal structure and their dependents. So while a simple verb phrase (*they arrived*) was headed by the finite lexical verb, complex verb phrases such as *had arrived* with finite auxiliary or *will arrive* with a modal verb were said to be headed by the auxiliary or modal, rather than the lexical verb. This approach has been taken further by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), challenging the notion of auxiliary verbs as a distinct category (since they do function as the head of the verb phrase), and proposing that the lexical verb following is the catenative complement (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7).

Likewise, the structural approach to prepositional phrases treated the preposition as its **head**, licensing an NP as its dependent, as in *up the garden path*. But as Huddleston and Pullum (2002) have pointed out, prepositions can take a variety of other complements, e.g. nonfinite clauses, at which point they function as subordinators rather than prepositions in the traditional sense (see further under **preposition**, section 4). So the question of what constitutes a prepositional phrase has been challenged, apart from what counts as its head.

4 Headedness and agreement

In the context of complex NPs, especially those with a complementary *OF*-phrase, the actual **head** can be seen to shift or be ambivalent, as reflected in alternative patterns of agreement. This happens especially with non-numerical quantifiers, such as *a group of people*, *a number of people* (see further under **GROUP OF, NUMBER OF**). Though grammatically singular, such expressions take a plural NP as complement, and notional agreement in a plural verb shows that the complementary NP is effectively the head, rather than

GROUP/NUMBER. The same holds in the alternative agreement patterns found with complex determiners. See further under **agreement**, section 7; and **determiner**, section 6.

head-driven phrase structure grammar (HPSG)

This grammatical approach developed by Carl Pollard and Ivan Sag in the 1980s grew out of generalized phrase structure grammar, incorporating aspects of categorial grammar and lexical–functional grammar (LFG). It developed the concept of *unification* to explain how semantic and syntactic features of one category can be shared across constituents in the clause, as in *agreement*. It minimizes the need for underlying grammatical rules. See further under **agreement**, section 1; and **unification**.

headless relative

See under **free relative**.

hedging device

See under **intensifier and downtoner**.

HENCE

This is both a connective adverb (*conjunct*) and a marginal *conjunction*. See further under **adverb**, sections 2 and 3; and **conjunction**, section 4.

HER

- For the grammatical uses of *HER*, see under **personal pronoun** and **determiner**.
- For its contextual meanings, see **SHE and HER**.

HERS

This is the feminine *independent possessive* or *independent pronoun*. See under **possessive pronoun**.

heteronymy

This term is constructed from Greek elements, meaning “other” (i.e. alternative) + “naming.” In linguistic usage it has two very different meanings:

- 1 *Heteronyms* are words with different meanings that are written the same way but pronounced differently. For example, *wind* as a noun and *wind* as a verb; *minute* as a noun and an adjective; *diffuse* as an adjective and a verb: see further under **homograph**.
- 2 *Heteronymic pairs* or sets are morphologically different words used for the same referent by different speech communities. For example, British cooks use a *frying pan* where American call it a *skillet*. The words *pavement*, *sidewalk*, and *footpath* all refer to the slightly elevated paved area beside a road designed for pedestrians. But each term belongs to a different variety of English: to British, American, and Australian English respectively. This second sense of **heteronymy** is more widely used among dialectologists.

HIS

- For the grammatical uses of *HIS*, see under **personal pronoun**, section 4; and **determiner**.
- For its contextual meanings, see **HE and HIM**.

historic present

See under **present tense**, section 4.

holonymy

See **meronymy**.

homograph

A **homograph** is a word spelled in exactly the same way as another, but with a different meaning, for example the verb *to bear* “carry” and the noun *bear* for a usually large furry animal. Their separate meanings reflect the fact that they are separate words by their different origins. **Homographic pairs** may or may not be pronounced the same way. With *bear*, the two words have the same pronunciation, whereas it is different for the verb *desert* “abandon” and the noun *desert* referring to a harsh climatic region. The latter are called **heteronyms**. See further under **heteronymy**, section 1.

homonym

Homonyms are words whose spelling and pronunciation coincide but whose meanings differ, as with the verb *stalk* “follow (someone)” and the noun *stalk* for the stem of a plant. **Homonymy** is usually taken to include **homographs** as well as **homophones**, and is thus a superordinate for both (see further under **homograph**, and **homophone**).

In principle, **homonyms** are words from different sources which account for their different meanings. Yet many words with the same spelling but different meanings are actually descended from the same stem. For example, the verb *to watch* and the *watch* on your wrist share the same parent word in Old English; as do *tank* (a container of water) and *tank* (a heavily armed combat vehicle), both descended from an Indian word for an artificial lake. Strictly speaking, these pairs are not homonyms but **polysemes**, i.e. separate branches of a polysemous word (see further under **polysemy**).

Many **homonyms** are polysemous developments of a remotely shared ancestor, as are *canon* and *cannon*, both descended from a Greek word meaning “rod” or “reed.” But because of their separate developments in Latin, Italian, and French (hence also their different spellings), they are usually regarded as homonyms. More debatable are cases like *cheque* and *check*, distinguished by their spelling only in the early C18 (in British English); and *flour* and *flower*, which were given different spellings by Johnson in his dictionary (1755), but are also polysemes of one and the same word. To modern readers they would appear to be homonyms.

Homonymic affixes: certain English prefixes are **homonymic**, for example the prefix *in-* “not” derived from Latin, and *in-* “in, into” as in *inroad*, inherited from Old English. There are also homonymic suffixes, notably:

- *-al* (1) is a noun suffix borrowed into English from French, used to derive words such as *acquittal*, *arrival*, *betrothal*, *dismissal*
- *-al* (2) is an adjectival suffix borrowed into English from Latin, used to derive words such as *bridal*, *critical*, *herbal*, *seasonal*, *sensational*
- *-ate* (1) is a verb suffix borrowed into English from Latin, and used to derive words such as *abbreviate*, *consecrate*, *frustrate*, *incorporate*
- *-ate* (2) is a noun suffix borrowed into English from Latin, used to derive words such as *caliphate*, *directorate*, *electorate*, *shogunate*
- *-ing* (1) is a noun suffix from Old English, used to derive verbal nouns such as *building*, *facing*, *opening*
- *-ing* (2) is a verbal inflection, used with all verbs (except modals) for the present participle, as in *be laughing*, *leaping*, *smiling*, *singing*

While the meanings of these affixes are usually clear to the human reader in their lexical contexts, they pose problems for machine reading and morphological analysis.

homophone

This is one of a pair or set of words which are pronounced in the same way but spelled differently, and have different meanings: e.g. *wait* “linger,” *weight* “mass”; or *pair* “a couple,” *pear* as a fruit, *pare* “to cut the skin off.” The different spellings of **homophones** are usually a sign of their different origins and their different meanings in English.

HOWEVER

The grammatical issues for *HOWEVER* reflect the fact that the word is polysemous, as an adverb and conjunction. In earlier centuries, *HOWEVER* as an adverb was a conjunct with adversative meaning, as in:

They were not keen to brave the cold, however.

As a conjunction it carries an indefinite meaning:

However she tried, she couldn't explain it.

These are its established roles. But since the late C20, *HOWEVER* has increasingly been used also as an adversative coordinator, though dictionaries have been slow to accept it. Some grammarians nevertheless recognize its status as a marginal coordinator (Peterson 2009), as in:

They were not keen to play tennis, however there was nothing else to do.

In traditional grammar where adversative *HOWEVER* is confined to the adverbial role, the punctuation mark required in mid-sentence would be a semicolon. See further under **punctuation**, section 2; and **conjunction**, section 4.

HPSG

See **head-driven phrase structure grammar**.

hypercorrection

This phenomenon occurs when users of a language apply a grammatical rule which relates to one structural category to others, effectively overgeneralizing with it. For example, the formal constraint on using the determiner *LESS* with countable nouns (*less students* > *fewer students*) is extended to *LESS* as a pronoun (*less than 20 students* > *fewer than 20 students*). See further under **LESS**, section 2.

The use of the subject pronoun *I* as the second coordinate in non-subject roles, as in ... *for my husband and I*, can also be seen as **hypercorrection** in response to the much more common case in which the object pronoun *me* is used ungrammatically as a coordinated subject. See further under **I and ME**, sections 2 and 3.

hypernym and hyperonym

These are alternative names for the superordinate word in *hyponymic* sets. See further under **hyponymy**.

hyphen

-
- 1 **hyphens in word punctuation**
 - 2 **hard hyphen and soft hyphen**
 - 3 **hyphen and en dash**
-

1 **Hyphens in word punctuation**

The hyphen has two punctuating functions in complex and compound words: to separate or to connect their component morphemes:

- to separate morphemes whose juxtaposition is liable to disturb the reading of the whole lexical unit. They are commonly used in complex words whose prefixes end in a vowel before a stem beginning with a vowel, especially the same vowel. This is why there is often a hyphen in *pre-arrange* and *anti-inflationary*. Hyphens are also needed for prefixed forms which are otherwise homonyms of another lexeme, e.g. *re-create* (cf. *recreate*), *re-mark* (cf. *remark*)
- to connect morphemes within a compound, so as to ensure they are read together. This is often most acute for compound adjectives used attributively, as in *key word-processing operation* (i.e. a generic text-processing task), as opposed to *key-word processing operation* (i.e. specific to a particular type of word)

Hyphens are nevertheless often discretionary, and a matter of regional preference. They are used more frequently in British than American editorial style, as reflected in the respective reference dictionaries. Hyphens are more

important for new than established compounds, whose component morphemes may otherwise be left spaced or set solid *cross talk/crosstalk*. Those that begin life with a hyphen may lose it over the course of time, as has happened with *co(-)ordinate* and its lemma. **Hyphenation** may also depend on the text: *bioengineering* can probably do without a hyphen in a technical report where it is a familiar term, but a hyphen (*bio-engineering*) helps in texts for the general reader.

2 **Hard hyphen and soft hyphen**

Hard hyphens are those which are the more or less regular or necessary way of spelling a complex or compound word, e.g. *half-sized*. These appear anywhere in the line of print. Compare the **soft hyphens**: those which appear at the end of a line of print when a longer word has to be divided and spills over to the next line, especially in right-justified type. These are only a temporary device to signal the continuation of that particular word on the next line.

3 **Hyphen and en dash**

Hyphens are approximately half the length of the **en dash**, whose alternative name is the **long hyphen**. Their functions are essentially different, since the en dash connects words within a phrase or span, rather than as parts of the same lexical unit (see under **dash**, section 3). Note however that the en dash is used in headings where the hyphen might otherwise appear in the regular spelling of a word.

hypocoristic

Hypocoristics are special forms of standard names, e.g. *Danny* (for Daniel), *Debbie* (for Deborah), *Tommy* (for Thomas), used to express affection within the family and among friends. Hypocoristic words are also formed from common nouns and noun compounds, to imbue them with a sense of familiarity and shared experience within a speech community, for example:

cabbie (cab-driver) *footie* (football) *polly* (politician) *telly* (television)

As in those examples, hypocoristics often involve both abbreviation and the addition of a hypocoristic suffix, though the net result is a shorter word. They occur in informal and casual discourse where polysyllabic words might be out of place.

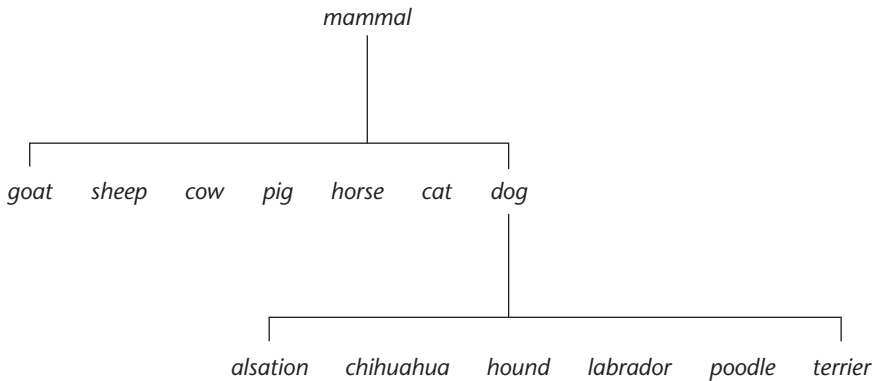
While *-ie/-y* is the most widely used **hypocoristic** suffix, there are others, e.g.

- *-er* suffix found on *boner*, *fresher*, *rugger*
- *-o* suffix on *weirdo*, *journo*, *muso*
- *-s* suffix attached to informal words such as *hots*, as in *got the hots*, or *got the sads/the sulks*; or those like *cuddles*, *stinky-poops*, *walkies*, used in talking with children and pets.

The first and third suffixes combine in *champers*, *bonkers*, *starkers*. See further under **-s**, section 5.

hyponymy

A *hyponym* carries the sense that it belongs to a particular class of items, and is included among the set of words relating to it. **Hyponymy** is thus the semantic relation of “includedness” which holds between the umbrella term for the class and words for the members of that class. So words like *cow*, *pig*, *horse*, *goat*, *sheep*, *cat*, *dog* are all members of the class *mammals*, in which they are hyponyms and *mammal* the *superordinate*.



As the diagram suggests, the *sense relation* in hyponymy is both vertical (to/from the superordinate) and horizontal among the *co-hyponyms*. The vertical relationship is recursively structured, so that hyponyms at the intermediate level may be the superordinate (or *hyper(o)nym*) for a further set of hyponyms below.

hypotaxis

This is the term used to refer to the syntactic subordination of one or more clauses to a matrix or main clause. See further under **subordination**.

hypothetical

English grammar has a more than one way of indicating that a statement projects something which is **hypothetical** rather than real. The various means include:

- subordinators such *as if*, *as though*, *as in*
He ate as though he hadn't eaten for weeks.
She felt as if a cloud had suddenly lifted.

The use of *as if/as though* makes it clear that the following clause expresses something unreal, as does the use of the past perfect tense with *had*.

- clause-initial remote past tense

Had they been interested, he would have mentioned it.

The inverted use of the past perfect “had ... been” frames the second clause in the remote past, as a hypothetical and impossible condition. See further under **IF**.

- *SHOULD* in conditional clauses

If I should never return, please take care of my only child.

Should I never return, please take care of my only child.

This **hypothetical** use of *SHOULD* in declarative word order or with subject-verb inversion is increasingly rare. See further under **WOULD and SHOULD**.

- *WERE*-subjunctive

If they were they still young, they could make the journey themselves.

Here the use of the only surviving past subjunctive form *WERE*, combined with *IF*, makes the clause an impossible condition and purely **hypothetical**. See further under **subjunctive**, section 2.

- Modal verbs such as *MIGHT* and *MAY*

With all that training, they might have become Olympic winners.

Without swift medical help, he may have died.

The first example is standard English, the second a relatively recent way of projecting a hypothetical or **unreal** outcome, noted in major varieties of English (Peters 2004). See further under **MAY HAVE or MIGHT HAVE**.

I* and *ME

- 1 standard uses of *I/ME* as first person singular pronoun
 - 2 idiomatic use of *I* in non-subject role
 - 3 informal uses of *ME* for *I*
 - 4 the determiner *ME* used for *MY*
 - 5 use of *ME* used for unstressed pronunciation of *MY*
-

1 Standard uses of *I/ME* as first person singular pronoun

The “vertical” or “perpendicular” pronoun *I* is used for the first person singular, i.e. when the person speaking is referring to herself/himself as the subject of a clause:

I think, therefore I am.

While *I* is the nominative (subject) form of the pronoun, *ME* is the form for accusative and dative:

The consultant rang me and then wrote me a letter.

(accusative: direct object) (dative: indirect object)

For more about nominative/accusative/dative, see **personal pronoun**, section 4; for the two kinds of object, see **object**.

The genitive/possessive form *MY* is discussed under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3; and the independent pronoun *MINE* under **possessive pronoun**.

2 Idiomatic use of *I* in non-subject role

Despite those standard grammatical rules, there are occasions when *I* is used in constituents of the clause other than the subject. It happens especially when *I* is coordinated (as second coordinate) with another name or noun phrase within the predicate. See for example:

He used to refer to John and I as “the midnight gardeners.”

It’s a great opportunity for my wife and I to visit our children

In each case, *I* and its coordinate form part of the complement of the verb. In traditional grammar terms *I* is incorrect (it should be *ME*). Yet this “common fault” (Treble and Vallins 1936) was probably believed to be more genteel. Decades later (Quirk et al. 1985) conclude that *X and I* has acquired the status of a “polite formula.” Some grammarians regard it as a **hypercorrection**; others (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) suggest that it is now simply a variant of standard English.

Idiomatic use of *between you and I* is the same phenomenon, though often stigmatized by conservative usage commentators.

3 Informal uses of **ME** for **I**

- *ME* used in subject role in coordinated structures, in colloquial speech:

Jamey and me lived in the same suburb.

Me and Jamey played in the jazz group.

These examples from casual conversation show *ME* substituting for *I* in coordinated subjects, as first or second coordinate. Research shows that using the nonstandard pronoun for the first coordinate (“me and Jamey”) is in fact more common than for the second (Biber et al. 1999; Peters 2009a). It is very old, as evidenced by the traditional Scottish song about Loch Lomond, where “me and my true love were ever wont to gae.” It is well entrenched in British English as an alternative paradigm (Wales 1996), and now regarded as one of the “vernacular universals” of English (Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2004). Despite this, *I* rather than *ME* prevails in subject role in coordinated structures in writing of all kinds, from everyday news to academic prose (Longman Grammar 1999).

- *ME* commonly takes on the subject role in dislocated phrases and fragmentary sentences:

You and me, we’re a great team.

Who’s going? You and me, George.

See further under **sentence**, section 2.

- *ME* in comparative clauses after *THAN* or *AS*:

Leo remembered it better than me.

Leo remembered it just as clearly as me.

The use of *ME* is more common in conversation, and it correlates with *THAN/AS* being prepositions. However traditional grammarians have long argued that the final pronoun should be *I*, on the grounds that it’s the subject of an ellipted clause (in which case *THAN/AS* are conjunctions). See further under **comparative clause**, section 3.

4 Use of **ME** for the determiner **MY**

The use of *ME* rather than *MY* in front of a gerund in object territory is now widely attested in writing as well as spoken discourse, as:

They referred to me coming with them.

See further under **gerund-participle**, section 3.

5 **ME** used for unstressed pronunciation of **MY**

ME is sometimes used in vernacular narrative and informal dialogue to render the unstressed pronunciation of the determiner *MY* before a noun, as in:

I got back on me bike.

As written, this looks like a gross grammatical error in replacing the first person singular determiner with a pronoun. It is however the conventional way of indicating that the vowel written as “y” is unstressed and probably reduced from /ai/ to a short /ɪ/ or indeterminate vowel. But the written “e” suggests

the long /i/ of the accusative pronoun, hence the stigma it carries.

This usage of *ME* is an artifact of the representation of speech, rather than a grammatical error. In any case, corpus-based research (Quinn 2009) found only very limited use of *ME* in this nonstandard role.

- ▶ For the use of *ME* rather than *I* as the complement of the clause (*It's me*), see **object territory**.
- ▶ For the conventional order of *I/ME* and other personal pronouns, see under **person**, section 2.
- ▶ For the substitution of *myself* for *ME*, see **MYSELF**.

ideational function

In systemic–functional grammar, this is one of the three *metafunctions* of language, along with the *interpersonal* and *textual* functions. The ideational function is presented by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) as consisting of both an *experiential* component and a *logical* component. See further under **metafunction of language**.

idiom

This word is used in several ways to refer to aspects of language. In nontechnical discourse, it can still refer to a particular speech style, e.g. *speaking in the Scottish idiom*.

Among lexicologists, **idiom** is the term for a range of more or less fixed expressions, especially those whose meaning cannot be extracted from the words they are made up of, e.g.

off his rocker *over the moon* *raining cats and dogs*

Some **idioms** can be varied a little, e.g. changing the tense of the verb from present to past: *kick the bucket* > *kicked the bucket*. There are degrees of *idiomaticity* (Fernando 1996), but **idioms** allow little by way of paraphrase: *over the moon* > ?? *above the moon*.

Grammarians use the term **idiom** to refer to expressions which are well-established items of the language without conforming to syntactic rules. Thus the expression *I'll try and come* does not conform to the normal catenative structures for verbs (see **catenative verb**, section 3). Its place in English idiom (in the nontechnical sense above) cannot be denied, however.

IF

In traditional grammar, *IF* was classed as a subordinating conjunction. In modern English grammars it is recognized as having two distinct conjunctive roles:

- as a complementizer for interrogative content clauses:

Asked if he liked sailing, he admitted to having hydrophobia.

- as the subordinator for adverbial clauses of condition:

We'll go sailing if the weather improves.

The term **IF-clause** refers to the subordinate clause (*protasis*) of a conditional sentence, the main clause being the *apodosis*. The structure is the same whether

or not the *IF*-clause exemplifies an **open condition**, as illustrated in the first example above; or a **hypothetical condition**, as in:

We would have gone sailing if the weather had improved.

We might go sailing if the weather were to improve.

As those two examples show, the term **hypothetical** covers different degrees of certainty. So the first example (“we would have ...”) represents a **closed** or **impossible** condition, whereas the second (“we might ...”) just makes it unlikely or **remote**. Other terms sometimes used for the first type of condition are **real condition** and for the second: **unreal condition**.

Both open and hypothetical conditions are **direct conditions**. Compare the **indirect condition**, exemplified in:

If I may comment further, the budget looks extravagant.

The clause prefaced by *IF* in such cases is not a protasis for the main clause, and is only indirectly related to it.

- ▶ For alternative ways of expressing the hypothetical in English grammar, see under **hypothetical**.

IF-clause

This term refers to a conditional clause headed by *IF*, on which see under **IF**.

- ▶ For **complement clauses** introduced by *IF*, as in *See if they are coming down the road*, see under **complement clause**, section 1.
- ▶ For clauses beginning with *AS IF*, see under **hypothetical**.

illocutionary force

The terms **illocution** and **illocutionary force** were coined by philosopher J. L. Austin ([1955]1975) in his speech-act theory to identify the pragmatic force or communicative function of any utterance. It may for example:

- state a proposition: *The world is flat.*
- ask a question: *How are you?*
- make a request: *Please pass the salt.*
- indicate an offer: *Shall I make coffee?*
- express a wish: *I'd like her to call me when she gets back.*

Complementing the illocutionary force is the **perlocutionary force** (or **locutionary force**), terms also coined by Austin. They refer to the effect of the illocution on the listener(s), in terms of their beliefs, attitudes, awareness, and behavior, and the further impact on any situation under their control. Because such effects are more diffuse, not necessarily linguistic, and less measurable, **perlocutionary force** is less often discussed.

The **illocutionary force** of utterances in everyday discourse is distinguished by Austin from the very particular **performative function** of certain verbs, e.g. *advise*, *declare*, *promise*, *warn*, when they constitute actual performance of the speech act they refer to, as in:

You are advised to check in 90 minutes before departure time.

I declare the meeting closed.

We promise never to sell my grandmother's jewelry.

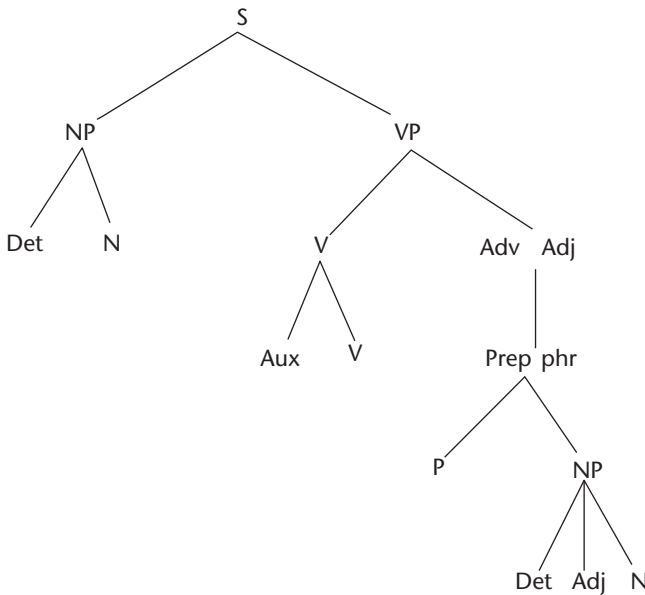
This is to warn you that your license will expire on April 1.

Verbs used in this way are referred to as **performative verbs**: see further under that heading.

immediate constituent analysis (IC)

This type of grammatical analysis, drawing on structural linguistics and the work of American Leonard Bloomfield (1933), divides each component of a sentence into its syntactic components, starting at the highest level, e.g. its component clauses, if applicable. **IC analysis** then passes to the level of the clause, dividing it into its chief constituents: the subject NP and the VP including its complements and/or adverbial adjuncts. The NP and VP are then divided into their structural constituents for more delicate analysis.

IC analysis is usually represented by a **tree diagram**, as shown below.



The camellias do bloom in the early spring.

The tree diagram shows the **immediate constituents** of each higher syntactic unit, down to the **ultimate constituents**, the lexical items on the lowest level of the tree. It is however possible to take the IC analysis of words down further to the level of morphemes within them, and so to recognize the plural suffix *-s* on “camellias” which affects the agreement with the VP, i.e. the fact that the verb *DO* takes the plural/base form (rather than the singular inflected form “does”). In complex words the morphemes are the **ultimate constituents**.

IC analysis articulates the functional components of the clause by syntactically labeled **nodes** at each level, showing the dominance of **mother**

nodes over *daughter nodes* (or *descendants*) lower down the tree, so that syntactic properties are inherited by the lower from the higher ones. The *terminal nodes* are the lexical items at the bottom, because they do not dominate any other items. The *preterminal nodes* are the syntactically labeled set immediately above them, i.e. Det, N, Aux, V, etc.

IC analysis is effective in explaining the distinct syntactic roles of each constituent of the clause. It does not however provide for discontinuous units, e.g. an adverbial adjunct interposed between the NP and VP, as in *The critics really liked the show*; or between Aux and V, as in *I've always liked it*. Gapping is also difficult to accommodate: see further under **gap and gapping**.

imperative

This term refers to the type of clausal syntax used typically in commands. In traditional English grammar it was one of the contrasting *moods* of English grammar, expressed by its distinctive clause pattern. **Imperatives** usually consist of a finite verb (V) as the first constituent of a clause, without a preceding subject (S), but with object(s) or adverbial adjunct(s) following the verb (see further under **clause**, section 2). For example:

Give it to her.

Call him now.

Make them welcome.

Although the subject (*YOU*) is not normally expressed in *second person imperatives*, it can be, as in the directive *You make them welcome*.

A curious subclass of commands that use imperative syntax are imprecations like:

Damn it!

Bugger the umpire!

Curse this new operating system!

These resemble the *second person imperative*, in not having an express subject – which is arguably *God* (Börjars and Burridge 2010). This is explicit in the formulation of older imprecations such as *Goddamn it*, and the intensifier *goddamned*.

A *third person imperative* is also sometimes found with an explicit subject, as in:

Everybody be quiet.

Somebody answer the phone.

Although the subject is explicit, some suggest that the implied (covert) subject is still second person (*YOU*). For *LET-imperatives*, see under that heading.

Imperatives are not necessarily punctuated with exclamation marks, especially when their pragmatic function is to express a polite request, as in the first and second examples above. When the imperative is a very public command, meant to move listeners to action, its *perlocutionary* intent may be marked by an exclamation mark:

Make way for the President!

See further under **illocutionary force**.

imperfect

See under **aspect**.

imperfective

See under **aspect**, and **perfective**.

impossible condition

See under **IF**.

imprecation

See under **imperative**.

IN

With its various spatial, temporal, and more abstract senses, this is one of the highly grammaticized prepositions of English (see further under **preposition**, section 1).

It also serves as the subordinator for nonfinite clauses, as in:

I relived the whole experience in going back to the school grounds.

It is integrated with the verb in various phrasal, prepositional, and phrasal-prepositional verbs: *turn in*, *delight in*. See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**, sections 1, 2, and 3.

incipient modal

See under **auxiliary verb**, section 5.

inclination

This term is used as an alternative to **intention** or **volition** to identify one of the subtypes of modality, often expressed by *WILL*. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3.

indefinite article

This is the term used in traditional grammar for the determiners *A* and *AN*. Though commonly found at the beginning of noun phrases, they are in fact **central determiners**. See further under **determiner**, section 3; and **A/AN**.

indefinite pronoun

Indefinite pronouns reference a nonspecific set of possibilities. *ANY* and *SOME* refer to an indeterminate subset, larger or smaller as in:

They will buy any/some of the books in that category.

Whereas *EACH* and *NONE* refer to the whole set, making it an all-or-nothing reference:

They will buy each/none of the books in that category.

ANY, *EACH*, *SOME*, *NONE* are the simple forms of the indefinite pronouns, which can refer to both animate and inanimate objects. All of them except *NONE* also serve as **determiners**: see further under **determiner**, section 3.

The compound **indefinite pronouns** fall into two sets according to whether they refer to humans or inanimate. Compare:

<i>anybody/anyone</i>	<i>anything</i>
<i>everybody/everyone</i>	<i>everything</i>
<i>somebody/someone</i>	<i>something</i>
<i>nobody/no one</i>	<i>nothing</i>

There is no simple pronoun form for *EVERY*, and no compound form for *EACH*. Note also that the use of *-body* or *-one* for human indefinites varies with the register and the variety of English. In the *Longman Grammar* corpus (Biber et al. 1999), the *-one* forms were the commonest overall, though the *-body* forms were relatively more common in conversation, and used more freely in American than British fiction.

Indefinite pronouns like those above are all loosely quantificational. Others like them are:

<i>all</i>	<i>another</i>	<i>both</i>	<i>either</i>	<i>enough</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>little</i>
<i>many</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>neither</i>	<i>several</i>		

Some of these have special properties. *ALL* and *BOTH* are universal in the sense that they take out the whole set while remaining indefinite in their reference. *EITHER* and *NEITHER* presuppose a pair of referents, where *EITHER* presents no commitment as to which will be selected, and *NEITHER* deselects both of them. *ANOTHER* marks the second of a set, without any indication of the size of the set. The indeterminacy of indefinite pronouns in relation to number and reference means that they often raise questions of agreement with the following verb (see further under **agreement**, section 4).

The **indefinite pronouns** *EACH*, *BOTH*, and *NONE* are **distributive pronouns**, in that they refer to every individual in the set. For the corresponding set of **distributive determiners**, see **determiner**, section 4.

- For the indefinite or generic use of the auxiliary pronoun *ONE*, as in *One never knows*, see **ONE**.

indent

Indents (i.e. the use of an indented first line) have long been used to mark the start of a paragraph. They thus expand the use of white space in the punctuation inventory beyond its use in relation to compound words and marking the boundaries between sentences. Indents retain this role in most printed books, although **line space** is increasingly used instead in official report writing, and in online documents. See further under **line space**.

independent pronoun

See the pronoun paradigm under **pronoun**, section 4.

indicative

The **indicative** is one of the types of **mood** identified by traditional grammarians in English syntax. It is the default pattern for clauses that make **statements**, as in:

The BBC is a trustworthy source.

Food parcels arrive by parachute.

Most educated people know the terms “alpha-” and “beta-testing.”

Such indicative clauses foreground the subject (agent), followed by the verb and its complement/adjunct/object, i.e. SVO/A/C: see further under **clause**, section 1. An alternative term for the indicative clause pattern is **declarative**.

In modern English, the **indicative** form of the verb contrasts with:

- the **imperative**, consisting of the base form of the verb without a subject:

Keep still Line up Go over there Come back

See further under **imperative**.

- the **subjunctive**, which is distinct only for the verb *BE*, and for lexical verbs in the third person singular only, which have no -s inflection. For example:

They asked that he be accompanied.

They asked that he come with a bodyguard.

See further under **mandative subjunctive**.

indirect condition

See under **IF**.

indirect object

See under **object**.

indirect question

Questions reported in ordinary discourse may be quoted so as to show that they are verbatim formulations of what was actually said:

John asked his sister “Would you like me to call you a taxi?”

Or less directly, as in:

John asked his sister if she would like him to call a taxi.

The first (= **direct question**) is set off with quotation marks and a final question mark. The directness is also expressed by means of the typical **interrogative** word order, with the subject following the modal verb. The use of the first and second person pronouns (“you”, “me”) are further indicators of the direct question. In the second version, reported as an **indirect question**, the pronouns are all in the third person (“her”, “him”), and the question is reported as a complement clause introduced by **subordinator** “if”. It is expressed in the normal **declarative** word order, with subject preceding the verb (see further under **declarative**; and **clause**, section 2). Apart from *IF*, indirect questions can be prefaced by any of the **wh-words**: *what, when, where, which, who, whom, whose, how*. Of those, *what, which, who, and whom* can be both subordinators and pronouns in indirect questions. See further under **WHAT**, section 2.

Note that in modern grammars the **indirect question** is termed the **dependent wh-interrogative** (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999) or the **subordinate interrogative** (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

indirect speech

See under **direct and indirect speech**.

inferable

In the analysis of discourse structure and cohesion, this term refers to information which is not made explicit in the preceding text, but easily *inferred* from it. See further under **given and new**.

infinitive

This is the base form of a lexical verb or primary auxiliary, which may or may not be prefaced by *TO* in actual clauses: compare *I will go* with *I aim to go*. As those two examples show, the **bare infinitive** is used with modal verbs, and the **TO-infinitive** typically with catenative and semi-auxiliary verbs (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 4).

The *TO*-form is also found when the **infinitive** is used as the subject of a clause, as in;

To err is human, to forgive divine.

Note that the *TO*-infinitive is often used to refer to the infinitive in grammars and in dictionary definitions, so as to distinguish it from other uses of the base form.

inflection

These are the suffixes associated with particular grammatical word classes such as nouns and verbs, which express the properties of the class, e.g. the plurality (of nouns) or pastness (of verbs). In English the default plural **inflection** for nouns is *-s*, and for the past forms of regular verbs it is *-ed*. See further under **noun**, section 3; **verb**, section 4; **suffix**; and **derivational affix**.

- For the inflections associated with the comparison of adjectives, see **adjective**, section 3.

inflectional affix

See under **inflection** and **derivational affix**.

inflectional morphology

See **morphology**, section 3.

information focus

- 1 information delivery via clause structure
 - 2 mobilizing adverbs
 - 3 topicalizing of nonfinite clauses
 - 4 fronting of the clausal object
 - 5 clefting and left dislocation
 - 6 focusing adverbs
-

1 Information delivery via clause structure

The projection and delivery of information intersects with the grammar of the clause. The two coincide naturally when the subject of the clause is the default focus of the sentence, as in the regular patterns of the declarative clause: SVO/SVA/SVC (see further under **clause**, section 1). But there are grammatical mechanisms for varying the standard order, to shift items other than the subject into the spotlight at the start of a sentence (i.e. initial position). One well-known method is to turn an active sentence into the passive:

A golf ball broke the car window. > The car window was broken by a golf ball.

In the passivized version, the primary focus of the sentence is the “car window,” not the “golf ball” (see further under **voice (1)**, section 2).

The following sections detail various ways of altering the standard order of sentence constituents and especially the **fronting** of a constituent so as to adjust the sentence focus and enhance **information delivery**. Note that the final constituent in a clause/sentence also bears some **end weight**. This is a factor in **dative shift**, which adds positional weight to the object by making it the final constituent of the clause. Compare:

They gave flowers to the conductor.

They gave the conductor flowers.

With the forward movement of the indirect object, the direct object “flowers” gains emphasis by coming after it and completing the clause. See further under **dative shift** and **end weight**.

2 Mobilizing adverbs

Adverbs are the most mobile elements of the clause, except when they are obligatory constituents in SVA clauses. Otherwise they can be moved forwards or back in the sentence according to information delivery needs. Adverbs of time (*yesterday, tomorrow*) are often fronted to foreground clear time reference points in a text; likewise attitudinal adverbs (also known as “sentence adverbs”) such as *fortunately, regrettably* can be moved to the start of the sentence, so that it is read in their light. The ability of modal adverbs such as *possibly, definitely* to appear early in the sentence helps to establish the relative certainty of the proposition sooner than in the modal verb itself.

Apart from those options the standard declarative clause order of S followed by V is often reversed in the presence of particular adverbs, such as locative and negative adverbs: *Never had they seen it before*. This happens especially with a pronoun as subject, which does not add information, and so the fronted adverb contributes more to the fabric of information: see further under **inversion**, section 2.

3 Topicalizing of nonfinite clauses

Like adverbials, **nonfinite clauses** can be moved to initial position in declarative sentences, as a prominent way of packaging information or signaling a change of perspective in the ongoing text. For example:

This chapter discusses the results of the experiment. With the conclusions summarized, the final chapter moves on to future lines of research.

See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**.

4 **Fronting of the clausal object**

In less formal discourse, the object of the clause can be moved forward into initial position in the clause, especially as a way of foregrounding a subject for discussion: *Computer games he finds irresistible*. For the fronting of other clausal elements, see under **fronting**.

5 **Clefting and left dislocation**

The standard SVO/A/C order is easily manipulated through clefting, especially the use of *IT-clefts*, as illustrated in:

She brought those pot plants with her.

compared with

It was those pot plants she brought with her.

In the second **clefted** example, the clausal object is moved ahead of the other constituents. The same is achieved by extraposition of the object in **left dislocation**:

Those pot plants, they took them camping.

See further under **IT-cleft sentence** and **dislocation**.

6 **Focusing adverbs**

Focusing adverbs like *also, even, only* can be deployed at various points in a sentence, so as to draw a neighboring word, especially the following word, into the spotlight.

The captain would also invite the sailors' wives to the ship.

They could even show their wives round the ship.

They could only bring their wives to the ship.

Apart from the inherent semantics of these adverbs (adjusting the scope of the following verb and its predicate), they all add emphasis to the verb in mid-sentence (Taglicht 1984). This allows a non-initial item in the sentence to be picked out as potential topic for the ongoing text.

-ing form

- 1 **verbal suffix for present participle and adjective**
 - 2 **nominal suffix for verbal noun**
 - 3 **verbal–nominal scale**
 - 4 **nomenclature for -ing forms**
-

1 **Verbal suffix for present participle and adjective**

The **-ing form** as a verbal suffix makes the so-called “present” participle, as in:

they are coming we were going he was being driven

It provides **-ing participles** for all English verbs except modals (see under **verb**, section 4). It combines with the verb *BE* to express the continuous

(progressive) aspect (see further under **progressive aspect**). The *-ing* verbal suffix is a relatively recent feature of English grammar. In Middle English it steadily replaced the earlier *-and* suffix which was used for the present participle of Old English verbs.

The **-ing form** is generally active in meaning, though it is also seen and heard to express the *mediopassive*, as in:

This hotel is renovating.

See further under **voice (1)**, section 3. Note also that the *-ing* participle when used as an adjective seems to distance itself from the most active sense of the verb. Compare:

He was charming her with his talk.

His manner with others was not so charming.

There is thus a kind of verb–adjective cline, like that of the verbal–nominal scale: see below, section 3.

2 Nominal suffix for verbal noun

The **-ing form** as a nominal suffix has an even longer history: it has been used from Old English on to derive verbal nouns as in:

Her coming was anticipated.

Going to bed early was what he never did.

The second example shows how the *-ing* suffix creates an English equivalent to the Latin *gerund* which can take its own arguments (see further under **gerund**).

3 Verbal–nominal scale

Verbal and nominal uses of the **-ing suffix** can be plotted on a verbal–nominal scale, in line with their syntactic roles and the types of dependencies they take. The following examples show the gradience of *-ing*, from clearly verbal use as the participle in the first sentence, to conventional noun phrase use in the fourth sentence, where it is postmodified by an *OF*-phrase:

I was painting the veranda when they came home.

They were enthusiastic about me painting the veranda.

They were enthusiastic about my painting the veranda.

My painting of the veranda raised some cheers.

While the syntax of the **-ing forms** in the first and fourth sentences is clear, those in the second and third sentences show how close the two can come to each other, especially in postverbal position or as the predicate of the clause. Heated debate from C18 on, about whether this “fused participle” should be preceded by a pronoun or a determiner, shows that the coincidence of the two *-ing* forms in English grammar is far from new, though its full syntactic implications have been recognized only quite recently (Quirk et al. 1985). But whether the verbal and nominal forms should be treated as two separate morphemes, or as a single, multifunctional structure, is the theoretical question, and the nomenclature still presents challenges (see next section).

4 **Nomenclature for -ing forms**

The term **-ing form** does not indicate its role in syntax, or where on the verbal–nominal scale any particular instance sits. This is in fact desirable for indeterminate cases, e.g. *I hate singing*. There applying the term **-ing form** allows the structure to be referred to without prejudice, and the formal coincidence between the two underlying forms to be acknowledged. But elsewhere a functional label is really needed for the **-ing form** and the syntactic structures it constructs (participial clause vs. noun phrase). Using the term **-ing participle** for the **-ing form** in the second sentence in the set in section 3, and **gerund** for the verbal noun in the third sentence helps to specify their respective places towards the verbal and nominal ends of the scale respectively. It rationalizes the use of the double-barreled term **gerund-participle** (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), which does at least highlight the ambivalence of the **-ing form** on the verbal–nominal scale. For more on the syntactic and semantic issues inherent in their construction: see under **gerund-participle**, section 3.

initialism

See under **acronym**.

insert

See under **interjection**.

instrumental case

See under **case**, section 1.

integrated relative clause

See **relative clause**, section 3.

intensifier and downtoner

Both **intensifiers** and **downtoners** are adverbs which modify other adverbs or adjectives and function as **subjuncts** to them. Many are adverbs of degree or extent (see under **adverb**, sections 2 and 3).

Intensifiers operate in two ways, either to amplify the characteristic expressed by the adverb/adjective, or to emphasize its aptness (Quirk et al. 1985). The **amplifier** type can be subdivided into **boosters** like *very*, illustrated in *very keen*, which push things further up the notional scale; and **maximizers** like *totally*, as in *totally supportive*, which put them at the extreme end. Meanwhile the **emphasizers** simply underscore the speaker's/writer's conviction about the adjective or adverb selected, as in *really keen*, *definitely ready*.

Downtoners can be similarly distinguished as either **diminishers** or **hedges**. The diminishers include **minimizers** which push the reference characteristic down to the bottom of the scale, as in *hardly present*, others simply put it lower down, as in *partly developed*. Hedges may be expressed through **compromisers**:

rather good, somewhat supportive, or by means of **approximators** as in *almost full, nearly ready*. The latter all suggest that the adjective or adverb which they modify is not entirely apt.

While amplifiers and diminishers adjust the referential content of the message, emphasizees and hedges work in the interpersonal dimension of discourse. See further under **metafunction of language**.

intensive verb

See under **copular verb**.

interjection

This is one of the word classes inherited from classical grammar, though they were on the margins of English grammar until the later C20. Until then **interjections** were loosely defined as emotional ejaculations, usually illustrated by monosyllables such as:

ah oh ouch phew ugh uhuh wow

Uttered in isolation, they do not combine to form syntactic units, and do not express any propositional content. They are of course much more strongly associated with spoken than written discourse.

More recently and with increasing interest in the grammar of speech, the word class of **interjections** was expanded by Quirk et al. (1985) to include the wide variety of formulaic utterances used in initiating and maintaining everyday discourse, for example:

- reaction signals, e.g. *yes, no, thanks, sure, quite, mm, mhm, oh, uhuh*
- expletives, e.g. *bugger, damn, gosh, good heavens, geez, shit*
- greetings and farewells, e.g. *cheers, good morning, hi, hello, goodbye*

All these are included under the updated term **inserts** by Biber et al. (1999), as well as **discourse markers** such as *well, right, okay*. Some inserts are preferred in particular regional varieties of English, e.g. *sure* in American English, and *quite* in British English. Expletives are included in the general class of interjections by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), without commenting on the other types of insert listed above. But clearly the interjection word class is being substantially enlarged in ongoing analysis of English discourse. See further under **word class**, section 2.

interpersonal function

See under **metafunction of language**.

interrogative

The **interrogative** is one of the types of *mood* identified by traditional grammarians in English syntax. It is the default pattern for clauses that formulate *questions*, as in:

How are you doing?

Do you like sugar with your coffee?

In interrogative syntax, the default clausal order of statements (subject followed by verb) is reversed, so that the verb, or rather the *operator* of the VP comes first, and is followed by the subject (see **clause**, section 2). Note the insertion of the support verb *DO* in the second sentence above, used to formulate the interrogative when no other auxiliary/modal is used. See further under **operator**.

Note that sentences formed with **interrogative** syntax are not necessarily questions. In some cases their function is that of a statement, for example:

Haven't we all heard that before?

In others, the interrogative may function as a directive or polite command:

Why don't you take a seat?

In yet others, as an exclamation:

Wasn't she great!

As the examples show, the final question mark may be varied when the function of a sentence formed with the interrogative is something other than a question. See further under **question**, section 1; and **question mark**.

interrogative adverb

The **interrogative adverbs** (*when, where, why, how*) are used to introduce both direct and indirect questions:

When will they be here? I asked when they would be here.

How does she know that? He questioned how she knew that.

The interrogative adverbs are identical with those used as **subordinators** in adverbial clauses and **complementizers** in noun clauses:

They'll be here when they are ready. (subordinator)

Only she knew how the key came to be there. (complementizer)

See further under **adverbial clause**, section 1; and **complement clause**, section 1.

Interrogative adverbs are part of the larger set of **wh-words**, along with the **interrogative pronouns**: see further under **wh-word**.

interrogative pronoun

The **interrogative pronouns** (*WHO, WHICH, WHAT, WHOM, WHOSE*) serve to introduce either direct or indirect questions:

Which is their house? The delivery man asked which was their house.

What is he doing there? They inquired what he was doing there.

For the changed order of words in the second pair, see **indirect question**.

WHICH and *WHAT* are neutral in terms of case (can be either nominative or accusative) and usually refer to inanimates. The others are used to refer to humans and are case-specific: *WHO* is nominative, *WHOM* is accusative, *WHOSE* is genitive (see further under **case**).

Note that *WHICH, WHAT, and WHOSE* also function as **determiners**, as in:

Which/what/whose car will they be coming in?

See further under **determiner**, section 3.

The **interrogative pronouns** are identical with the **relativizers** used to introduce relative clauses and **complementizers** in complement clauses:

The house which is on the corner is theirs. (relativizer)

I wondered what he was doing there. (complementizer)

- ▶ For more on relativizers, see under **relative pronoun**, sections 2, 3, and 5.
- ▶ For complementizers, see under **complementizer**.

Interrogative pronouns are part of the set of **wh-words**, along with the **interrogative adverbs**: see further under **wh-word**.

intransitive preposition

The notion of **intransitive prepositions**, i.e. prepositions appearing without any complement (noun phrase or otherwise), is flagged by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) in their reclassification of most subordinating conjunctions as prepositions. See further under **preposition**, section 4.

intransitive verb

See under **transitivity**, section 1.

intrinsic modality

See under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

invariant tag

See under **question**, section 4.

inversion

- 1 subject–verb inversion in direct questions
 - 2 inversion following fronted adverb
 - 3 inversion in hypothetical conditions
 - 4 subject–verb inversion with quotation
-

1 Subject–verb inversion in direct questions

The most common and familiar kind of **inversion** in English grammar is the switching of the clausal subject and verb in direct questions:

Are you coming with us?

How does this bell work?

See further under **clause**, section 2.

2 Inversion following fronted adverb

Inversion is not uncommon in indicative sentences when particular kinds of adverbial adjunct are moved forward into initial position in the sentence. For example:

- negative or restrictive (“near negative”) adverbs

Never could they accept the challenge.

Hardly had she arrived than she started to make demands.

- comparative adverbs and adjectives

*So keenly did the children miss their parents, they cried themselves to sleep.
Such was their sadness, they could never enjoy going out.*

- locative and temporal adverbs

*Here comes the bus.
Now is the hour when we must say goodbye.*

- prepositional phrases

*Down the road came the person we were waiting for.
On the wall hung a large notice saying "closed for renovations."*

Note that the first two types of inversion (with negative and comparative adverbs) both have auxiliaries or modals as operators of the clause, and could not be phrased with a simple lexical verb. Their ***inverted subjects*** can be either personal pronouns or complex NPs. The third and fourth types are phrased with a simple verb, and with a complex NP – not a personal pronoun.

3 **Inversion in hypothetical conditions**

Subject–verb inversion at the start of a clause is found with some auxiliary and modal verbs as a way of formulating a hypothetical condition:

*Had we known then that she had another job, we would never have appointed her.
Were I younger, I would be there like a shot.
We'll come and visit you in Brussels, should the tour finish early.*

Note that this type of **inversion** associated with conditional clauses goes with special forms of the verb: the remote past perfect, the **WERE**-subjunctive, and the modal **SHOULD** meaning "(if it) happens that ...". See further under **IF** and **hypothetical**.

4 **Subject–verb inversion with quotation**

Inversion of subject and verb is quite common in news reporting and narratives that contain verbatim material, especially following a quotation:

"The unrest is spreading through the country" writes our Jakarta correspondent.

In research associated with the *Longman Grammar* (1999), this type of inversion (VS) was strongly preferred over SV in news reporting.

irregular verb

- 1 irregular and regular verbs
- 2 verbs with the same form for past and present
- 3 verbs that simply use *-t* for the past
- 4 verbs that change only the stem vowel for the past
- 5 verbs that change the stem vowel and add *t* or *d* for the past
- 6 verbs that change the stem vowel and one or more consonants before adding *t*
- 7 verbs with a changed vowel for past tense, but the same for present tense and past participle
- 8 verbs with different vowels, for the present, past tense, and past participle

- 9 verbs with three different stem vowels, plus *-(e)n* for the past participle
- 10 verbs using combinations of vowel changes and orthographic adjustments, plus *-en*, to distinguish present, past tense, and past participle
- 11 verbs using suppletion for their past forms
- 12 unstable irregular verbs
- 13 irregularization of regular verbs

1 Irregular and regular verbs

The **irregular verbs** (also known as *strong verbs*) are a relatively small subset in modern English, less than 20% of the more than 300 which were used in Old English (Fries 1940). The core members show changes to the stem vowel to express the past tense and past participle, as in *swim/swam/swum*, though many also mark the past by the addition of *t* to the stem, or using it to replace a final *d*. They can be negatively defined as not manifesting the characteristic *-(e)d* inflection used to mark the past tense and participle of **regular verbs** (also known as *weak verbs*), for example *define(d)*, *want(ed)*.

The categories of irregular and regular verbs do not include the **auxiliary** and **modal verbs** of English, which are also rather irregular, especially the verb *BE*, with its amalgam of different forms (see section 11 below). Both *HAVE* and *DO* behave somewhat like regular verbs in adding *d* for the past tense, but *HAVE* also shows changes to the stem consonant (loss of *v*), and *DO* a radical change to the stem vowel, neither of which is matched in other regular or irregular verbs. The modal verbs all have unique histories, and their “past” forms now represent the past tense only very occasionally: see further under **modality and modal verb**.

The **irregular verbs** are grouped below according to the number and types of changes they make to form their past tense and past participle, from those which make no change at all, to those which make multiple adjustments. Note that the classifications are based on the **orthographic** forms of the verb (i.e. spelling), rather than invoking their phonological form (i.e. sound), as in Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002). So *read* and *lead* are assigned below to different groups because the first is spelled the same way for present and past tense (despite their different pronunciations), whereas *lead* uses different spelling and pronunciation (see sections 2 and 4 respectively). The doubling of a consonant, the loss of a final orthographic (“silent”) *e*, or the alteration of a vowel from two letters to one are all used below as classificatory features. They are the points of differentiation in writing.

2 Verbs with the same form for past and present

These have monosyllabic stems ending in *t* or *d*, some with preceding *s* and/or *r*. For example:

<i>burst</i>	<i>cast</i>	<i>cut</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hurt</i>	<i>let</i>	<i>put</i>
<i>quit</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>rid</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>shed</i>	<i>shut</i>	<i>slit</i>
<i>split</i>	<i>spread</i>	<i>thrust</i>				

In some cases, the past forms vary with the meaning of the stem. Thus *bid* belongs with the set above when it means “declare” (a wager); cf. *bid* “utter” (a greeting), whose past forms are *bade/bidden* (see section 10 below). When *cost* means “be the price of” it has no distinct past forms; but it takes the regular past inflection (*costed*) when it means “estimate the value of.”

The verb *beat* belongs here with its identical past tense, and its informal past participle (also *beat*). In standard writing however, the past participle is *beaten*.

3 **Verbs that simply use -t for the past**

These are monosyllabic stems ending in *-nd* or *-ld*, where the *-d* is replaced:

bend build lend rend send spend

Other similar verbs which simply add *t* to the stem without changing their spelling are *deal*, *mean*.

Note also that a number of regular verbs ending in *-m*, *-l*, *-m*, *-n*, or *-p* can take *t* for their past forms, including:

burn dream lean leap learn spoil

While the regular *-ed* spellings are used more generally in North America, in Britain they are often used for the past tense and *-t* for the past participle. In Australia and New Zealand where *-t* varies with *-ed* for the past tense (Peters 2009a), some associate the *-t* with transitive verbs and the *-ed* with intransitive ones (see further under **-ed**). Compare the *dwelt* group discussed below in section 5.

4 **Verbs that change only the stem vowel for the past**

These monosyllabic verbs with a variety of stem vowels simply change it to mark their past forms:

bleed, breed, feed, lead, meet, speed (ee/ea > e)
bind, fight, find, grind, wind (i > ou)
cling, dig, fling, sling, slink, spin, stick, sting, string, wring (i > u)

Special cases are *win* (i > o), *shoot* (oo > o), *sit* (i > a), *hold* (o > e), *hang* (a > u), which are all one-off examples with the same vowel change for both past forms. Note also *come*, *run*, which present a vowel change for the past tense, but revert to the present tense vowel for their past participles.

5 **Verbs that change the stem vowel and add t or d for the past**

A smallish group of verbs change not only the stem vowel but add *t* as well for their past forms:

creep, feel, keep, kneel, sleep, sweep, weep (ee > e)

Two special cases are *sell* and *tell*, which change the vowel (e > o), reduce double to single *l*, and add *d*.

Another related set of verbs make no change to the stem vowel but do reduce a double consonant (*ll*) to single and add *t*. They include:

dwelt smell spell spill

The use of *-t* with such verbs is more common in Australia and New Zealand, and to a lesser extent in Britain; whereas the regular *-ed* prevails in North America (Peters 2004). Compare the *burn* group in section 3 above.

6 Verbs that change the stem vowel and one or more consonants before adding *t*

This group of verbs show the most substantial changes to the stem of all the irregular verbs:

bring > *brought* *buy* > *bought* *catch* > *caught* *leave* > *left*
seek > *sought* *teach* > *taught* *think* > *thought*

Others showing major changes to the stem but no additional *t* are:

stand > *stood* *strike* > *struck*

Both were strong verbs in Old English, having an *-en* inflection for the past participle in Middle English.

7 Verbs with a changed vowel for past tense, but the same for present tense and past participle

This very small group includes

blow, grow, know, throw (*o* > *e* > *o*)

Others showing similar vowel changes as well as the *-(e)n* suffix are *draw* (*drew/drawn*); *eat* (*ate/eaten*); *fall* (*fell/fallen*); *see* (*saw/seen*).

A one-off case to add here is *fly* (*flew/ flown*), whose idiosyncratic stems reflect the verb's rather variable forms in the earlier history of English.

8 Verbs with different vowels, for the present, past tense, and past participle

This group still shows the historical *strong verb* vowel declination from present to past to past participle:

begin, drink, ring, shrink, sing, sink, spring, stink, swim (*i* > *a* > *u*)

Most of these also show signs of reverting to a two-way vowel contrast (*i* > *u*), which can be seen in more informal writing and transcribed speech (Peters 2009b). They manifest the reduced vowel contrasts of verbs like *cling, fling*, etc. (see above section 4). It is one of the few irregular verb groups which has attracted new members in modern English, e.g. *sneak* > *snuck*, distinguished by the fact that their stems typically end in a velar nasal consonant.

9 Verbs with three different stem vowels, plus *-(e)n* for the past participle

This group includes

break, freeze, speak, steal, weave (*ea* > *o* > *o*)
bear, swear, tear, wear (*ea* > *o* > *o*)

Note that for *bear* the past participle is *borne*. Further members of this set are *forget* and *get*, which change the stem vowel (*e* > *o*) for the past forms, and add *-en* for the past participle, at least in *forgotten*, less universally for *got* (see **GET: get, got, gotten**).

10 **Verbs using combinations of vowel changes and orthographic adjustments, plus *-en* to distinguish present, past tense, and past participle**

A small group have three contrasting stems, by virtue of different vowel–consonant combinations. Some involve doubling of the stem-final consonant, contrasting with dropping of the orthographic *e* of the stem:

drive, ride, rise, stride, strive, write (i > o > i)

Similar cases are *bite* (*bit/bitten*) and *hide* (*hid/hidden*), where the consonantal and other orthographic contrasts involving *e* are the key to the different forms.

A further trio of verbs to be grouped here are *bid* (*bade/bidden*), *give* (*gave/given*), *forgive* (*forgave/forgiven*), where the spelling of the present tense and past participle stems differs by virtue of the doubled consonant, or presence/absence of orthographic *e*. Note also the subset:

awake, forsake, shake, take, wake (a > o/oo > a)

where the *-en* is the key contrast between present tense and past participle stems.

A one-off case involving other kinds of orthographic variation for the three contrasting stems is *lie* (*lay/lain*). Compare the **regular verb** (*lay/laid*) with which it is often confused: see **LAY and LIE**.

11 **Verbs using suppletion for their past forms**

Two outstanding examples of this borrowing from other verbs are:

- the verb *go*: this was a “weak” verb in Old English, which in Middle English replaced its regular past tense/participle with *went*, the earlier past form of the verb *wend* “make (one’s way)”
- the auxiliary verb *BE*: the standard modern English paradigm involves suppletion from the stems of multiple dialectal variants, including those with an initial /b/ in *be, being, been*; with an initial /w/ in *was, were*; contrasting with the initial vowel of the present forms in *am, is*, and possibly *are*. See further under **BE**.

12 **Unstable irregular verbs**

As part of the historical erosion of the irregular verb system, some of those surviving show signs of reversion to the regular verb paradigm in allowing alternative past tense forms with *-ed*. They include:

<i>light</i> (<i>lit</i>)	now often	<i>lighted</i>
<i>shear</i> (<i>shore/shorn</i>)	now often	<i>sheared</i>
<i>shine</i> (<i>shone</i>)	now often	<i>shined</i>
<i>shoe</i> (<i>shod</i>)	now often	<i>shoed</i>
<i>speed</i> (<i>sped</i>)	now often	<i>speeded</i>
<i>strive</i> (<i>strove/striven</i>)	now often	<i>strived</i>
<i>weave</i> (<i>wove/woven</i>)	now often	<i>weaved</i>

In some cases the regular past form has a slightly different meaning from the irregular one(s). Note that some verbs show regularization of the past tense

but not the past participle. For example *hew*, *mow*, which have long since acquired a regular past tense with *-ed*, but their *-n* past participles are still widely used, at least in British English (Peters 2004).

13 Irregularization of regular verbs

In counterpoint to the general trend towards regularization of **irregular verbs**, there are a few remarkable cases even in modern English where regular verbs have been endowed with irregular parts. One example is *thrive*, historically a regular verb which in early modern English became associated with irregular verbs such as *strive* (see section 10 above). Its irregular parts *throve*/*thriven* are all but obsolete now. Other examples are the verb *hang*, whose regular past form is still around in judicial use: *hanged by the neck*; and the past participles *sewn* and *sawn* (Peters 2009b).

- ▶ For the variable aspects of *regular verbs*, see under **regular verb**, section 3.

IT and ITS

- 1 *IT* as the neuter third person singular pronoun
- 2 nonreferential uses of *IT*
- 3 *ITS* as the possessive determiner and pronoun

1 *IT* as the neuter third person singular pronoun

This is the youngest pronoun in the English personal pronoun system, dating only from C16. It is used to refer to things inanimate or abstract, and to persons and animals whose gender is unknown or not salient in the context. It has the same form for all cases: nominative, accusative, and dative.

The ball glanced off the wall ...

It bounced back on the grass. (nominative – subject)

The dog chased it. (accusative – direct object)

The children gave it the ball. (dative – indirect object)

The examples also show how “it” can be applied to an inanimate referent (“ball”), as in the second pair of sentences, and to an animate but nongenderized reference (“dog”). Using “it” for the dog suggests that the speaker/writer has no personal relationship with it. Were it the family pet, a genderized pronoun (*HIM/HER*) might well have been selected. The same animate yet nongenderized use of *IT* can be seen when applied to corporate nouns, such as *army*, *clergy*, *committee*, *government*, etc. The alternative would be to use *THEY* as if referring to the people who make up those organizations (a solution not favored by the traditional grammarian), because it represents notional rather than formal agreement: see further under **agreement**, section 2.

With all these referential and nonreferential uses (see next section), *IT* is the most common of the three third person pronouns (singular or plural) in conversation, and outnumbers all other pronouns in academic writing (Biber et al. 1999).

2 Nonreferential uses of *IT*

Apart from its referential uses, the pronoun *IT* has several syntactic roles as a slot-holder in certain types of clause and sentence:

- empty subject of simple clause, as in:

It's raining.

It's 8 am.

It's the New York plane.

This is **prop-IT** (Quirk et al. 1985), which provides the **dummy subject** needed to turn the observations about time, distance, ambient events, etc. into predications. It is not a grammatical **participant** in the process (see further under **participant**) and does not count as an argument of the verb. See further under **valency**, section 3.

- empty object, as in:

footing it out to the finishing line

toughing it out

he made it ("managed to get there")

IT here provides a generic object to the verb, but is nonreferential. Again it does not count as an argument of the verb.

- anticipatory subject of an extraposed content clause (finite or nonfinite), for example:

It was agreed that there would be monthly meetings.

It would be nice to go to the airport with them.

This use of *IT* is deliberately impersonal and athematic, as it looks forward to the following **complement clause** (see further under **complement clause**, section 3). *IT* is then **cataphoric**, whereas the ordinary referential pronoun is normally anaphoric. See further under **anaphora**.

- focusing subject of a cleft construction, for example:

It was yesterday that we met for the first time.

IT here takes as its complement an item extracted from the following clause, putting the spotlight on it. See further under **IT-cleft sentence**.

All these nonreferential uses of *IT* as the subject of the clause mean that it is easily overused as a sentence opener in expository prose. This is doubly unsatisfactory, because of the repetitious pattern it creates, and because it is an empty **theme** or **topic** in terms of the information structure of sentences. See further under **theme**, section 2; and **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3.

3 *ITS* as the possessive determiner and pronoun

ITS is the possessive determiner and pronoun for *IT*, used for inanimate and nongenderized animate references:

The letter was on its way before Christmas.

The dog ran beside the bicycle of its owner.

The company kept all its records online.

For more on the grammar of *ITS*, see **possessive pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 3.

- Note that *ITS* has been spelled without an apostrophe since the early C19. See further under **ITS or IT'S**.

IT-cleft sentence

This is a type of **clefting** in which one or other of the noun phrases (subject or object) of a simple clause is extracted to be the focus of a fronted subordinate clause, as in:

It's cream cheese that makes it a rich cake.

Cf. *Cream cheese makes it a rich cake.*

It's cream cheese that you need for the recipe.

Cf. *You need cream cheese for the recipe.*

IT-clefts are the most widespread form of clefting, used in conversation and fiction writing as well as academic prose, according to *Longman Grammar (1999)* research. This makes them stylistically neutral. Compare **pseudo-cleft sentence**, section 3.

The **IT-cleft sentence** deviates from the conventional **topic–comment** order of information by “predicating” the topic (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), as in the first example above. In both examples the dummy subject *IT* is inserted into the usually significant first information slot to highlight the constituent which otherwise loses salience as the given item, or the object of the sentence. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, sections 1 and 2; and **IT and ITS**, section 2.

ITS or IT'S

ITS is the singular third person neuter possessive pronoun/determiner, used primarily for inanimates, as in:

It comes with its own battery.

For the grammar of *ITS*, see further under **personal pronoun**, section 4; and **determiner**, section 3. For the contextual meanings of *ITS*, see further under **IT and ITS**.

IT'S is a contraction of *it is*, as in: *It's no secret*. See further under **contraction (1)**.

ITS and *IT'S* are easily substituted for each other – most often *IT'S* appears instead of *ITS*. The explanation usually given for adding the apostrophe is that possessive nouns in the singular are marked that way, although none of the other possessive pronouns has an apostrophe: compare *HERS*, *OURS*, *THEIRS*, *YOURS*. Admittedly they function only as **independent pronouns**, whereas *ITS* is both a determiner and an independent pronoun (see further under **pronoun**, section 4).

IT'S was in quite often used instead of *ITS* for the possessive of *IT* in C18 and up to about 1815, according to the *Oxford Dictionary (1989)*. Before then, the contraction for *it is* was not *IT'S* but rather *'tis*, so there was no grammatical ambiguity if the determiner was endowed with an apostrophe.

J, K

joint coordination

See **coordination**, section 3.

jussive

This term was used in traditional grammar for various types of clause that function as commands. It included **imperatives** expressed in the canonical syntactic form (*Consider this*) with an implied second person addressee, as well as certain types of command expressed in the first and third person:

- **LET-imperative** (first person) as in *Let's go*.
- the **third-person imperative**, as in *Everybody listen*.
- stock expressions in the **subjunctive** such as *Heaven help us! Praise be!*

Some grammarians treat the jussive as a type of **mood** distinct from the imperative and subjunctive, thus reserving it for the **LET-imperative**.

See further under **imperative**; **LET-imperative**; **subjunctive**, section 1; and **mood**.

kernel

This term, used in transformational–generative grammar, identifies the essential declarative clause or sentence. The **kernel sentence** is syntactically complete in that all the obligatory constituents are present. It is also the most basic form, in that none of its components have been moved, deleted, added, or transformed by optional rules to turn it into the interrogative, negative, passive, etc. Thus:

Buses replace trains on Sunday.

is the kernel for

Trains are replaced by buses on Sunday.

Do buses replace trains on Sunday?

Compare **deep structure**.

L

LAY and LIE

Two regular verbs and one irregular verb coincide with these forms:

- 1 **LAY** – meaning to “set down,” or “spread out on a surface,” as in:

Wagtails lay three to four eggs a year.

Could you lay those paint covers over the furniture?

LAY is a regular verb, whose past tense is *laid*. The orthographic variation ($y > i$) distracts from its otherwise regular form (see **regular verb**, section 3). It is a transitive verb, requiring an object as shown in the examples.

- 2 **LIE (i)** – meaning to “to be horizontal on a surface,” as in:

Snow lies over the whole town

The children lie down after lunch on camp beds.

The past forms of **LIE** are irregular, with *lay* as the past tense and *lain* as the past participle:

Snow lay everywhere after the heavy fall.

The children had lain on camp beds.

These past forms are unique, and *lain* relatively rare: see further under **irregular verb**, section 10. Note that the verb **LIE** is intransitive, but requires an adverbial adjunct; see **clause**, section 1.

- 3 **LIE (ii)** – meaning “tell untruths,” as in:

Young children do not lie without reason.

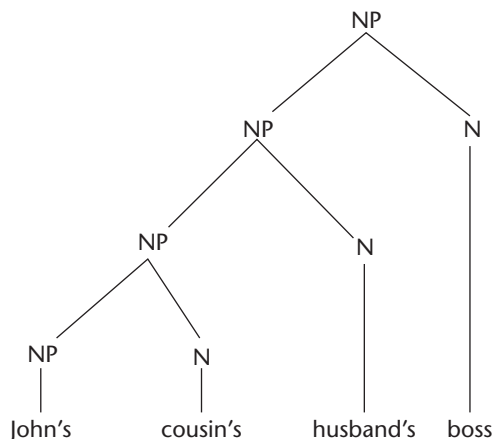
LIE in this sense is a regular verb, and its past tense and past participle are *lied*. It is intransitive.

left dislocation

See under **dislocation**.

left-branching

This refers to a pattern of repeated premodification in syntactic structure for a given constituent, to the left of the head. In English grammar this can be found in the NP structure associated with the ‘s genitive, as in:



For the application of the term **left-branching** to the structure of complex sentences, see next entry.

left- and right-branching sentences

Complex English sentences may be constructed so that they start with one or more subordinate clauses before articulating the main clause, as underlined in:

If you have any problems with the computer when you log on or try to connect to the internet, just let me know.

English literary stylists constructed much longer left-branching sentences with many more subordinate clauses to delay the final main clause. These were modeled on the **periodic sentence** of classical rhetoricians, and felt to be the height of elegance. The following example comes from Samuel Johnson's Preface to his *Dictionary* (1755):

If the language of theology were extracted from Hooker and the translation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from Bacon; the phrases of policy, war, and navigation from Raleigh; the dialect of poetry and fiction from Spenser and Sidney, and the diction of common life forms from Shakespeare, few ideas would be lost to mankind for want of words in which they might be expressed.

With its set of preliminary conditional clauses, this periodic sentence provides elaborate staging for the main clause (underlined) and embedded relative clause which close the sentence. Because periodic sentences postpone the point of closure to the delayed main clause, they provide greater challenges to the reader, as cognitive research has confirmed. Compare the more easily processed **right-branching sentence**, which leads off with the main clause, and attaches subordinate clauses to it afterwards:

Just let me know if you have any problems when you log on or try to connect to the internet.

Note also **mid-branching** or **medial branching**, where a subordinate clause is embedded between two parts of the main clause:

The manager, who always kept an eye on who was in or not in, could always tell you if it was worth waiting for them.

For more on the structure of **complex sentences**, see under **sentence**, section 1.

lemma

By its origins in logic and mathematics, this term refers to a subsidiary proposition or theorem used to prove another proposition, but it has acquired extended meanings in lexicography and linguistics.

In modern lexicography, **lemma** refers first to the individual entry or headword in a dictionary, these being subsidiary items in the dictionary's macrostructure. By extension the term **lemma** comes to mean the canonical form of the word given as the headword for the entry.

Associated with each **lemma** is a set of word forms with the same **stem**, to which different inflections are added, e.g. for the lemma *think* there are *thinks*, *thinking*, *thought*. Because they belong to the lemma, the term in some contexts comes to refer to the whole set of related words. The computational process of **lemmatization** involves assembling all inflected forms together with the uninflected form. However, linguists and morphologists reserve the term **lemma** for the canonical form, and use **lexeme** for the whole set of forms related by inflection including the lemma. See further under **lexeme** and **stem**.

Note that **lemma** itself has two plural forms: the Greek *lemmata* and the English *lemmas*.

LESS

-
- 1 **LESS and LITTLE**
 - 2 **LESS vs. FEWER as determiner**
 - 3 **LESS as comparative adjective**
-

1 **LESS and LITTLE**

LESS is the regular comparative form of **LITTLE** as a determiner, pronoun, and adverb, as illustrated below:

little income/less income than five years ago (determiner)

had little to do/less to do (pronoun)

little known writer/less known writer (adverb)

These various roles are discussed further under **LITTLE**, sections 3–5.

2 **LESS vs. FEWER as determiner**

LESS is often said to be reserved for use with noncount(able) nouns, and this is in keeping with the semantics of it being the comparative of **LITTLE** (see below, section 3). Where **LESS** might otherwise occur with countable nouns, **FEWER** is used in standard and formal discourse. Compare:

These taxes mean less money in your pocket.

These taxes mean fewer dollars in your pocket.

But in practice, especially in more informal discourse (i.e. speech and unedited writing), **LESS** is found with countable as well as noncountable nouns, thus:

These taxes mean less dollars in your pocket.

While prescriptive grammarians from C18 on insisted that *FEWER* went with countable nouns, using *LESS* with them is centuries old, and in keeping with the fact that its antonym *MORE* is used with both countable and noncountable nouns.

Yet the force of the prescription is such that some writers employ *FEWER* instead of *LESS* not only when it is a determiner before a countable noun, but also when it's a pronoun followed by *THAN* and a plural noun. For example:

We received questionnaires back from fewer than 10 percent of those surveyed.

The use of *FEWER* in such cases suggests editorial intervention, where the pronoun *LESS* would be quite at home. Usage data shows that *LESS* is found seven times more often than *FEWER* as pronoun (Peters 2004).

3 **LESS as comparative adjective**

LESS also functioned in the past as a *comparative adjective*, instead of *LESSER*. It is still there in restricted collocations such as *to a greater or less extent*, and as an epithet in personal names such as *St James the Less*. But its productive role as the comparative form for *LITTLE* as adjective has been taken over by *LESSER*. See next entry.

LESSER

LESSER is the comparative form for *LITTLE* as an adjective, as in

They felt the heat to a lesser extent.

In modern English it has taken the place of *LESS* (see **LESS**, section 3; **LITTLE**, section 2). Strictly speaking *LESSER* is a *double comparative* with its *-er* suffix, and was censured by C18 grammarians on this account. But it serves to distinguish the comparative form of *LITTLE* as adjective from the comparative *LESS* as a determiner (see **LITTLE**, section 3).

In some applications the meaning of *LESSER* makes it close to being a comparative of the adjective *low* rather than *LITTLE*, as in:

He pleaded guilty to the lesser charge.

Note that *LESSER* is very occasionally used as the comparative form of *LITTLE* as adverb, in compound adjectives especially those formed with the past participle of a verb:

lesser-known thrillers of Agatha Christie

The more generally used adverb in such compound adjectives is *LESS*, as in *less well-known varieties*. See further under **LITTLE**, section 5.

LET-imperative

Several distinct types of imperative can be expressed with the English verb *LET*:

- inclusive first person *LET*, as in *Let's do it*.
- exclusive first person *LET*, as in *Let us contribute to the cost*.
- open *LET*-imperative, as in *Let them go home*.
- second person imperative, as in *Let me give you a lift*.

While the first type typically includes both speaker and listener in whatever is being proposed, in some contexts it is used asymmetrically, e.g. by the dentist saying: *Let's take a look at that tooth of yours*. Compare the “medical” use of *WE* (discussed under **WE and US**). In research reported in the *Longman Grammar* (1999), the inclusive first person **LET-imperative** occurred twice as often in American as in British conversation. The second type of *LET-imperative* involves only the speaker and his/her group, and is less informal in style than the first. The third and fourth types also contrast in their focus. The third is open or at least nonspecific in its address, whereas the fourth is directly addressed to the second person.

- ▶ For the form of the regular **imperative**, see under that heading.

lexeme

This term is used by morphologists and grammarians to refer to an abstract unit of the *lexicon*, including the set of forms associated with a single word and its meaning, i.e. the base and all inflected forms. Thus the lexeme *DO* includes *do* itself as well as *does*, *did*, *doing*, *done*. As indicated in the previous sentence, capital letters are used to indicate that the word should be taken to include all its inflected members, not just the canonical form. Compare **lemma**.

Note that the term **lexeme** is also used to refer to multiword units with a unitary meaning such as *round off* in the sense of “conclude” and any inflected forms e.g. *rounds off/rounding off/rounded off*. An alternative for the term **lexeme** used by some lexical analysts is *lexical item*.

lexical bundle

See under **collocation**, section 1.

lexical–functional grammar (LFG)

LFG, developed by Ronald Kaplan and Joan Bresnan and published (1982) in an extended article, became one of the most influential grammars of the late C20. It greatly enlarges the role of the lexicon so that it encompasses much of the work invested in syntax and syntactic rules in other contemporary grammars.

lexical morphology

This term includes the morphological analysis of complex words as well as the processes by which they are formed. In the latter application, **lexical morphology** is equivalent to *derivational morphology*. See further under **morphology**, sections 2 and 3.

lexical priming

See under **colligation**.

lexical verb

This is the term now used by many grammarians (e.g. Biber et al. 1999; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) for referring to:

- 1 the verb which combines with an auxiliary and/or modal verb in a *complex* VP, for example the verb *try* in:

will try have tried might have been trying

The nonfinite forms of the **lexical verb** vary with the accompanying auxiliaries/modals, which express the finite element of the clause (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 1). In this context a lexical verb means any verb which is not an **auxiliary** or **modal verb**, and the one which expresses the semantic content as opposed to the grammatical properties (finiteness etc.) of the VP.

2 any simple finite verb which expresses the semantic content, as in:

I try he tries we tried

Note that this then includes **lexical** uses of the auxiliary verbs *BE*, *DO*, and *HAVE*:

I am / he is / we are / he was / they were (on holiday)

I have / it has / you had (a good chance of winning)

I do / he does / they did (the breakfast on Sundays)

In examples like those, the auxiliary verbs become **lexical verbs** which express the semantic content as well as the grammatical property of finiteness (as seen in the tense selections and subject–verb agreement. See further under **BE** (as a copular verb); **DO** (as a transitive verb); and **HAVE**, section 4.

Other, older names for the **lexical verb** in both senses are **full verb** and **main verb**. Note that in their analysis of the verb phrase, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) reinterpret the role of all auxiliaries and modals as **lexical verbs** in sense 2 above. See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7.

lexicogrammar

The boundary between the grammar and lexicon is more and less sharply drawn, depending on the grammatical model. In traditional and transformational grammars, the rules of syntax and patterns of morphology that make up the grammar are treated as entirely independent of the lexicon. The grammar is the **syntagmatic** axis of language, and the lexicon the **paradigmatic** axis, also known respectively as the **horizontal** and **vertical** axes (see further under **paradigm**, section 2).

In systemic–functional grammar among others, grammar and the lexicon are treated as an integrated resource for expressing meaning (the **lexicogrammar**), with continual interplay between them. Thus in English the notion of possibility can be expressed through the grammatical system (by choosing the modal verb *MAY*), or by choosing any of a number of words from the **open classes** of the lexicon: adverbs, adjectives, or nouns. Compare

It may rain tonight.

Maybe/Perhaps it will rain tonight.

It is possible that it will rain tonight

There's the possibility of rain tonight.

The interchangeability of these different ways of expressing the same meaning show the interplay between grammar and the lexicon, and the reason for conceptualizing them together as the **lexicogrammar**. See also **grammatical metaphor**.

lexicon

This term refers to the lexical resources of a language, all the individual words and word forms, and associated grammatical properties. See further under **word**, section 3.

lexis

This is the vocabulary of a language, its words, idioms and phraseologies, as opposed to its grammar and phonology. Compare **lexicon**.

LFG

See **lexical–functional grammar**.

licensing

This term refers to the way that:

- 1 the *head* of any type of phrase has particular types of syntactic dependents attached to itself: see further under **phrase**, and **head and headedness**.
- 2 a given word may require a particular pattern of complementation. Thus verbs such as *give*, *send* will **license** two following objects, one indirect, the other direct. See further under **object**; and **valency**, section 2.

LIE

See under **LAY and LIE**.

light verb

This term was coined by Jespersen (1942) to refer to high-frequency verbs such as *DO*, *give*, *HAVE*, *make*, *take*, which have relatively little semantic content of their own but help to form multiword verb units with their NP objects. For example:

have a swim do a dance give a nudge make a move take a walk

In such constructions, the light verb functions mainly as predicator of the expression, hence their alternative name **expanded predicate verbs**. The scope of the term **light verb** varies somewhat in the hands of different researchers, but is usually confined to examples where the noun is identical with the base form of the relevant verb. By this definition, they effectively paraphrase the simple verb, so *Shall we have a swim?* is equivalent to *Shall we swim?* This definition excludes otherwise similar constructions such as *make a suggestion*, where the noun is not the base form of the equivalent verb.

The **light verbs** used in particular constructions vary somewhat within and between regional varieties of English. Thus *take a bath/look/walk* are sometimes said to be typical of American English, while *have a bath/look/walk* are British. Corpus-based research bears this out on the American preference for *take*, but British English actually makes use of both (Algeo 1995). Light verbs are often associated with informal dialogue, yet research has shown that they are also used in more formal settings such as courts and classrooms, as a way of mitigating an imperative: *Let's have a look at the evidence ...* (Smith 2009a).

LIKE

Few words play as many grammatical roles as *LIKE*. In fact it is the convergence of two morphemes, each with its own grammatical offshoots.

- *LIKE* (1) as a verb (*I like*), and the related noun found in *their likes and dislikes*
- *LIKE* (2) as an adjective (*in like circumstances*), the related noun (*the likes of him*), preposition (*she talked like her mother*), subordinator (*they don't make bread like they used to*)

For more on the use of *LIKE* as preposition, see under **preposition**, sections 1 and 2.

The use of *LIKE* as a comparative subordinator has been rather inexplicably stigmatized by prescriptive usage writers since C19 (though not by Fowler (1926)). The shadow of this correlates with the findings of corpus-based research, that it's found more often in fiction writing than nonfiction (Peters 2006). Its general currency is however underpinned by being built into multiword verbs such as *looks like*, *seems like*, *sounds like*. See further under **adverbial clause**, section 1.

Note that *LIKE* (2) is also the source of the now commonly heard discourse marker. It serves

- as a quotative device: *And he was like I'm gonna help you*
- as a focusing device: *We'll talk now – like – about the problem you raised*

See further under **discourse marker**.

line space

White space after sentence-final punctuation (full stop, question mark, quotation mark) is conventionally used to complement it before the start of the next sentence with its capital letter. This space within the line of print/writing thus combines with those other orthographic signals in marking sentence boundaries. Likewise variable amounts of line space can be used to mark off items in a list.

A different use of **line space**, i.e. a whole line of white space, is now a well-recognized punctuative device in separating one paragraph from another, as an alternative to the use of a paragraph **indent** (see further under that heading). Both spatial devices constitute an extra dimension of the punctuation repertoire in marking paragraphs rather than single sentences.

linking adverb

See **conjunct**.

linking verb

See **copular verb**.

LITTLE

- 1 *LITTLE* as adjective and paucal quantifier
- 2 gradability of *LITTLE*, and degrees of comparison
- 3 *LITTLE*, *A LITTLE* as a determiner with noncountable nouns

- 4 pronoun (*LITTLE, A LITTLE*)
 5 adverb (minimizer and time adjunct)

1 **LITTLE as adjective and paucal quantifier**

LITTLE is first and foremost an adjective referring to small size, as in *a little girl*. But it has developed multiple grammatical roles as a **paucal** quantifier, and is more or less grammaticalized as a determiner, pronoun, and adverb. Many of its uses are somewhat idiomatic, interfacing with its semantics in reference to physical size, frequency, and more abstract degrees of comparison, as discussed below.

2 **Gradability of LITTLE, and degrees of comparison**

As an adjective, *LITTLE* has only limited gradability. Its negative value can be emphasized with the aid of intensifiers as in:

We had very little time to lose.
Their suggestions were too little and too late.

Yet *LITTLE* has no regular comparative and superlative forms. Admittedly **littlest** is sometimes used for the superlative when smaller size as well as a lower degree of something are concerned, as in:

littlest angels littlest sister littlest things

The comparative form *littler* is available by analogy, though very rarely used. Both inflected forms of *LITTLE* carry a sense of improvisation and of being **hypocoristic** expressions: see further under **hypocoristic**.

With certain abstract nouns, *LITTLE* as adjective makes use of suppletive forms *LESSER* and *LEAST* to express the comparative and superlative, as in:

the lesser evil of the two the least difficulties

Here again the superlative is much more productive than the comparative form. The comparative survives mostly in fixed phrases such as *a lesser man*, and older scientific nomenclature such as the *lesser black-backed gull*, *lesser celandine*, *lesser kestrel*, *lesser panda*. See further under **suppletion and suppletive form**.

These various constraints on the use of *LITTLE* as an adjective contrast with the grammatically straightforward *small* (*smaller, smallest*), which takes its place as the adjective referring to small size in many a context.

3 **LITTLE/A LITTLE as a determiner with noncountable nouns**

LITTLE/A LITTLE combines only with noncountable nouns – unlike *LITTLE* as adjective, which is not so constrained (see section 2 above). For example:

There was little hope of finding any survivors.
They had little help from their parents.

The connotations of *LITTLE* as determiner are negative, and quite different from those of *A LITTLE*. Compare the second example above with:

They had a little help from their parents.

A *LITTLE* is relatively neutral in comparison, and focuses on quantifying the noun (= “a small amount” but without the implication that it should have been greater). Note that *LITTLE* as a determiner takes advantage of suppletive degrees of comparison: *LESS* as its comparative form, and *LEAST* as its superlative. For the noncountability of *LESS* as a determiner, see **LESS**, section 2.

4 **Pronoun (*LITTLE* and *A LITTLE*)**

Again, these differ in that *LITTLE* is negative in its connotations while *A LITTLE* is neutral:

They achieved little over the weekend

They achieved a little over the weekend.

Again *LESS* and *LEAST* provide degrees of comparison for *LITTLE* as a pronoun.

5 **Adverb (minimizer and time adjunct)**

The semantic differences between *LITTLE* and *A LITTLE* as adverbs is even more marked. *LITTLE* remains negative in its quantification, as in:

They were little interested in the program

As an adverb (subjunct), *LITTLE* is a minimizer (see under **intensifier and downtoner**). Meanwhile *A LITTLE* is an adjunct of degree/extent as well as time:

They talked a little about the result.

In both cases, the degrees of comparison (comparative and superlative) are formed with *LESS* and *LEAST*, as in *less/least interested in the result*, and *talked less/least about the result*. See further under **LESS** and **LESSER**.

logical function

This is part of the *ideational function* of language. See further under **metafunction of language**.

long hyphen

See under **dash**.

long passive

See under **passive voice**, section 2.

LOT OF, LOTS (OF), A LOT, and LOTTA

These complex determiners serve their purpose for speakers or writers who want to convey the sense of a substantial number or quantity, without being too precise about it. For example:

A lot of food was left on the table.

Lots of calls were made to the switchboard.

As the examples show, *A LOT OF/LOTS* can take either mass or count nouns as their complement, and could be substituted for each other in those two sentences. But if they were, the grammatical agreement in those sentences would remain unchanged, because both *LOTS OF* and *A LOT OF* are **number transparent**, i.e. they take their grammatical number from the following NP (see **number**

transparency). This indifference to number goes with their grammaticalization as *complex determiners*, which is most visible in the coalesced form of (A) *LOT OF* as *LOTTA*, made prominent in the titles of rock and roll songs such as “Whole lotta love.” See further under **determiner**, section 6.

As a pronoun and adverb, *A LOT* is positive in a general way, as in:

It did a lot for her self-confidence.

All the players improved a lot during the course.

This use of *A LOT* is also sometimes coalesced into one word (*alot*) by novice writers.

-ly

This suffix is attached to many English adverbs and some adjectives:

1 Adverbs formed with -ly

This suffix is the regular means of deriving adverbs from adjectives in modern English, for example:

brightly < *bright* *hopefully* < *hopeful* *evidently* < *evident*
tempestuously < *tempestuous*

As the examples show, adverbs can be formed with *-ly* from pre-existing adjectives short or long, and whether they are Germanic or Romance in origin: see further under **adverb**, section 2.

2 Adjectives ending in -ly

These adjectives are a limited set of older formations, mostly based on nouns. For example:

cowardly *friendly* *kindly* *monthly* *statesmanly* *westerly* *yearly*

This derivational pattern has not been productive in English since the early C19 (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002).

Note that adjectives ending in *-ly* resist being turned into adverbs with an extra *-ly* and repetition of the suffix. Ad hoc use of *friendlily*, *kindlily*, etc. is nevertheless sometimes heard. The alternative is to use the adjectival form as a **zero-marked adverb**: see further under **zero adverb**.

M

main clause

See under **clause**, section 4; and **sentence**, section 1.

main verb

This is a traditional grammar term for the **lexical verb** which combines with one of the auxiliary and/or modal verbs in a complex verb phrase, for example the verb underlined in the following VPs:

will run have run may be run

(See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 1.) Strictly speaking **main verb** is a functional label used to explain the complementary functions of the auxiliary/modal and lexical verb, though in practice it is most commonly applied to lexical verbs generally, whether accompanied by auxiliaries/modals or not: see further under **lexical verb**.

Note that the primary auxiliary verbs *BE*, *HAVE*, and *DO* also function as main verbs, in examples like the following:

He is a good swimmer.

She has a great voice

We do anything.

See further under **BE** (as a copular verb); **DO** (as a transitive verb); and **HAVE**, section 4.

mandative construction

This term is used by grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to a complex sentence which articulates an obligation, requirement, suggestion, recommendation, or wish. The mandative construction is licensed in the main clause by:

- a verb such as *insist*, *propose*, *stipulate*, *urge*
- a noun such as *demand*, *injunction*, *recommendation*, *request*
- an adjective such as *crucial*, *mandatory*, *necessary*, *vital*

In the subordinate clause, the verb may take the form of the **mandative subjunctive**, or a modal paraphrase, most often using *SHOULD*. See further under **mandative subjunctive**.

mandative subjunctive

This is one of the few remaining uses of the present subjunctive, still found in many varieties of English – at least outside the UK. The mandative subjunctive

can be seen in the third person singular verb, which appears in the base form, i.e. without an -s inflection, when it articulates an obligation, request, recommendation, or suggestion, as underlined in:

They have insisted that he write a formal letter of complaint.

The nurse requested that she bring photos of the family to help the patient.

Mandative subjunctives are also found in the clause following nouns that nominalize the controlling verbs just mentioned:

This was the typical Victorian insistence that she get married as soon as she could.

Certain adjectives that express requirements, recommendations, etc. impersonally can also take the mandative:

It is important that the husband accompany his wife to the hospital.

In all these mandative constructions, the verb in the subordinate clause is grammatically marked by the absence of the third person singular inflection, as well as the way it contrasts with the tensed verb of the main clause. The mandative subjunctive embodies the base or plain form of the verb, as is clearest in mandates involving the verb *BE*, used for all three persons of the verb, singular and plural:

The airline suggests that we be at the check-in two hours before departure.

She requested that they not be late this time.

As the second example shows, the negative form of the mandative subjunctive simply preposes “not” before the verb.

The use of the **mandative subjunctive** was actively discouraged by Fowler (1926), and its usage in British English through C20 was much lower than in American English (Övergaard 1995). Other corpus-based studies have shown that its use is still relatively strong in Australian and New Zealand English (Hundt 1998; Peters 2009c). Meanwhile in British English, mandative subjunctives are typically paraphrased by the use of *SHOULD*:

They insisted that he should write a formal letter.

Or by use of the indicative:

They insisted that he wrote a formal letter.

They insist that he writes a formal letter.

These indicative paraphrases are termed **covert mandates** by Huddleston and Pullum (2002). The subordinate clause introduced by **mandative verbs** such as *demand*, *insist*, *propose*, *suggest* is a type of **complement clause**. See further under **complement clause**, section 1.

- For more about the **subjunctive**, see under that heading.

MANY, MUCH, and MORE

These have multiple grammatical functions: all three as determiners and pronouns; and the second and third as adverbs. They represent degrees of comparison, with *MANY/MUCH* as the base forms for *MORE* as the comparative, and *MOST* as superlative.

As determiners, *MANY* and *MUCH* have complementary roles in relation to the following noun, since *MANY* goes with countable nouns, and *MUCH* with uncountable/mass nouns (see further under **determiner**, section 4; and **count noun, mass noun, and countability**). Meanwhile the comparative *MORE* and superlative *MOST* can take either countable or mass nouns.

Yet *MANY* and *MUCH* complement each other as pronouns in the same way as when they are determiners, i.e. *MANY* takes a countable noun as complement, while *MUCH* takes the mass noun. Compare:

Many of the apples are ripe. with *Much of the fruit is ripe.*

With *MORE* and *MOST* as pronouns, both types of complement are fine:

more of the apples / more of the fruit

most of the apples / most of the fruit

There is no differentiation for count and mass nouns.

MUCH is not so widely used as *MORE/MOST* in the adverbial role, and tied to various polite formulae, e.g.

thanks very much much appreciated much obliged to you much changed

As in the last three examples, *MUCH* is frequently found in the company of past participles, and as a slightly formal paraphrase for *A LOT*. *MORE* and *MOST* are stylistically neutral and highly productive, able to provide degrees of comparison with past participles as well as adjectives:

more appreciated than before most obliged to you

more willing to help most willing to help

The last pair of examples show how *MORE* and *MOST* help to construct the comparative and superlative forms of many adjectives with two or more syllables: see further under **adjective**, section 3. See also **MOST**.

marked form, marking, and markedness

- 1 linguistic form that contrasts with the base form of the word
 - 2 linguistic form whose usage diverges from a common counterpart
-

1 Linguistic form that contrasts with the base form of the word

A **marked form** in the most straightforward sense is one which has additional morphological **marking** from the base form. So the past verb *brought* is a marked form of the verb *bring*, and *cherries* is a marked form of the noun *cherry*, because of its plural marking.

2 Linguistic form whose usage diverges from a common counterpart

A **marked form** in a less obvious sense is distinctive in some way, because of a special feature of form or meaning which constrains its usage. The concept originated with Trubetzkoy's (1969) analysis of phonological systems, but has since been applied to various linguistic elements and levels of language. For example the word *vixen* for a female fox is **marked** by comparison with the generic *fox*, and the word *beverage* used in legal and official discourse is marked when

compared with the ordinary noun *drink*. Marked forms are usually relatively uncommon by comparison with their *unmarked* counterparts. The plural form *-en* found on *brethren* and *oxen* is marked in comparison with the common *-(e)s* plurals of English. This notion of *markedness* is more debatable than the first, because it relates to more abstract linguistic properties, and to relative frequencies which may be difficult to establish with any certainty.

mass noun

See under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

matrix clause

This is the term for a main clause or a higher subordinate clause in which a complement clause is embedded. See for example:

We expected they would come later.

They should come if they think it's a good idea.

In both examples, the **matrix clause** has a **complement clause** embedded in it, as often (see further under **clause**, section 4). An alternative name for the matrix clause is **superordinate clause**.

Another type of complex sentence where the main clause is a **matrix clause** is the one to which a **comparative clause** is attached.

The tree has grown much faster than its predecessor did.

The matrix clause contains the comparative element (“much faster”) which is complemented by the comparative clause itself. See further under **comparative clause**, section 2.

The term **matrix clause** is also applied by some grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985) to the main clause whose action is contingent or consequent on that of the adverbial subordinate clause:

I will if you will.

We won't leave until you come.

Let's not drink before the sun is over the yard arm.

Note also the application of **matrix clause** to main clauses in which a restrictive relative clause is embedded. See further under **embedded clause**; and **relative clause**, section 3.

MAY

This is one of the less frequent modal verbs, used to express epistemic possibility, and also permission. *MAY* shares the latter function with *CAN* but is regarded as more polite in its connotations. See further under **modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 3.

MAY HAVE or MIGHT HAVE

MAY is often said to express less tentativeness than *MIGHT*, and so it is in the following pair:

We may come to the lecture.

We might come to the lecture.

The second formulation with *MIGHT* definitely makes for a more remote possibility, while *MAY* leaves it more open. The same assumptions can be applied to the perfect forms of the same verb:

He may have died before then.

He might have died before then.

But *MIGHT HAVE* becomes a closed possibility when a further condition is added:

He might have died if the ambulance had been delayed.

This could explain why in radio broadcasts and other news scripting, *MIGHT HAVE* is sometimes replaced by *MAY HAVE*, as in:

He may have died if the ambulance had been delayed.

The substitution of *MAY HAVE* keeps the incident more in the present, as still happening rather than a closed event in the past. This immediacy is of course an important aspect of “breaking news.” See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 4.

ME

See under **I and ME**.

mediopassive

This is a type of verb phrase which sits between the active and passive voice, and between transitive and intransitive uses of the verb. The subjects of mediopassives are the *patients* of the action (see further under **case grammar**). But the construction seems to draw on an inherent property of the subject, which is usually modified by an adverb of manner, or a negator. For example:

The car sells well.

The car will not sell.

Mediopassives are expressed either as the tenseless present form of the verb or with a modal verb, as in the examples above, and thus convey a nontemporary state of being (Hundt 2007).

Compare **ergative** and see further under **middle construction**.

meronymy

This is the linguistic term for the part–whole relationship between two nouns, like that between *finger* and *hand*, or between *cover* and *book*. Referring to the first assumes the second, and they form a semantic bond within a sentence and/or across sentence boundaries. The *meronymic* relationship between the word for the part and that for the whole can also be encapsulated in a single NP, as in:

a branch of the tree a cat's whisker a bicycle wheel the ace of spades

Note that **meronymy** can be expressed in several kinds of NP, using an *OF-phrase*, a *partitive genitive*, a premodified NP, or a compound (see further under **partitive**).

While **meronymy** focuses on the part belonging to the whole (as the head of the NP in all the examples above), the opposite relationship (foregrounding

the relationship between the whole and the part) can be seen in expressions like *a pack of cards*. This relationship is technically *holonymy*.

In classical rhetoric, both **meronymy** and holonymy were exploited in the figure of speech *synecdoche*, by which the word for the part might be used to refer to the whole, or vice versa. This use of meronymy can be seen in modern English expressions like *the roof over our heads*, meaning one's house and home, while holonymy can be found in *going to the gym*, used to refer to taking exercise on any of the various pieces of equipment available at the gym.

Both **meronymy** and holonymy contribute to the cohesion of a text. Other kinds of semantic relationships or *sense relations* between words are *synonymy*, *antonymy*, *hyponymy* (see further under those headings). See also under **cohesion**.

metafunction of language

In systemic–functional grammar, the **metafunctions** are the three major communicative functions of language which combine to express meaning in discourse. They are the *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* functions:

- *ideational function* is the ability of language to construe human experience of the mental and physical world. It includes both *experiential* and *logical functions*, to embody and express the content of our experience of the mental or physical world, and the ability to structure it in terms of time, causation, etc.
- *interpersonal function* is the way language itself is a form of personal and social action, communicating and interacting with others.
- *textual function* is the way in which language organizes utterances and sequences of discourse into coherent texts, creating cohesion and continuity according to the context in which it is used.

In any discourse, spoken or written, these functions are simultaneously present in the formulation of sentences and the choice of words.

middle construction

This term serves as a superordinate for two minor types of verb phrase with expanding uses, exemplified by:

The ice melted. and *The book sells well.*

They share some of the semantic properties of active and passive constructions, and can be associated with transitive or intransitive constructions.

Transformational grammarians and others use a variety of nomenclature and syntactic criteria to distinguish the two canonical types illustrated above. The terms *ergative* and *mediopassive* help to separate them (Hundt 2007), to indicate whether the action depends on an implied cause and a specific event (= ergative) or is an inherent, timeless property of the subject (mediopassive). See further under **ergative** and **mediopassive**.

Note that the **mediopassive** corresponds in some cases to the *reflexive constructions* used in other European languages. Compare:

- English: *The book sells/reads well.*
German: *Das Buch verkauft/liest sich gut.*
French: *Le livre se vend/se lit bien*
Spanish: *El libro se vend/se lee bien.*

However the English reflexive verb does not correlate with the middle construction in this way: see further under **reflexive verb**.

middle intransitive

See under **ergative**.

middle voice

See further under **voice (1)**, section 3; **ergative** and **mediopassive**.

MIGHT

This modal verb is used to express epistemic modality like *MAY*, but is more tentative in its connotations. See further under **modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 3.

MINE

In earlier centuries this was an alternative to the determiner *MY*, used before words starting with a vowel, e.g. *mine eyes*. In modern English it is confined to the role of independent pronoun, as in *That's mine*. See further under **possessive pronoun**.

modality and modal verb

- 1 modality, mood, and modal verbs
 - 2 parameters of modality
 - 3 modal verbs and their individual meanings
 - 4 modal verbs in their linguistic contexts
 - 5 modal paraphrases: adverbs, comment clauses
-

1 Modality, mood, and modal verbs

Though **mood** has largely given way to **modality** in the analysis of the verb system, the two differ fundamentally: **mood** relates to grammatical form of the verb, and **modality** to its shades of meaning. Modality is the speaker/writer's perspective on the verbal process, e.g. the likelihood or certainty of it happening, and whether there is some obligation or necessity tied up in it. The **modal verbs** that express these subtle shades of meaning have evolved out of lexical verbs over the centuries, with the addition of *deontic* meanings leading on to the development of *epistemic* ones (see below section 2). Several pairs are the former present and past forms of the same verb (*CAN/COULD*, *MAY/MIGHT*, *SHALL/SHOULD*, *WILL/WOULD*), but the tense contrasts have largely faded (see below sections 3 and 4). Because of their idiosyncratic histories, the nine central modals:

can could may might must shall should will would

do not fit into either the *irregular* or *regular* classes of English verbs. They do not take the third person singular inflection *-s*, and they have no *-ing* forms.

Compare

<i>I see</i>	<i>he sees</i>	<i>we are seeing</i>
<i>I enjoy</i>	<i>he enjoys</i>	<i>we are enjoying</i>
<i>I can</i>	<i>he can</i>	<i>we are ... able to see</i>
<i>I will</i>	<i>you will</i>	<i>we are ... going to enjoy</i>

As the third and fourth examples show, the absence of *-ing* forms for *CAN* and *WILL* obliges us to paraphrase them with *periphrastic modals*. Note also that modal verbs take the bare infinitive (*can see, will enjoy*), whereas the periphrastic ones connect with the *TO*-infinitive. The inventory of English modal verbs is continuing to evolve, with other periphrastic modals and quasi-modal verbs: see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7.

2 Parameters of modality

Modality is conventionally divided into two broad types: *deontic* and *epistemic*. *Deontic modality* introduces the parameters of obligation and permission into the predication, and logical necessity is often added, since all three are included in the term *root modality* often used as a paraphrase (Collins 2009b). *Epistemic modality* meanwhile expresses the speaker/writer's point of view about the probability of an event, and the capacity/ability embedded in it. In systemic–functional grammar, deontic modality is termed *modulation* and epistemic modality is *modalization* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

To clarify certain other types of modality, some grammarians work with three or four parameters, separating off the category of *alethic modality* (the expression of logical necessity) from the deontic; and *dynamic modality* (the predication of fact on the basis of a property of the subject) from the epistemic (Palmer, 1987). See further under **alethic** and **dynamic modality**.

Cutting across these parameters are the notions of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic modality*, used by Quirk et al. (1985). They group together as intrinsic the deontic modalities of obligation, permission, and necessity as well as intention, all of which involve “some kind of intrinsic human control over an action.” Meanwhile extrinsic modality involves some kind of human judgment about what is or is not likely to happen. It includes epistemic modality as well as nondeontic root possibility/necessity, prediction, and ability (the last because it involves a judgment about capacity). *Subjective* and *objective* types of modality are also to be factored in, with the view that the subjective (first or second person) is stronger in its illocutionary force than the objective (third person).

3 Modal verbs and their individual meanings

Grammatical analysis of individual **modal verbs** tends to focus on the set of meanings borne by each, because of the lack of complete consensus over which parameters to invoke. Modal verbs are all polysemous. The sense involved is

often intricately bound up with linguistic and pragmatic context, and indeed more than one sense may be operative. Still the range of possible meanings is often characterized under seven major heads, including possibility, ability, permission, obligation, necessity, intention, prediction (Aarts 1997), as shown in the table.

Yet another aspect of modal meaning is the relative strength of the modality expressed, e.g. the obligatory force of deontic modals and the sense of conviction with epistemic ones. It too is shown in the table, in terms of a scale from weakest (–), to strongest (*), with (+) indicating moderate strength. The relative frequencies are extracted from research on the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999), and expressed as integers or decimal fractions relative to the reference number (1) for *SHALL*, the least frequent of them.

	<i>can</i>	<i>could</i>	<i>may</i>	<i>might</i>	<i>must</i>	<i>shall</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>would</i>
possibility	*	+	+	–					
ability	*	+							
permission	+	–	–						
<i>relative frequency of occurrence</i>	10	7	4	2.5					
obligation					*	–	+	–	
necessity					*		+		
<i>relative frequency of occurrence</i>					3.5		4.2		
intention			–			+	–	*	–
prediction					–	+	–	*	+
<i>relative frequency of occurrence</i>						1		15	12
habit/ <i>relative frequency</i>					–				–

As the table shows, the dynamic modals (*CAN*, *COULD*, *WILL*, *WOULD*) are the most commonly occurring of the set, while deontic modals such as *MUST*, *SHOULD* occur rather less often. *SHALL* is clearly the least used modal in modern English. See further under **WILL and SHALL** and **WOULD and SHOULD**.

Note that the former present/past pairs of modals (*CAN/COULD*, *MAY/MIGHT*, *SHALL/SHOULD*, *WILL/WOULD*) express the same kind of meaning, though with differing force. The present form is usually the stronger of the two.

4 Modal verbs in their linguistic contexts

The linguistic construction of **modal verbs** affects their meaning and illocutionary force. The person of the subject (whether first, second, or third), carries different implicatures in deontic modality. Compare:

I must pack my bags tonight.

He must pack his bags tonight.

While the first person imposes an obligation on oneself, the third person makes it a more detached contextual necessity. Likewise in the range of epistemic modality:

I will do it soon.

He will do it soon.

where the first person carries an intention, and the third a prediction. In dialogue, the modal meaning is interconnected with the relative status (equal or unequal) of those involved: so the first person may be giving permission to the second person (*You*), or making an epistemic statement in examples like the following:

You can leave by the back door.

The force of modal verbs is also affected by the clausal structures in which they appear. The meanings discussed above relate to their use in main clauses rather than subordinate clauses or complex sentences. Compare:

He should leave immediately.

How would you react if he should leave immediately?

In the first example (a simple sentence), *should* carries its ordinary sense of obligation. In the second it expresses a hypothetical condition in the *IF*-clause. See further under **IF**.

Note also that the modal verb in a subordinate clause may be determined by the tense of the main clause, as in:

He will leave immediately.

He said he would leave immediately.

They may come tomorrow.

They said they might come tomorrow.

This use of **WOULD** (the past form of **WILL**) and **MIGHT** (the past form of **MAY**) matches up with the past form *said* in the regular “sequence of tenses”(see further under **sequence of tenses**). It is however often varied in response to other pragmatic needs in the communicative context. See also **MAY HAVE and MIGHT HAVE**.

5 Modal paraphrases: adverbs, comment clauses

Modality can be expressed by other constituents of the clause than the VP. They include **modal adjuncts**, e.g. *perhaps*, *possibly*, used to paraphrase epistemic **MAY**; and *necessarily* used instead of **MUST** to express logical necessity. The tentativeness of epistemic **MAY** can also be expressed through the insertion of comment clauses such as *I think* into the discourse.

modalization

In systemic–functional grammar, this refers to *epistemic modality*. See under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

modifier

This term refers to a grammatical unit which adds optional semantic information to the head of a phrase, as in:

contrary to received opinion
their concerns about the future

In fact the head noun of an NP may be *premodified* by one or more adjectives and *postmodified* by a prepositional phrase or relative clause:

After the cool bright sunrise that was their first at that altitude, they started the final ascent.

Likewise, a VP may be modified by an adverb, as in: *They climbed bravely*, whether positioned before or after it: *Bravely they climbed*. Either way, the modifier is an optional addition to the NP or VP, not one required by the lexical head. Compare **adjunct**, section 4; and contrast **complement**, section 1.

Note that in traditional grammar, the term **modifier** was used only for adverbs *modifying* a verb, while *qualifier* was used for the modifiers of nouns. In systemic–functional grammar meanwhile, **modifier** is applied only to the premodifiers of the head noun, and *qualifier* is reserved for the postmodifiers.

modulation

In systemic–functional grammar, this refers to *deontic modality*. See under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

monomorphemic

This term refers to a word consisting of only one morpheme, such as *cat*, *count*, *custard*, *contumely*. Although the last two words could be broken down into smaller parts in the source languages from which they came, this is not possible in terms of C21 English. A *monomorphemic word* is a simple word and normally a free morpheme. See further under **morpheme**.

monotransitive

This refers to a verb or construction in which the verb takes a direct object. See under **transitivity**, section 4; and **valency**, section 3.

monovalent

See under **valency**, section 3.

mood

This concept inherited from classical grammar refers to the capacity of verbs to predicate real events, processes, and states of being (in the *indicative mood*), or to project them as hypothetical (*subjunctive mood*); to turn them into a question (*interrogative mood*), or a command (*imperative mood*). In some

languages there are different verb inflections for each mood, but in English there are only remnants for the indicative and subjunctive (see further under **subjunctive**). The other moods are differentiated simply by their word order and the presence/absence of a subject. The contracting mood system of English has been substantially supplemented by an expanding system for expressing different types of *modality*. See further under **modality and modal verb**.

Note that other languages present a much greater range of moods than have ever been fully fledged in English, including the *conditional*, *desiderative*, *hortatory*, and *jussive*. See further under **conditional** and **jussive**.

morpheme

This term refers to the minimal unit of linguistic meaning, a form (written or spoken) to which a meaning may be attached. So “keen” /kin/, “pool” /pul/ are all **morphemes**, working in the written and spoken media respectively. While structural analysts regarded the phonological form as primary, others have endorsed the concept of *visual morphemes* (Bolinger 1946), and it is convenient to do so in explaining them via printed text.

Some words consist of a single **morpheme** only, just a stem as in *ally*, and are thus *monomorphemic*. When a suffix is added to that base, as in *allied*, the word becomes *bimorphemic*. The combination of base and affix(es) creates complex words in which only the base is a “free” morpheme. See under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**.

Note that *morphemic variation* can be analyzed in terms of orthographic variation, as in *ally/allied*, or phonological variation, as with the past tenses of *talked* and *changed*, where the final consonants are /t/ and /d/ respectively. At a higher level of abstraction, the alternative participles ending in *-ed* and *-en* may be seen to exemplify morphological variation for the grammatical concept of {past participle}. Note that curly brackets are used among linguists to identify morphemes. See further under **brackets**, and **allomorph**.

morphology

- 1 **morphological structure and derivational processes**
- 2 **roots, stems, and classical combining forms**
- 3 **suffixes: derivational and inflectional**
- 4 **morphology and the syntax of the clause**

1 **Morphological structure and derivational processes**

These terms refer to the internal structure of words, the meaningful units (*morphemes*) of which they are composed, and the inflectional and derivational process(es) by which they are formed. So the essential morphology of the word *paintings* is:

<i>paint</i>	+ <i>-ing</i>	+ <i>-s</i>
stem/base (verb)	+ noun suffix	+ plural inflection

Its derivational processes involve (1) stem + derivational suffix, and (2) base (including suffix) + inflection. All three elements of the word are morphemes, but they differ in status, the stem being a *free morpheme* and the affixes being *bound morphemes* (see further under **morpheme**). The *derivational morphology* precedes the *inflectional morphology*, generating a complex *base* before the addition of the inflection: see further under **base**.

2 **Roots, stems, and classical combining forms**

English complex words are often derived from roots which are not exactly free morphemes. This is evident in examples such as *include* and *exclude*, where the prefixes seem to be separable from the root, but there is no morpheme *-clude* in modern English. (It represents the Latin verb “close.”) Even English roots/stems are less than free in inflected words such as *driving*, where the stem *driv-* never appears on its own. The same is true in *ratified*, where stem *ratifi-* cannot stand alone (only by reference to *ratify*), and its classical root *rat-* has no independent existence with the relevant meaning in English. Likewise most neoclassical stems in English compounds, like those in *electrolysis*, *geography*, *patriarchy*, also need to combine with others of their kind, hence their name *combining forms*. Note that some classical combining forms like *-athon*, *-ology*, *-ome*, extracted from classical loanwords (such as *marathon*, *etymology*, *chromosome*), are rather general in their meaning, and thus resemble suffixes. See further under **stem** and **combining form**.

3 **Suffixes: derivational and inflectional**

The suffixes of English are either derivational or inflectional. The derivational type identifies the word with a particular word class, as the *-ment* in *agreement*, *argument* marks them as nouns, and the *-ify* of *beautify*, *simplify* marks them as verbs. There are however a number of homonymic suffixes in English (see under **homonymy**). Inflectional suffixes are attached to particular word classes, e.g. the plural *-s* to nouns, superlative *-est* to adjectives, and can serve to disambiguate words moved by *conversion* to another word class. Thus the past verb form *costed* “assess the value of” is clearly different from the noun *cost*. See further under **derivational affix** and **inflection**.

4 **Morphology and the syntax of the clause**

Because many suffixes are associated with a specific word class, they identify themselves with particular constituents, e.g. suffixed nouns with NP, and adverbs ending in *-ly* with the adverbial adjunct. Inflections that mark the number of the noun and verb are visible in the patterns of agreement between the subject NP and the verb. The interplay between the morphology of words and the syntax of the clause is evident in such details. See further under **agreement**, section 2(i).

MOST

- For the use of **MOST** to mark the superlative degree of adjectives, as in *the most beautiful day*, see **adjective**, section 3.

- ▶ For the use of *MOST* as a *determiner*, as in *Most grammarians agree on this*, see **determiner**, section 4.
- ▶ For the uses of *MOST* as a *pronoun*, as in *Most of the lemons are ripe now*, see **pronoun**, section 2.

mother node

In immediate constituent analysis, this refers to the formal relationship between two nodes in a tree diagram, i.e. that of the superordinate (**mother node**) when it immediately dominates a subordinate (*daughter node*). See further under **immediate constituent analysis**.

movement rule

Movement rules are used in transformational–generative grammar to explain how the ordering of clause constituents found in surface structure comes to differ from the putative deep structure, e.g. subject followed by object. Their inversion in the canonical form of English questions is accounted for by a movement rule. See further under **transformational–generative grammar**.

MUCH

See under **MANY, MUCH, and MORE**.

multal

See under **paucal**.

multiple negation

Although a single *negative* (e.g. *not*) can negate a clause or phrase, speakers sometimes use more than one in a sentence. This is helped by the fact that negation can be expressed by several types of exponent:

- adverbs such as *not*, *never*
- the determiner *no*
- pronouns such as *none*, *nothing*, *nobody*
- negative suffixes such as *a-*, *non-*, *un-*

(See further under **negation**, section 2.) When more than one *negator* is used in the same clause or sentence, they may converge to form a single negation, in what is now called **negative concord**. Otherwise they work independently of each other, relatively unobtrusively. See further under **negative concord**.

multiword lexical unit

This term is used to cover various kinds of word sequences, typically consisting of two or three words, which combine to form a lexical unit. They include compounds of all kinds, and other types of grammatical units such as:

- complex prepositions: *in spite of*, *in terms of*
- complex subordinators: *so that*, *in order that*
- correlative coordinators: *neither . . . nor*

See further under individual headings, as well as **compound word**, section 1; and **word**, section 2. See also **phraseology**.

Multiword verbs are those that consist of more than one element, including phrasal and prepositional verbs where the following particle is intimately connected with the meaning and syntax of the verb, e.g. *take over*, *come up with* (see under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**).

The term **multiword verb** is extended by grammarians to other semantically bonded verbal units, e.g. *had better*, *would rather* (Quirk et al. 1985); and by Biber et al. (1999) to high-frequency **passive prepositional verbs**, such as *be accustomed to*, *be bound to*, which are also auxiliary-like but not yet admitted to canon of periphrastic auxiliaries (see **auxiliary verb**, section 4). Some grammarians also apply the term to **light verb constructions**, such as: *have a rest*, *take a look*: see further under **light verb**.

MUST

This modal verb is used primarily to express deontic modality, i.e. obligation and necessity. See further under **modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 3.

mutual information

This concept comes from the mathematical side of information theory, focusing on the relationship between two variables, and what they indicate about each other. In computational linguistics it has been used as a way of calculating the strength of association between words such as “bright” and “light,” which occur as a collocation yet are not always found together in a text corpus.

MY

- ▶ For the grammatical uses of **MY**, see under **personal pronoun**, section 4; and **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.
- ▶ For its various contextual meanings, see **I and ME**.

MYSELF

This is the first person singular **reflexive pronoun**, used to complement and emphasize the pronoun *I*, as in *I will do it myself*.

Note that **MYSELF** is also used to replace **ME** or *I*, especially in coordinated structures:

They invited my wife and myself to the launch.

My wife and myself will attend the reception.

It provides a conspicuous alternative to *I* or **ME**, either of which may seem to be grammatically questionable. See further under **I and ME**, sections 2 and 3; and **reflexive pronoun**, section 3.

N

name

For the difference between proper names and proper nouns, see **proper noun and proper name**.

narrative present

This term refers to the use of the present tense to refer to a past event in narrative discourse. An alternative term is the *historic present*. See under **present tense**, section 4.

natural gender

See under **gender**, section 2.

near negative

See under **negator**.

negation

- 1 negation and polarity
 - 2 exponents of negation: negative words and affixes
 - 3 *NOT* vs. *NO* negation
 - 4 scope of the negative, including negative raising
 - 5 negative inversion
-

1 Negation and polarity

Negation is the grammatical means of embedding *negative polarity* in a sentence, clause, or word, so as to deny rather than affirm the semantic content. So the positive statement:

I often read science fiction.

can be *negated* in

I do not often read science fiction.

or

I never read science fiction.

The addition of *negators* such as *NOT* or *NEVER* to the second and third sentences gives them negative polarity. The unmarked first sentence with its *positive polarity* is the default condition. The two polarities are typically juxtaposed when tag questions are added to a statement, as in *You will come, won't you*, or *They won't come, will they?*

See further under **tag question**.

2 Exponents of negation: negative words and affixes

Negation is expressed in English grammar through a variety of grammatical constituents, both independent words such as *NO*, *NONE*, *NOT*, *NEVER*, *NOBODY*, *NOTHING*; and affixes to words: prefixes such as *a-*, *non-*, *un-*, and the suffix *-less*. The most versatile of the negators is the particle *NOT*, which can be used to negate most constituents of the clause:

- noun phrase: *not the nine-o'clock news*
- adj phrase: *a not unexpected response*
- adv adjunct: *not unexpectedly*
- verb phrase: *they would not risk it* (finite); *try not to interfere* (nonfinite)

NOT is the ubiquitous negator, whose frequency of occurrence is also reflected in widespread use of the contracted form *n't*, which is attached to auxiliary and modal verbs especially in spoken discourse. Thus *they wouldn't* appears for *they would not* in the sentence above (see further under **contraction (1)**). Note that when *NOT* or *N'T* is attached to a verb phrase which does not involve a modal verb or *BE* or *HAVE*, the verb *DO* is introduced, in what grammarians call **DO-support**. Compare

They are coming. *They aren't coming.*
They came yesterday. *They didn't come yesterday.*

As the second sentence shows, the *DO* auxiliary embeds the tense as the finite operator of the clause. See further under **DO**.

Other negators than *NOT* are confined to just one or two grammatical roles:

none, *nobody*, *nothing* (pronouns)

never (adverb)

no (adverb) as in *no more*; (determiner) as in *no answer*

These various grammatical roles allow negation to be expressed through different constituents of the clause, including the subject/object NPs, prepositional phrases, and other adverbial adjuncts, as well as verb phrases.

Negative affixes are tied to particular lexical items in the clause, especially adjectives and verbs, but also to nouns, and to adverbs derived from negative adjectives, for example:

<u>a</u> moral	hope <u>l</u> ess	<u>i</u> nsensitive	<u>n</u> oncombatant
<u>u</u> nofficial	desensit <u>i</u> ze	<u>d</u> isengage	<u>u</u> ntie
<u>d</u> istaste	<u>n</u> onparticipation	seam <u>l</u> essly	<u>u</u> nintentionally

The affixes underlined negate or reverse the semantics of the stems to which they are attached. But their scope is limited by attachment to them, and does not extend to neighboring constituents (see section 4 below).

Because English grammar supports all these alternative ways of expressing negation, it is possible for two or more negative elements to appear within the same clause or sentence. This sets up different kinds of **multiple negation**, as in:

Such criticisms cannot go unanswered.

He never did nothing like that.

They won't come again, I don't think.

See further under **negative concord**.

3 **NOT vs. NO negation**

The negators *NOT* and *NO* provide alternative ways of negating a statement, for example:

They could not get an answer. They could get no answer.

I haven't any idea. I have no idea.

Typically *NOT* (or *N'T*) is used to negate the verb phrase, while *NO* embeds the negative in the noun phrase, but either way the meaning is the same. Research on the relative frequency of the two constructions shows that *NOT* is used far more often than *NO* is as a grammatical negator, in a ratio of about 5:1 in writing and about 9:1 in speech (Peters 2008). This correlates with Jespersen's 1917 observation that *NO* has a somewhat literary feel to it. *NO* is preferred in idiomatic cases such as *leave no stone unturned*.

NOT combines with **nonassertive** words (determiners, pronouns, adverbs) such as *ANY*, *ANYBODY*, *ANYONE*, *ANYTHING*, *ANYWHERE* in expressing negation, as in the second example sentence above. See further under **nonassertive**.

4 **Scope of the negative**

The negative scope of the negator may be larger or narrower, depending on their type and the sentence context. The scope of negative affixes is limited to the word to which they are attached, as in *disinterested*, *unbreakable*, whereas the scope of negators which are independent words typically extends from their point of occurrence within the clause to the end of the clause. Compare the different meanings of:

You didn't say you were going.

You said you were not going.

It was impossible to see them together.

It was possible to not see them together.

The scope of the negation in the two second sentences is much more limited than that of the first.

There are however sentences where the negation that strictly belongs to a lower clause is transferred or raised to the higher clause, without changing the meaning. This happens especially with mental process verbs or their impersonal analogues, as in:

I don't think it will rain.

It doesn't look as if it will rain.

In sentences like these, the negation which logically applies to the subordinate verb "rain" is attached to the verb phrase in the matrix clause. This is termed **negative raising** or **transferred negation**. See further under **raising**, section 3.

5 **Negative inversion**

When negative adverbs are foregrounded as the initial constituent in the sentence, the conventional S + V word order can be inverted. Compare:

Never would they overcome their fear of heights.

They would never overcome their fear of heights.

The inverted construction is however subject to several constraints, especially that the verb phrase should include an auxiliary or modal verb, as in that example. See further under **inversion**, section 2.

negative

This term serves both as adjective and noun, to refer to a word (e.g. *NO*, *NOT*, *NEVER*) or affix (e.g. *non-*, *un-*, *-less*) which expresses negation. See further under **negation**, section 2.

negative concord

This is the grammarians' term for the use of *double* or *multiple negatives* where the scope of just one of them is sufficient to negate the clausal meaning, as in *You didn't never go there*. Double negatives have long been stigmatized in examples like this, probably because of their association with uneducated speech and ethnic dialects including "Black English." In fact such intensification of the negation within the clause has long been put to dramatic effect (as by Shakespeare), and conveyed the meaning intended to audiences and readers. But C18 grammars censured the double negative as illogical, on the basis that "two negatives make a positive" – that they cancel each other out, as they do in mathematics – and this has added to its critical reception in English. The assumption was/is that successive negatives have independent negative force, rather than working pleonastically or in combination, as the term **negative concord** suggests. In languages other than English (e.g. Spanish) the use of double negatives, i.e. negative concord, is standard in expressing negation within a clause

In fact, various kinds of English clauses show negative concord. It is sanctioned through the correlative coordinators *neither ... nor* as in:

They were neither ready to leave nor properly dressed.

Although the negative is expressed in both coordinates, they form a single negation. This type of double negative formulation is of course standard, even formal English. Other examples of negative concord can be found in more conversational English, for example in the familiar retort which uses a fronted negative:

Not in my house, you're not ... ("going to set up your ferret farm.")

Here the two independent negatives are attached to different constituents of the clause, an adverbial adjunct and the verb phrase, but they converge in the focus of their negation.

Convergent negatives can also appear in successive clauses in the same sentence, as in

They aren't here, I don't think.

Here the second negative (in an asyndetic parenthetical clause) can be interpreted pleonastically, as underscoring or intensifying the verbal negation of main clause, rather than an independent negation. The **double negative** is more challenging when it occurs in both the matrix clause and its complement, for example:

I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't Sunday's train timetable.

In such cases it is not clear how the two negatives are to be interpreted:

- pleonastically, so that the second negative reinforces the scope of the first negative to the end of the sentence; or
- as a case of **negative raising**, where the intended negation of the second verb is promoted into the matrix clause with its mental process verb, except that the second negative has not been deleted (see **negation**, section 4); or
- independently, so as to negate “surprised” *and* the suggestion that it was “Sunday’s train timetable” (i.e. it would be the timetable for another day).

Whatever the interpretation (in terms of negative concord or as a double negative), these examples are associated with polite speech rather than uneducated English.

Note finally some examples of double/multiple negation, where the pair or set of negatives clearly involve independent negations. For example:

This newspaper never makes impossible demands of its journalists.

No one said nothing about the paper, but the comments didn't amount to much.

Thus whether the use of repeated negatives amounts to negative concord or not, it is a not uncommon phenomenon in standard English syntax.

negative raising

See **negation**, section 4.

negator

This term is reserved by many grammarians (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985) for *NOT*, the negative particle, and its contracted form *n't*. Others apply the term **negator** to negative words in other grammatical classes such as the pronouns *NEITHER*, *NEVER*, *NO ONE*, *NOBODY*, *NONE*, *NOTHING*, adverbs such as *NOWHERE*, and the conjunction *NOR* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). They also identify a set of **approximate negators**, namely the determiners *FEW*, *LITTLE*, and adverbs such as *barely*, *hardly*, *scarcely*, *seldom*. For other grammarians these are **semi-negatives** or **near negatives**. See further under **negative**.

NEITHER

This serves as a negative determiner and indefinite pronoun: see under **determiner**, section 3; and **indefinite pronoun**.

In combination with *NOR* it forms a *correlative conjunction*. See further under **conjunction**, section 5.

neoclassical compound

This term usually refers to the type of compound that contains neoclassical elements, for example *biology*, *demography*, *oligarchy*. They are of special interest because the neoclassical elements or *combining forms* in such compounds cannot stand alone (all are *bound morphemes*). Yet the combination of two neoclassical elements actually produces a *free morpheme* in each case. They thus challenge the general principle that bimorphemic English words always contain at least one free morpheme. (See further under **bound morpheme and free morpheme**; and **word**, section 6.) In the *Cambridge Grammar (2002)* the neoclassical combining forms are regarded as *bound bases*: see further under **base**.

The morphology of neoclassical compounds is also debatable in cases where the “joining” vowel, historically speaking, belongs to neither of the classical combining forms involved, for example the *-o-* in *hydrology*, *psychology*, etc. The Greek roots are strictly *hydr-* (as in *hydrant*, *hydraulic*), *psych-* (as in *psychedelic*, *psychiatry*) and *-logy* (as in *eulogy*, *genealogy*). The appearance of the *-o-* is however explicable as morphological variation, so that *hydr-* and *hydro-*, *psych-* and *psycho-*, *-logy* and *-ology* are *allomorphs* of the same morpheme (see further under **allomorph**).

In modern English, compound nouns can combine a neoclassical component with an English free morpheme, as in:

<i>aerospace</i>	<i>garbology</i>	<i>meritocracy</i>	<i>pesticide</i>	<i>pornography</i>
	<i>psychoanalysis</i>	<i>stereophony</i>	<i>television</i>	<i>turbojet</i>

These mixed types are treated along with the purely neoclassical formations as neoclassical compounds in the *Cambridge Grammar (2002)*. The blending of languages in the mixed type might once have been regarded as a “barbarism,” but they attract no special attention these days.

- See further under **combining form**, section 6.

nesting

The term **nesting** is most strictly applied to the recursive embedding of a constituent within another of the same type, as when coordinated phrases appear within others:

John and [James and his wife] are coming.

The term is also used for the embedding of a given type of subordinate clause, as in

This is the dog [that chased the cat [that killed the rat [that ...]]]

See further under **recursion and recursiveness**.

Nesting is sometimes used to refer to *medial branching* (Quirk et al. 1985), as of an embedded relative or other subordinate clause in mid-sentence. For example:

The grandfather clock which had been passed down over five generations in my family was never going to stop.

See further under **left- and right-branching sentence**.

nexus

This term is used in systemic–functional grammar and elsewhere as a superordinate for the alternative ways in which a pair of clauses may be combined, either by *coordination* or *subordination*. See further under **coordination**, section 1; **subordination**; and **clause**, section 4.

nexus question

This is an alternative name for the *closed* or *polar question*. See further under **question**, section 3.

NICE

This is an acronym for the four syntactic properties identified by Palmer (1974) to distinguish auxiliary verbs from ordinary verbs. These are their ability to support *Negation*, to undergo *subject–verb Inversion* in questions, to operate as substitute for an ordinary verb (called *Code* because the auxiliary is a cipher for the lexical meaning *coded* elsewhere (in a preceding clause)), and to add *Emphasis* to the ordinary verb. All are illustrated for the auxiliary verb *DO* below:

- *Negation*, as in *George doesn't ever smile.*
- *Inversion*, as in *Does George ever smile?*
- *Code*, as in *George doesn't smile, but Jane does.*
- *Emphasis*, as in *Jane does smile.*

The functions illustrated for *DO* cannot be taken on by the lexical verb *smile* itself, at least not in modern English. “George smiles not” or “Smiles George ever?” could only be archaic English. The NICE functions are performed by both the so-called *primary auxiliaries* and the *modals* as operators. See further under **operator**, section 2; and **auxiliary verb**, sections 2, 3, and 6.

NO

This is the negative determiner, one of the central determiners, as in:

No two children are alike.

See further under **determiner**, section 3.

NO is also a negative adverb as in:

The trip will take no more than 12 hours.

In such cases, *NO* serves as a kind of intensifier, i.e. as a *maximiser*. See further under **intensifier and downtoner**.

- For the alternation between *NO* and *NOT*, see under **negation**, section 3.

NO ONE

See under **indefinite pronoun**.

NOBODY

See under **indefinite pronoun**; and **negation**, section 2.

node

See under **immediate constituent analysis**.

nominal

This identifies a word which behaves like a noun and as head of a noun phrase, though it belongs to another word class. Thus the adjective used as subject in *The best is yet to be* is referred to as a **nominal**. Used in this way, **nominal** itself is a noun.

- For the use of **nominal** as an adjective, see the next five entries.

nominal clause

See **noun clause**.

nominal group

This is an alternative term for the *noun phrase*, used in systemic–functional grammar.

nominal phrase

See under **noun phrase**, section 1.

nominal relative clause

This term refers to a self-contained relative clause which does not modify other noun phrases but takes on the role of noun phrase itself. For example:

We couldn't buy what we wanted at the supermarket.

Here the underlined *wh*-clause stands instead of the NP object required by the verb “buy.” Compare the following, where the *wh*-clause replaces the subject NP:

What the world needs now is action on climate change

In that example, the nominal relative clause creates a *pseudo-cleft sentence*, also known as a *wh-cleft sentence*. See under **pseudo-cleft sentence**.

Alternative terms for the **nominal relative clause**, used by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), are *independent relative clause*, *free relative clause*, and *fused relative clause* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

- For other types of **relative clause**, see under that heading.

nominal and verbal style

The **nominal style** is a noun-heavy style of writing, one which makes much use of abstract nouns and *nominalizations* to express the content, and where actions tend to be commuted into processes, as in:

The passage of the music industry bill will be delayed by a committee investigation.

In *nominally styled* sentences like that, the ratio of nouns to verbs is high (2:1), and NPs often consist of juxtaposed nouns (“music industry bill,” “committee investigation”), or of nouns which are postmodified by prepositional phrases (“passage of the music industry bill”). The verb is typically copular or else a passive (“will be delayed”), as in this case.

This nominal style is often contrasted with the so-called **verbal style**, where verbs (especially finite verbs) are more in evidence, and bring their natural dynamic to the sentence:

The music industry bill is unlikely to pass before the committee has investigated further.

The verbal style uses more active verbs, and the ratio of verbs to nouns is much more equal, as the second version of the sentence shows. See further under **passive voice**, section 1.

nominalization

This is the word-forming process whereby abstract nouns are formed out of verbs and adjectives, usually by means of additional suffixes. For example: *embodiment*, *manifestation*, *perusal*, from the verbs *embody*, *manifest*, *peruse*; and *arbitrariness*, *culpability*, *likelihood*, from the adjectives *arbitrary*, *culpable*, *likely*. The words formed are themselves often referred to as **nominalizations**. They are a conspicuous feature of the **nominal style**: see further under **nominal and verbal style**.

nominative

This term was taken over from Latin grammar by the first English grammarians in C17, to refer to the case of the subject of a verb. In Latin and other languages, nouns typically carry a special **inflection** to show their case and thus their role within the clause. But in modern English, nouns have no special inflection to show whether they function as subject (i.e. nominative) or object (accusative). Compare:

The dog bit the snake. with *The snake bit the dog.*
 (nom.) (acc.) (nom.) (acc.)

Only in the personal pronoun system is the accusative case visible, as in:

I love him and *He loves me.*
 (nom.) (acc.) (nom.) (acc.)

The lack of nominative inflections for modern English nouns that function as subject leads some grammarians to rename the nominative form of pronouns as the **subjective case** (see Quirk et al. (1985)). Others including Biber et al. (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) retain the term **nominative** for the subject case of pronouns.

Compare **accusative**. See further under **case**, section 4.

nonaffirmative

See next entry.

nonassertive

The **nonassertive** words of English grammar are associated especially with the formulation of interrogative, negative, and also conditional sentences. The most common of the nonassertive words is *ANY*. For example:

Do you have any money?
I don't have any money.
If we had any money, we wouldn't have to walk to the airport.

The three syntactic structures of those three sentences (polar question, negative statement, conditional clause) have in common the fact that they project the

absence or uncertain presence of something. Logically none of them claim the truth of the corresponding positive statement: *I/you/we do have some money.*

Other grammatical contexts which prompt the use of **nonassertive forms** are:

- adverbial clauses introduced by *before*:
I spoke to them before anyone else had.
- after implicitly negative verbs, adjectives, adverbs:
The minister denied any connection with the Mafia.
He was reluctant to discuss any aspect of the affair.
He rarely responded to any email correspondence.
- following *without*:
He wanted the public to trust him without ever discussing the allegations.

The nonassertive words of English include **ANY** as determiner and pronoun, as well as all its compounds **ANYBODY**, **ANYWHERE** etc., plus a number of adverbs. They are listed below, with their **assertive** counterparts, often formed with **SOME**:

<i>any</i>	<i>some</i>
<i>any more, any longer</i>	<i>still</i>
<i>anybody, anyone</i>	<i>somebody, someone</i>
<i>any place</i>	<i>some place</i>
<i>any time</i>	<i>sometime</i>
<i>anywhere</i>	<i>somewhere</i>
<i>at all</i>	<i>somewhat</i>
<i>either</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>ever</i>	<i>sometimes</i>
<i>yet</i>	<i>already</i>

Although the **nonassertive** items are the unmarked choice in negative, interrogative, or conditional sentences, it is possible (and not ungrammatical) for an assertive item to occur in them. See for example:

I don't mind talking to some journalists.
Do you have some money on you?

This combination of the assertive + interrogative is especially associated with polite offers and requests (Biber et al. 1999).

Note the alternative terms for **nonassertive** and **assertive** used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) are **nonaffirmative** and **affirmative**.

noncount noun

See under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

nondefining relative clause

This is an alternative name for the **nonrestrictive relative clause**. See under **relative clause**, section 3.

NONE

This is the **independent** form of the **negative pronoun**. See further under **pronoun**, section 4; and **negation**, section 2.

nonfinite clause

see **clause**, section 5.

nonfinite verb

English verbs have three *nonfinite* forms, including:

- the infinitive: *(to) forget*
- the *-ing* participle: *forgetting*
- the past participle: *forgotten*. The past participle ends in *-ed* if the verb is regular, and *-(e)n* or another inflection if the verb is irregular (see further under **irregular verb**).

None of the three nonfinite forms can serve as the operator of a *finite clause*.

See further under **operator**, section 1; and compare **finite verb**.

non-numerical quantifier

This is a term for numerical expressions like *a bunch of*, *a pile of*, *heaps of*, *loads of*, which are used especially in conversation to refer to indefinite quantities of something (Smith 2009b). Though not fully grammaticalized, these expressions are *number transparent*, like *A LOT OF*, *LOTS OF*, and may take either count nouns or mass nouns as their complements. See further under **number transparency**.

nonreferential

See **IT and ITS**, section 2; and **ONE**, section 3.

nonrestrictive relative clause

See under **relative clause**, section 3.

non-subject case

See under **oblique**, section 1.

nonterminal node

See under **immediate constituent analysis (IC)**.

NO-ONE

See **NO ONE** under **indefinite pronoun**.

NOR

The coordinator **NOR** is normally paired with another negative, as the second of the two correlatives. For example:

They could not sleep properly in the aircraft, nor stretch their legs.

We had neither fresh entertainment nor good quality food.

Never again would we fly with that airline, nor recommend it to others.

Though **NOR** marks the coordination of two clauses or phrases, it seems to set them apart in *disjunctive coordination* (see further under **coordinator**; and **conjunction**, section 4).

The correlative *NEITHER/NOR* is the least common of the correlatives according to research associated with the *Longman Grammar* (1999), found in formal and literary styles rather than everyday news. *NOR* is rare in conversation, and otherwise replaced by *OR* as the second coordinator, as in:

Never again would we fly with that airline, or recommend it to others.

The use of *NOR* to reinforce negative scope over the second coordinate probably seems rather too emphatic – especially since it is strictly pleonastic. See further under **negative concord**.

NOT

This is the all-purpose negator of modern English: see **negator**.

- ▶ For its alternation with *NO*, see under **negation**, section 3.
- ▶ For its contracted form *n't*, widely used in spoken English, see under **contraction (1)** and **clitic**.

NOTHING

See under **indefinite pronoun**.

notional agreement or notional concord

See under **agreement**, section 2.

noun

- 1 **concrete and abstract nouns**
 - 2 **common and proper nouns**
 - 3 **the grammar of common nouns**
 - 4 **count/countable and noncountable/mass nouns**
 - 5 **collective nouns**
 - 6 **plural-only nouns**
 - 7 **compound nouns**
-

Of all the lexical word classes, **nouns** are the most frequent by far in English. Research on the Longman corpus found that on average every fourth word was a noun (Biber et al. 1999). This goes with their representing all the entities of our experience (Reid 1991): concrete, abstract, countable, uncountable, common, and unique. They are also the most-open-ended class of words, to which new members are continually added.

1 **Concrete and abstract nouns**

With nouns we can refer both to physical, tangible objects such as *road*, *sand*, *tree*, as well as abstract ones such as *action*, *idea*, *idealism*. The first type are traditionally called **concrete nouns**, the second **abstract nouns**, though there's no hard and fast dividing line. *Art* may be a **concrete noun**, when applied to a painting or sculpture as an object to be looked at; or **abstract**, when used to appraise the artistic quality of the object.

Some nouns can be said to label general classes of objects. So the noun *cup* can refer to receptacles as small as a demi-tasse for coffee and as large as a football

trophy, and *dog* to canines ranging from a great dane to a chihuahua. The latter example shows how nouns can be scaled in terms of their specificity, with the generalized *canine* at one end of the scale and specific breeds of dog such as *chihuahua* at the other. Nouns with more general meanings are likely to function as *superordinates* for more specific ones (see further under **hyponymy**).

Where there is no ready-made superordinate, a generalized abstract noun may be borrowed from a related verb, as when *residence* (from *reside*) serves as a cover term for *house*, *cottage*, *mansion*, *flat*, *apartment*, *bungalow*, *hut*, etc. **General nouns** are freely coined in English to refer to abstract qualities: *appropriacy*, *derogatoriness*, *durability*, *inanimateness*, *pedagogism*, etc. **Nominalizations** like these lend their weight to the so-called **nominal style**: see further under **nominal and verbal style**.

2 Common and proper nouns

Common nouns differ from **proper nouns** in their referential scope. They can refer to a wide range of objects which are deemed to belong to the same class, e.g. *car*, *computer*, *house*, *window*. Proper nouns have in principle only one, unique referent, e.g. *Dante*, *Hitler*; *France*, *Madagascar*.

The two are formally distinguished in modern English by the use of an initial capital on the proper noun, and its absence from the common noun. See further **common noun**; and **proper noun and proper name**.

3 The grammar of common nouns

Common nouns embody a number of grammatical properties, including:

- **number**: this is the possibility of being singular or plural. In English the singular noun is unmarked, whereas the plural noun is usually marked by an -s inflection. Only foreign loanwords from Italian, Latin, or Greek have contrasting singular and plural inflections, as in *concerto/concerti*, *larva/larvae*, *phenomenon/phenomena*: see further under **plural**, section 3.
- **gender**: masculine/feminine distinctions are shown only in certain nouns for human beings, e.g. *man/woman/boy/girl*; and some animal names *cow/bull*, *ewe/ram*, etc. It is evident in certain feminine suffixes, e.g. *actress*, *hostess*; *comedienne*; *aviatrix*, and combining forms such as *-man* in *fireman*, *fisherman*, *policeman*. See further under **gender**, section 3.
- **case**: nouns in modern English bear no distinctive marking except for the genitive/possessive **case**, marked by the -'s as in the *dog's dinner*. The unmarked case is referred to as the **common case**. See further under **case**, section 2; and **genitive**, section 2.

4 Count/countable nouns and noncountable/mass nouns

Common nouns may be roughly divided into those which can refer to one or many (= count nouns), and those which can only refer to a mass entity (= mass nouns). **Count nouns** can take both the indefinite determiner *a*, and be pluralized, as in *an apple/apples*; *a table/tables*. **Mass nouns** can only refer to things as a collective, without particularizing the elements they consist of, e.g. *butter*, *rice*, *sand*, *soil*. Note however that some nouns have both **countable** and

noncountable senses and are therefore *dual* in this respect (see further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**). For the different types of determiner that go with count and mass nouns, see **determiner**, section 4.

5 **Collective nouns**

This term is applied to nouns that refer to a group of some kind, for example: *crowd, flock, mob, orchestra, team*. Their patterns of agreement with the following verb vary somewhat, because of the mismatch between their singular form and their plural semantics. See further under **agreement**, section 5.

6 **Plural-only nouns**

This is a curious collection of nouns which are always plural in form although they refer to a singular entity. The so-called *bipartites* such as *scissors, spectacles, trousers, tongs* nevertheless take a plural verb; whereas the *summation plurals* such as *athletics, dominoes, measles, physics*, take a singular verb. See further under **agreement**, section 5.

7 **Compound nouns**

These are nouns consisting of more than one base. They may be combinations of noun + noun, adjective + noun, or noun + some form of a verb, or verb + noun. See further under **compound word**, section 3.

- For the structure and syntax of the **noun phrase**, see under that heading.

noun clause

The term **noun clause** or *nominal clause* is a legacy of traditional grammar, which related the major types of subordinate clause to the corresponding phrase types (noun/adjectival/adverbial phrase). So the subordinate clause attached to a verb of saying, thinking, etc. might be seen as its object, and as an alternative to a noun phrase constituent in the matrix clause. Compare:

We all agreed [that] the map would be returned.

We all agreed on the return of the map.

Noun clauses like that are now usually termed *content clause* or *complement clause*, recognizing the syntactic fact that the subordinate clause *complements* the verb. Strictly speaking they are *verb-complement clauses*, although they can also complement nouns, as in:

Our agreement that the map would be returned ...

This is then a *noun-complement clause*. See further under **complement clause**, sections 1 and 2; and **clause**, section 4.

noun complement clause

See **noun-complement clause**.

noun phrase (NP)

- 1 **the noun phrase and its head**
 - 2 **complex premodification in the noun phrase**
 - 3 **noun phrase structure and countability**
 - 4 **noun phrases as clause constituents**
-

1 The noun phrase and its head

The **noun phrase** is a principal syntactic unit in languages everywhere. Though usually headed by a noun (common or proper), it can also be a pronoun, e.g. *the American president, Barack Obama, he*. An NP can also be headed by a nominalized adjective prefaced by *the*, as in:

The powerful tend to lack negotiating skills.

Note that NPs headed by an adjective that refers to people are construed in the plural. But if the adjective refers to an inanimate concept, as in *The best is yet to be*, it takes singular agreement.

The NP may consist of one or several words, with its head both pre- and post-modified, as in:

The unknown man who came to dinner had proposed to our daughter.

NPs are the expanding suitcases of English, because of their capacity to accommodate recursive patterns of modifiers on either side of the head:

The tall, dark, handsome man who came to the dinner which we held on the Sunday that preceded our wedding anniversary had proposed to our daughter.

Such a sentence challenges the reader with its recursive use of premodifying adjectives and a string of nested postmodifying relative clauses, but it is perfectly grammatical. See further under **recursion and recursiveness**.

2 Complex premodification in the noun phrase

When the head of the NP is a common noun, it may be preceded by one or two determiners and an adjectival phrase, as in:

All that very thorough early preparation ensured a good result.

This NP begins with a sequence of two determiners: the **predeterminer** “all” followed by a **central determiner** “that” (see further under **determiner**, section 3). The adjectives that form the **adjectival phrase** actually include a nested **AdjP** in “very thorough,” which precedes the second adjective “early.” Note that the two adjectives are respectively **evaluative** and **descriptive adjectives**, in their usual order of appearance (see further under **adjective**, section 2). In systemic–functional grammar, both types of adjective are termed **epithets**: see further under **epithet**.

3 Noun phrase structure and countability

There are some constraints on the constituents of the NP, according to the type of noun that heads it. When headed by a noncountable noun, only singular central determiners can accompany it (*THIS, THAT*), but never *A*; and the choice of postdeterminers is very limited. Countable nouns are not subject to any such restrictions. Proper nouns are also restricted in the type of premodification they support. Adjectives and *AdjPs* are possible, but not determiners:

Poor blind old Jim shuffled to the door.

Because proper nouns are in principle unique in their reference, no further *determination* of the NP is possible. But this restriction disappears when the proper noun is used in the plural, as in

the Ataturks of this world *the Alps*

See further under **proper noun and proper name**.

4 **Noun phrases as clause constituents**

The **noun phrase** is the essential content of any proposition, occurring as at least one of the clause constituents, and usually as several. The intransitive/monovalent verb has an NP as subject; while transitive/divalent verbs entail two NPs, as subject and object, as in the following:

The American president is sending his special envoy to Australia in a few weeks.

As in that sentence, noun phrases can occur within adjuncts as complements of the prepositional phrase, as illustrated. Noun phrases also function as possessive phrases within other noun phrases, and as adverbial adjuncts, as in:

The president's new envoy will be arriving next month.

See further under **determinative**; and **adjunct**, section 2.

noun-complement clause

A **noun-complement clause** is a subordinate clause that functions as complement of an NP in a main or matrix clause, as in:

The recognition that the peak oil supply has already been reached is not yet universal.

Such clauses generally express abstract content, whereas **verb-complement clauses** project the same or similar content in an active way:

They don't all recognize that the world's oil supply has already peaked.

See further under **complement clause**, section 2; and **nominal and verbal style**.

NP

This is the standard abbreviation for **noun phrase**. See further under that heading.

number

As a grammatical term, **number** is the concept of one or more than one (i.e. *singular* or *plural*). In modern English grammar it is expressed in several word classes, notably nouns, pronouns, determiners, and verbs.

- Nouns are typically marked for plural number by an -s inflection, while the singular number is implied by the lack of that inflection.
- Pronouns have quite different forms for the first and third persons singular and plural (*I-WE; HE/SHE/IT-THEY*).
- A few determiners have contrasting singular and plural forms, notably *THIS/THESE* and *THAT/THOSE*.
- English verbs (apart from modal verbs) are marked for singular only in the third person in the present tense, e.g. *sells*. The other persons and the third

person plural are all unmarked for number: *sell*. There is however one exception in the verb *BE*, where both the first person and third person singular present tense are marked (*am/is*) and distinct from *are*; and in the past tense the singular *was* contrasts with plural *were*.

Fundamental to the syntax of the clause, is the requirement that the subject NP and the verb should agree in number (singular with singular, plural with plural). This applies also to pronouns as subjects of the verb. Although this is the default pattern, it does vary somewhat with the inherent semantics of the head noun or the NP (see under **agreement**, sections 5–8). Some commentators (Reid 1991) argue that one should not overstate the rules of **number agreement** between subject and verb, since it is actually constructed by speakers and writers as they generate discourse. Grammarians also recognize that there are indefinite pronouns, complex determiners, and quantifiers which are **number transparent**, i.e. do not themselves dictate the subject–verb agreement of the clause. See further under **number transparency**.

The grammatical number of an NP also determines:

- the number of any demonstrative determiner in the same NP: singular *THIS* with *house*, plural *THESE* with *houses*
 - the **number** of any anaphoric pronouns later in the clause or sentence, or even the following sentence: *Those shares have kept their value through the recession. For their owners they have been an effective capital earner.* See further under **anaphora**.
- Note that the agreement of personal pronouns with the preceding NP is subject to **notional agreement**. See further under **agreement**, sections 2–4.

NUMBER OF

This quantificational phrase is partly grammaticalized, which makes for variable patterns of agreement with it. It naturally takes a plural complement, and in the form *A NUMBER OF* it usually takes plural agreement:

A number of good movies have appeared since January.

In that example, “a number of” works much like a complex determiner and is **number transparent**. Its complement (“movies”) becomes the de facto head of the NP, dictating agreement in the plural.

Compare:

The number of good movies doing the rounds is rather small.

In this second example, “the number” remains the head of the NP, with “of good movies” as its postmodifier. Thus singular agreement generally prevails because the definite article draws more attention to the semantics of the word “number” itself. Yet Huddleston and Pullum (2002) note that when this is expressed by premodification with the indefinite article, as in *a very large number of good movies have appeared ...*, plural agreement can still be found. See further under **agreement**, section 7; **determiner**, section 6.

number transparency

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to explain the inherent indeterminacy of complex determiners such as *A LOT OF*, *LOTS OF*; and non-numerical quantifiers such as *couple of*, *number of*, *rest of*, *heaps of*. Some of these expressions can take either count nouns or mass nouns as their complements, and if they are the subject NP, the complement then dictates the agreement with the verb. Compare:

A lot of timber was lying around. *A lot of logs were lying around.*
The rest of the cake was untouched. *The rest of the cakes were untouched.*
There was heaps of laughter. *There were heaps of laughs.*

In the same way, the determiners *ALL* and *HALF* are **number transparent**, in that their complements can decide the agreement *HALF*:

All/half the rice was eaten. *All/half the loaves were eaten.*

Interrogative pronouns such as *WHAT*, *WHICH* are also **number transparent**. Compare:

What is your plan? *What are your plans?*
Which is his house? *Which were the apples you brought back from the farm?*

The complementary NP decides the number agreement, which is anticipated in the singular/plural form of the verb *BE* and other primary auxiliaries.

object

The **object** is a common constituent of the clause in the SVO sequence, occurring after the finite verb, and the key to its **transitivity** (see further under **clause**, section 1; and **transitivity**, section 1). It may be realized by an NP, including any variety of pronoun.

In fact there are two types of object to be distinguished in English grammar:

- **direct object**, which is the complement of a transitive/divalent verb, as in:

They announced the winner.

This is the default type of object, which represents the semantic unit affected by the verbal process, whether material or mental etc. (see further under **verb**, section 6).

- **indirect object**, which is the recipient or beneficiary of a ditransitive/trivalent verb, as in:

He gave the winner the prize.

This is a type of object licensed by a very particular set of verbs, those of “giving” or making something change hands. It is found almost only in the SVOO clause pattern, and (in standard English) as the first of the two objects. It is called the **indirect object** on the basis that it is secondary rather than primary to the verbal process, as the beneficiary/recipient rather than the unit which is transferred. Its normal position ahead of the direct object and next to the verb marks it as the indirect object. It may also be paraphrased by a prepositional phrase and placed after the direct object:

He gave the prize to the winner.

In this mutation the same phrase becomes an **adjunct** to the verb in the SVOA clause pattern. It also gives it **end weight**: see further under that heading.

Some modern grammars treat both the SVOO and SVOA clause patterns identified above as SVCC, because either way the direct and indirect objects are required by the ditransitive verb. See further under **complement**, section 3.

In classical grammar the two types of objects were distinguished by their inflections as the **accusative** and **dative case** (see further under **case**, section 1). In English grammar the nouns or pronouns serving as objects are indistinguishable in form, and identifiable only by their order relative to the finite verb, and their semantic or **thematic** roles in relation to it: see further under **case grammar**.

Note that in traditional grammar, the term **object** was also used to refer to the complement of a preposition. See further under **complement**, section 1; and **prepositional phrase**, section 1.

object complement

See under **predicative complement**.

object raising

See **raising**.

object territory

This term is used by Quirk et al. (1985) to refer to the zone immediately after verb where the case of the pronoun may diverge from that required by formal syntax. The prime application is to sentences such as *It's me*, *It's him*, etc. where the pronoun complement is in the accusative rather than the nominative case in the SVC clause pattern. In strict traditional grammar, the pronoun should be nominative (*It is I*) because it complements the subject of the verb.

The term **object territory** is extended by some grammarians to other postverbal points of pronoun variability, as when the accusative pronoun takes the place of others that might be used in formal writing, as in:

Everyone else gets more pocket money than me. (cf. ... *than I do*)

His mother was worried about him going to the carnival. (cf. ... *about his going ...*)

See further under **comparative clause**, section 3; and **gerund-participle**, section 3.

objective case

This term is substituted for **accusative case** in some modern English grammars (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985), to refer to the distinctive form of most personal pronouns used as the **direct object** of a verb or preposition.

They drove us to the city.

It was an eye-opener for us.

The same objective case form also is used for the **indirect object** in modern English:

They gave us an unforgettable experience.

In traditional grammar the latter is the **dative case** rather than the **accusative**, although the two have not had different pronoun forms in English for centuries. The term **objective case** can therefore be used to cover both accusative and dative forms of the personal pronouns, except when those names are needed to distinguish the syntactic functions of the pronoun, as direct and indirect object of the clause. See further under **accusative**, **dative**, and **object**.

oblique

- 1 the inflected case associated with non-subject roles
 - 2 the relationship of the following NP to a prepositional verb
 - 3 prepositional phrases and other constituents
-

1 The inflected case associated with non-subject roles

In traditional grammar, the term **oblique** was used for any case other than the nominative which was marked by inflection. In modern English this could only be the accusative/dative case used for the personal pronouns (*ME, HIM, HER, US, THEM*), and the interrogative/relative (*WHOM*).

2 The relationship of the following NP to a prepositional verb

In modern English grammar, **oblique** is sometimes used to refer to the less direct relationship of an NP to the licensing verb via the preposition, as in:

They insisted on casual dress.

The review referred to my earlier paper.

See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

3 Prepositional phrases and other constituents

The term **oblique** is applied by grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to the slightly detached relationship between the NP of a prepositional phrase and the NP constituent which it modifies, as in **double genitive** constructions such as *a friend of John's*. See further under **double genitive**.

The term **oblique** is also used in connection with a variety of other constructions where the oblique NP of a prepositional phrase acts as a restrictive modifier of the constituent to which it is attached. See for example:

- appositive constructions:

We will visit the city of London in the month of May.

- partitive and quantitative constructions:

a group of us, three of us

- complex predicative complements:

They regard him as the arbiter of all things.

See further under **apposition**; and **partitive**, section 2.

oblique stroke

See under **slash**.

OF

-
- 1 prepositional phrases with **OF**
 - 2 **OF** in partitive and quantitative constructions
 - 3 appositional use of **OF**
 - 4 **OF** in genitive paraphrases
 - 5 double genitive construction
-

1 Prepositional phrases with **OF**

OF is the most common preposition in English, because of its use in many kinds of prepositional phrases that postmodify NPs, with nouns, or certain types of pronoun or adjective as head. For example:

The legend of the lost ring of the Niebelungs will be told for ever.

Most of us have heard it before.

The best of the characters is heroic.

OF-phrases can postmodify almost any common noun, and were historically found with proper nouns also, as in *John of Gaunt*. They postmodify quantitative pronouns (*ANY, BOTH, EACH, SOME, MOST, ALL*), and comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. All these roles make *OF* one of the most **grammaticized prepositions** of English (see further under **prepositions**, section 1). Several of its other distinct syntactic functions are indicated in the sections below.

2 **OF in partitive and quantitative constructions**

An *OF-phrase* accommodates the whole which is mentioned as the oblique in **partitive** constructions. See for example those with indefinite pronouns as head:

any of us few of the relatives some of his advisers

(See further under **partitive**, section 2.) *OF-phrases* are also used as the complement of quantificational nouns and pronouns, as in:

all of the answers a set of 20 principles a heap of ideas

The importance of the **oblique** in such constructions helps to explain why plural agreement may be used when such phrases with singular quantificational nouns are the subject of the clause (see further under **agreement**, section 4). It also explains why some of them may be regarded as “fused head” constructions, especially those like the first which are led by an indefinite or quantitative pronoun. See further under **fused head**.

3 **Appositional use of OF**

In everyday expressions like *the city of New York*, the two NPs separated by *OF* are clearly coreferential, as is clear from the alternative construction *New York City*. But because the specifier in *the city of New York* is syntactically oblique, it represents **partial** rather than **full apposition**. See **apposition**, section 3.

4 **OF in genitive paraphrases**

OF-phrases can provide a paraphrase for NPs including a noun in the genitive case as determinative. They are syntactically interchangeable in some but by no means all applications. Compare:

the economic leaders of Japan Japan's economic leaders

the author of the book the book's author

the hat of John John's hat

the face of Jane Jane's face

In the first two examples, the alternate versions can be freely interchanged and are natural and idiomatic in either form. But the third and fourth examples with personal proper nouns are more natural with the genitive case as determinative, whether they involve alienable or inalienable possession. In such cases, the *OF-phrase* is very marked and much less natural.

5 Double genitive construction

The double genitive construction is a special kind of *OF-phrase* in which the oblique itself is a genitive form. In its elemental form, e.g. *friend of ours*, the oblique is the independent form of the pronoun (see **pronoun**, section 4). It alternates with the determiner *OUR*, though the *OF-phrase* is more arm's length and thus differs slightly in meaning. This applies also when the genitive is a personal name. Compare the three alternatives:

[Marie's friend] a friend of Marie's a friend of Marie

These three constructions suggest a scale of acquaintance, in which the second example with the double genitive is intermediate, and not necessarily redundant. See further under **redundancy**.

ON

This is one of the *grammaticized prepositions* of English, used in complementing nouns and especially multiword verbs. See further under **preposition**, section 1; and **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**, sections 1, 2, and 3.

ONE

-
- 1 **ONE as a cardinal number**
 - 2 **ONE as a substitute word**
 - 3 **ONE as a generic pronoun**
-

The word *ONE* has several lexicogrammatical uses, as a numerical determiner, pronoun, and noun.

1 **ONE as a cardinal number**

When used to quantify a noun in an NP, *ONE* appears as a *postdeterminer*, i.e. immediately preceding the head:

This was my one chance to see the performance.

See further under **determiner**, section 3.

As a number, it also serves as an independent pronoun and head of a noun phrase

More than one in three children are overweight.

See further under **noun phrase**.

The grammatical agreement between phrases like *one in three* or *one (out) of three* and the following verb is ambivalent: see entry on **ONE IN/OUT OF**.

2 **ONE as a substitute word**

ONE works rather like a pronoun in being able to substitute for a previously mentioned noun phrase:

He came without a trained partner, but we found one for him.

Yet as a substitute **word**, it can also be premodified and pluralized like an ordinary noun: as in:

Those big white peaches are riper than the yellow ones.

When modified thus, *ONE* substitutes only for the head of the noun phrase. The use of *ONE* in substitute role is especially common in speech (Biber et al. 1999), where it has an important role in *cohesion*. See further under **pro-form** and **cohesion**.

3 **ONE as a generic pronoun**

ONE has long served as a kind of indefinite pronoun, referring to a generalized individual:

One wouldn't think of doing it nowadays.

Unlike the regular third person singular pronouns, *ONE* does not refer to a specific third party, and is thus “nonreferential” (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). In this role *ONE* is analogous to the French pronoun *on* or the German word *man*. But English *ONE* as a generic pronoun tends to sound rather formal. This goes with the fact that it occurs in writing rather than speech, and especially the more crafted kinds of writing, such as fiction and academic prose (Biber et al. 1999). In conversation *generic ONE* is usually replaced by generic use of *YOU* (see further under **YOU**, section 2).

Generic *ONE* has always challenged English grammarians and usage commentators as to which pronoun should be used to refer back to it. Should it be:

At the time one didn't see how one could do it.

At the time one didn't see how he could do it.

At the time one didn't see how they could do it.

The first pattern with *ONE* repeated has been favored in British usage since the later C19, whereas American usage is divided between the first and second patterns (*Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, 1989). The pattern with *HE* is actually the oldest of the three, according to the *Oxford Dictionary* (1989), and could perhaps still be justified as a generic use of *HE* (see **generic pronoun**). Yet because *HE* is the masculine pronoun, it runs the risk of not seeming to be coreferential with generic *ONE*. There's a similar problem of coreferentiality for the pattern with *THEY*, because it is inherently plural – even though it would otherwise be the natural choice because it's now so freely used as a gender-free singular pronoun (see **THEY and THEM**). Thus the shifting semantics of *HE* and *THEY* tend to reinforce the repeated use of *ONE* (i.e. the first pattern), despite the fact that it makes the generic pronoun more prominent.

Although generic use of *ONE* usually projects a third person singular reference, in upper class British style, the pronoun *ONE* was also used as a substitute for the standard first person singular pronoun (*I*), as in:

One is used to early rising.

This use of *ONE* in thinly veiled self-reference now sounds awkward, if not pretentious to many (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

ONE IN/OUT OF and ONE OF THOSE THAT/WHO/WHICH

Proportional phrases like *one in ten* and *one out of ten*, when used as the subject NP, raise the question of agreement with the following verb. See for example:

Only one in ten citizens read(s) for pleasure.

Only one out of ten citizens buy(s) books nowadays.

Both phrases raise the question of whether to use formal agreement in the singular which makes “one” the head of the NP. Or to go for notional agreement in the plural, on the basis that the phrase does not refer to a single case, but to a much larger percentage of citizens represented by such a formula. See further under **agreement**, section 2.

In sentences that use *ONE OF THOSE THAT/WHO/WHICH* as their subject NP, the same issue arises in the complementary relative clause:

He is one of those who paint(s) the landscape as if it was the same everywhere.

The book is one of those which take(s) too long to engage the reader.

Again the question of singular or plural agreement in each case reflects whether the speaker/writer is projecting a view of the one painter/book or the many of that type. The use of formal agreement (in the singular) would anticipate further discussion of the one painter/book, whereas the use of notional agreement (in the plural) suggests that the writer/speaker is profiling a whole group of painters/books that fit the description.

one-place predicate (1-place predicate)

See under **predicate**, section 2; and **valency**, section 3.

onomatopoeia

See under **phonetheme**.

open condition

See under **IF**.

open question

See under **question**, section 2.

open word class

See under **word class**, section 3.

open-class quantifier

See under **determiner**, section 6.

operator

-
- 1 “operator” defined in general terms
 - 2 auxiliary verbs as operators, and the NICE properties
 - 3 operators in tag questions and declarative tags
 - 4 operators and inversion
-

1 “Operator” defined in general terms

The term **operator** can be used to refer to a grammatical element with scope over some part of the sentence in which it occurs. It may be applied to the determiner or quantifier with their scope over the noun phrase, to negation with its greater or lesser scope within the sentence, and to the tense operated by the finite verb within the verb phrase.

2 Auxiliary verbs as operators

The commonest use of **operator** is to refer to auxiliary verbs (*BE, HAVE, DO*) which carry the tense in compound verbs/verb phrases (Biber et al. 1999). For example:

Does the post office open on Sunday?

Have they considered any alternative?

The post office doesn't open on Sundays.

The words underlined in the examples show how the auxiliary operator is found especially in discontinuous verb phrases, in interrogative and negative clauses. The auxiliary *DO* is the most conspicuous operator, because of the “*DO*-support” it provides in formulating both negative and interrogative verb phrases for all lexical verbs (see further under **DO**).

Other auxiliaries and modals serve as operators themselves in interrogative clauses:

Are they coming with us?

Have they found a hotel?

Will we all be together?

May we join you for dinner?

Fronted uses of *BE* as a copular verb and *HAVE* as simple transitive are also examples of operators:

Are you OK?

Have you any money?

These additional “lexical” uses of *BE* and *HAVE* are distinguished from the regular auxiliaries by some grammarians. But others (e.g. Huddleston and Pullum 2002) note that they further illustrate the operation of the NICE properties associated with all auxiliaries. See further under **NICE**.

3 Operators in tag questions and declarative tags

Additional roles of operators can be seen in tag questions, which they help to formulate on the basis of any auxiliary or modal already used in the main clause, or otherwise using a form of *DO*.

You can be there, can't you?

He won't be coming, will he?

They drove down yesterday, didn't they?

For more on the formulation of the **tag question**, see under that heading.

Declarative tags likewise extract an auxiliary from the main clause as their operator, or else rely on *DO*:

We've brought the whole family, we have.

It takes a whole day, it does.

4 Operators and inversion

Subject–operator inversion often occurs when a sentence begins with a negative or restrictive element. See for example:

Never did I see so many babies in one extended family.

By no means were they all alike.

Rarely are such intergenerational gatherings held these days.

As the examples show, this subject–operator inversion can take place with either a pronoun or a longish noun phrase: see further under **inversion**, section 2.

Note that this subject–operator inversion takes place only when the negative element has scope over the whole sentence. Compare:

At no time did they express frustration. [sentence negative]

In no time at all they would be gone. [negative adjunct]

See further under **negation**, section 4.

optative

This term is borrowed from classical grammar, where it referred to special paradigms of inflections for the finite verb, used to express wishes and desires. In English grammar, **optative** is sometimes applied to constructions formulated with clause-initial *WOULD*, such as:

Would that they had spoken up sooner!

In the same way, **optative** is used to refer to formulaic exclamations expressing a wish which are formed with the present subjunctive. They may or may not foreground the verb:

Perish the thought! Politeness be damned!

See further under **subjunctive**, section 4.

OR

This is one of the four coordinators of English, used to formulate alternatives and especially *disjunctive coordination*. See further under **coordination**, section 4.

orthography

The technical term **orthography** covers the whole writing system, including spelling and punctuation practices, both of which intersect with grammar and morphology. The chief elements of the English *orthographic system* are the twenty-six letters of the roman alphabet, which are used singly and in combination to represent words and approximate their sounds. The units of a spelling system are called **graphemes** (see further under that heading). Word spellings are however deeply connected to their individual histories, and they

make the orthographic system very pluralistic, witness the spelling alternations in the parts of old verbs such as *say/said*; *bring/brought*; *teach/taught*. The conventions associated with capitalization are much younger, and standardized only in the C18. The English punctuation system is also relatively young, having evolved with modern English from C17 on. See further under **punctuation**.

OUR

- For the grammatical uses of **OUR**, see under **personal pronoun**, section 4; and **determiner**, section 3.
- For its contextual meanings, see **WE and US**.

OURS

See under **possessive pronoun**.

override reflexive

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to describe the non-obligatory use of reflexives rather than bare pronouns, as in:

my wife and myself *compared with yourself*

In such cases, the default expression would be the simple pronouns: *I/me, you*.

But they may be **overridden** by optional reflexive pronouns, in relatively formal styles of discourse. See further under **reflexive pronoun**, section 3.

- For the overriding of regular patterns of agreement, see **semantic override**.

P

paradigm

- 1 paradigm as a set of inflectional forms
 - 2 paradigm and syntagm
 - 3 paradigm as a particular framework for theoretical analysis
-

1 Paradigm as a set of inflectional forms

This term has long been used by grammarians to refer to the set of forms taken by a word according to its function and meaning within a sentence. So the paradigm for the English noun *child* would be:

<i>child</i>	singular, common case
<i>child's</i>	singular, genitive case
<i>children</i>	plural, common case
<i>children's</i>	plural, genitive case

Likewise there are paradigms for verbs, for the English verb *HAVE* for example:

<i>have</i>	1st/2nd singular, 1st/2nd/3rd plural, present tense
<i>has</i>	3rd singular, present tense
<i>had</i>	all persons, past tense
<i>had</i>	past participle
<i>having</i>	present participle (<i>ing-form</i>)

In traditional grammar, the noun paradigms were sometimes referred to as **declensions** and the verb paradigms as **conjugations**, as in Latin grammar. See further under **conjugation** and **declension**.

2 Paradigm and syntagm

In linguistic analysis the paradigm is the vertical axis of language, in which lexical choices of words and word forms are made. It contrasts with the **syntagm**, the horizontal axis, in which syntactic choices are made to formulate a proposition. Both kinds of choice are exercised in the following pair of sentences, where the second paraphrases the first.

Shall I sing you a song of the fish of the sea?

Let me sing a lyric for you about the ocean's wildlife.

The **paradigmatic** choices in the second version are firstly, to use an imperative form of the verb ("let me" rather than the interrogative "Shall I?"), which also entails a different form of the pronoun. The preposition "of" is replaced by the more specific "about." Other paradigmatic choices are the

substitution of “wildlife” for “fish,” and of “ocean” for “sea.” The last item uses the genitive case in “ocean’s,” instead of the original noun “sea” in the common case. In each case the choices are made from the same word class (pronoun, verb, preposition, noun), with the same or an alternative inflected form associated with that class. Words with similar meaning have been chosen for the paraphrase, although they could have been different in meaning while still working within the same paradigmatic slots.

The *syntagmatic* choices are to be seen firstly in the pragmatic decision to make the utterance a friendly kind of imperative, rather than a question (however rhetorical). In this case it doesn’t affect the ordering of the verb’s subject, but it does impact on the order of the verb’s objects. The indirect object “you” comes before the direct object “a song” in the first version, but the two are reversed for the second version, in which the indirect object requires a preposition (“for”). A second syntagmatic choice is the reconstruction of the phrase “fish of the sea” (postmodified NP) into the premodified NP “the ocean’s wildlife”.

3 **Paradigm as a particular framework for theoretical analysis**

The term **paradigm** is also widely used to refer to a particular theoretical framework for an academic discipline. The changing of paradigms involves quite different ways of interpreting the raw material of the discipline, and often new sets of technical terms. This radical kind of *paradigm shift* may affect the whole cast of scientific thinking, as discussed in Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The late C20 has seen the rise of substantially different grammatical paradigms by which to analyze the raw material of discourse, hence the need to discuss alternative terms and analyses at various points in this dictionary.

See further under **cognitive grammar, government-binding theory, lexical-functional grammar, systemic-functional grammar, transformational-generative grammar**.

parataxis

This Greek word meaning “side by side” has been put to multiple uses by English grammarians, to refer to elements juxtaposed as equals in a syntactic structure. Some reserve it for a coordinated structure where there are no explicit coordinators, i.e. for *asyndetic coordination*, as in *I came, I saw, I conquered*. Others use it as a general term for *coordination*, with or without the use of *coordinators*: see under **coordination**, section 7.

Parataxis is used by some grammarians (e.g. Halliday) to refer to certain other juxtapositions of clauses without overt use of conjunction, for example when a clause of saying or thinking is used with a direct quotation:

The instruction said “Go directly to jail.”

The equal status of the two clauses is demonstrated by the fact that their order is interchangeable:

“Go directly to jail,” the instruction said.

Compare the syntax of the same content when presented as a *complement clause*, as in:

The instruction said (that) I should go directly to jail.

The second construction shows *hypotactic* rather than *paratactic* projection of the same raw material. See further under **projection**, section 3.

parentheses

This is an alternative name for the pair of *round brackets* used to enclose a *parenthetical phrase* or *clause*. See next entry.

parenthesis

A parenthesis is a string of words with its own independent structure, which is inserted into a longer sentence without interconnecting with its syntax. For example:

*We saw a great movie called “The Life of Others” (something like that) last weekend.
They are, I know, planning to go away at Easter.*

As in those two examples, the *parenthetical phrase/clause* may be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of round brackets or with commas. Dashes may also be used. See further under **brackets**, section 1; **comma**, section 2; and **dash**, section 4.

parse tree

See **tree diagram**.

part of speech

In traditional grammar, the word classes (noun, verb, etc.) were referred to as *parts of speech*. See further under **word class**, section 1.

participant

In systemic–functional grammar, the **participant** is one of the three essential types of clause constituents, along with the *process* and one or more *circumstances* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The participant(s) is/are closely involved with the process (i.e. the verbal component), which is detailed by the circumstances. While the participant(s) are realized by means of nominal groups (noun phrases) or pronouns, the process is embodied in the verbal group (verb phrase), and the circumstance(s) are expressed in adverbial groups (adverbial phrases) or prepositional phrases. See for example:

<i>The guide</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>the tourists</i>	<i>a lecture</i>	<i>in the bus.</i>
participant	process	participant	participant	circumstance

All three components can be analyzed under more specific terms: those for the participants in a verbal process would be as follows:

<i>The guide</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>the tourists</i>	<i>a lecture.</i>
participant: sayer		participant: receiver	participant: verbiage

Compare those for the participants in a material process:

<i>The guide</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>the tourists</i>	<i>a brochure.</i>
participant: actor		participant: recipient	participant: goal

Thus participants take on a variety of roles, depending on the type of *process* and the type of agency associated with it: see further under **process**.

Note that in certain types of relational process (expressed with the verb *BE*), the *circumstance* can also become a kind of participant. Compare the use of “the coast” in the following:

We'll drive down the coast.
Our destination is the coast.

In the first sentence (material process), “down the coast” is strictly circumstantial, as an adverbial/prepositional phrase that remains outside the participant/process nexus. But in the second sentence (relational process), “the coast” becomes the identified participant. It neutralizes the systemic–functional distinction between participant and circumstance, and aligns them with the *arguments* of the verb endorsed by other grammars. See further under **circumstance**; and **valency**, sections 2 and 3.

particle

The term has been a catch-all for words whose syntactic behavior doesn't fit exactly into traditional word classes such as preposition and adverb. It has long been applied (as in the *Comprehensive Grammar 1985*) to the prepositions and adverbs which collocate with multiword verbs: those in *phrasal verbs* such as *pick out* (a tune), *send out* (an email), *turn on* (the light), as well as *prepositional verbs* such as *ask for*, *defer to*, *rely on*.

More recent grammars (e.g. the *Cambridge Grammar 2002*) distinguish between the two types of verb by reserving the term **particle** for the movable adverb-like preposition used in phrasal verbs such as *pick (it) out*, *turn (it) on*; and using the term **preposition** for the item which complements prepositional verbs like *ask for (it)*, *defer to (it)*. Similarly the *Longman Grammar (1999)* uses **adverbial particle** for the second element of phrasal verbs, and the term **bound preposition** for the second element in prepositional verbs. This nomenclature helps to distinguish the different syntactic relations of the particle with their respective verbs. See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**, sections 1 and 2.

partitive

- 1 **partitive constructions and partitive nouns**
 - 2 **quantitative and qualitative constructions**
 - 3 **partitive genitive**
-

1 Partitive constructions and partitive nouns

The term **partitive** is attached to a number of constructions with *OF*-phrases, where the first noun is identified as a part of the second, i.e. the whole set or concept to which it belongs. For example:

a bit of peace *a blade of grass* *an item of clothing*
a piece of furniture *a slice of cheese* *a wad of paper*

Some **partitive nouns** (like *blade*) are idiomatically associated with the second noun in the construction. Others are restricted to a few collocates, for example *a wad of paper/banknotes/tobacco*, while yet others can be used more widely, witness the *slice of cheese/ham/bacon/bread/cake* as well as *a slice of life/history* etc. A few others like *bit*, *item*, *piece* are quite generic, and often used to refer to a countable unit of a noncount noun: see further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

2 Quantitative and qualitative constructions

Partitive constructions are often loosely quantitative, especially those headed by indefinite pronouns or quantifiers, as in:

any of us *a few of the police* *a group of protesters* *much of the noise*

Some of these constructions raise issues of agreement with the following verb (see further under **agreement**, sections 4 and 7). *OF*-phrases headed by non-numerical quantifiers such as *heaps of work*, and **collective nouns** as in *herd of cattle*, are also sometimes discussed as partitives, because they too identify a subset of a larger group. Some partitives denote qualitative categorizations and subcategorizations of a larger semantic concept or group:

a kind of friendship *that sort of movie* *my type of person*

In all these partitive constructions, the part is indicated before the whole, which is the **oblique** (see further under **oblique**, section 3).

3 Partitive genitive

The term **partitive genitive** is applied to partitive NPs expressed with a genitive ('s), unlike all the examples in sections 1 and 2 above. For example:

the book's cover *a child's face* *a rabbit's paw* *the earth's surface*

In such cases the whole is identified in the genitive noun and the part is the head of the NP, rather than the other way round. See further under **genitive**, section 2; and under **OF**, section 4 for the interchangeability of the two.

- For the semantics of the part-whole relationship, see **meronymy**.

passive voice

- 1 voice: passive vs. active
- 2 agentless passive
- 3 GET-passive
- 4 prepositional passive

1 Voice: passive vs. active

The term **voice** is used in English grammar to distinguish alternative ways of projecting the verbal process, the so-called **active** and **passive**. While the **active voice** has the subject of the verb perform its action, the **passive voice** has as its subject the entity on which the verbal process focuses or impacts. So the

grammatical object of the active version becomes the subject of the passive one. Compare:

The opposition raised the question of sustainability.

The question of sustainability was raised by the opposition.

In the first (**active**) sentence, the subject NP “the opposition” does the raising of the question. Whereas in the second sentence with the passive voice, the grammatical subject (“the question . . .”) is the entity affected by the verb “raised,” and the actual subject/agent of the active version is coupled in obliquely after the verb, through the use of a *BY*-phrase. While the passive is formulated through use of the auxiliary *BE* and the past participle of the verb, the active can be expressed in various types of VP, including a simple verb, as shown in the first sentence above.

Passive constructions often serve as alternative formulations of the clause in extended exposition and argument. They reconfigure the SVO clause structure so that the object can be foregrounded ahead of the verb and in topic position (see further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**). Passive constructions are most frequent in academic prose, accounting for 25% of all finite VPs, according to research by Biber et al. (1999). In conversation they account for only 2%.

2 **Agentless passive**

Although the passive clause uses a *BY*-phrase to articulate the agent of the verb, it is absent from many passive constructions. For example:

We were well instructed for the mission.

His creativity should be stimulated there.

They were engaged to be married for years.

These examples represent some of the several types of passive constructions with which *BY*-phrases are much less common. The identity of the agent may be known, or not considered important. Either could explain the first example above, where the **agentless passive** keeps the focus on the outcome of the verbal process rather than the input. The second, meanwhile, is a psychological process, and the third a reciprocal action. These various types of agentless passives (or **short passives**) are actually commoner by far than the **long passives** that use the *BY*-phrase, in all types of writing including academic prose (Biber et al. 1999).

3 **GET-passive**

This construction provides an alternative to the standard *BE*-passive, in examples like:

They were arrested for disorderly conduct.

They got arrested for disorderly conduct.

Despite such parallels, the *GET*-passive often seems to add the sense that the subject has somehow contributed to the verbal process, especially when it refers to changes in social status, as in *get married/divorced/promoted/fired*. *GET*-passives are even more likely than *BE*-passives to be agentless. In corpus-based research, Collins (1996) found that more than 92% were “short”; overall the *GET*-passives

occurred more than twice as often in spoken data as in written data; and they were commoner in fiction than in nonfiction writing of any type. Both findings confirm that *GET*-passives are associated with spoken rather than written discourse, and somewhat informal style. But their frequency in writing has increased significantly in the last fifty years, according to Mair and Leech's research (2006). See further under **GET: get/got/gotten**, section 5.

4 Prepositional passive

The prepositional passive is primarily associated with prepositional verbs, with the complement of the preposition extracted as the subject of the *passive* construction. For example:

Climate change was not believed in then.

Action was called for by all political parties.

Energy-saving schemes were looked down on.

The environmental challenges would have to be dealt with.

As in all those examples, the prepositional passive produces a *stranded preposition*: see further under **preposition**, section 5.

past participle

This is one of the nonfinite forms of a verb, which all *regular verbs* form with an *-ed* inflection. *Irregular verbs* form it in various ways, through changes to the vowels and/or consonants of the stem, and by the addition of *-(e)n* in some cases (see further under **irregular verb** and **regular verb**). The past participle combines with auxiliary verbs to form secondary tenses: see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 2.

past perfect

This secondary tense combines the past of auxiliary *HAVE* with a verb's past participle, to represent an event or action completed in the past. For example:

They had found the right path before.

The guide had trained them to use a compass.

Some grammarians prefer to use the classical term *pluperfect*. Either way *perfect* refers to the completion of the process indicated by the verb. In subordinate clauses, especially conditional ones, the past perfect is the *remote past*, which makes the possibility very hypothetical and most unlikely:

They would have avoided trouble if they had carried better maps.

See further under **perfect aspect** and **sequence of tenses**.

past tense

This is one of the two primary *tenses* of English, contrasting with the *present tense* (see further under **tense**, section 1). The **past tense** is usually marked by characteristic inflections, i.e. the suffix *-ed* if it is a regular verb, or by internal changes of the root vowel, and sometimes associated consonant changes, if it is an irregular verb. See further under **regular verb**, and **irregular verb**.

Though the past tense is often used to mark past events, it does not necessarily refer to past time events. In complex sentences, the past tense may be used

in the subordinate clauses so as to harmonize with that of the main clause, whether it refers to past, present, or future time. For example:

The question was whether you were able to come to the workshop.

This **sequence of tenses** is more often adopted in formal than everyday style, where it is just as likely to be:

The question was whether you are able to come to the workshop.

See further under **sequence of tenses**.

Note that the classical term **preterite** is preferred by some grammarians, e.g. Huddleston and Pullum (2002), rather than **past tense**. Though a less accessible term, it avoids the conflation of time and tense which can happen in references to the past tense.

patient

This is one of the thematic roles identified in case grammar and government-binding theory, among others. The term is based on the literal sense of its Latin ancestor, the verb *patior* ("I suffer"). Hence it refers to the entity which undergoes the action of the verb, either as object of a transitive verb or as the subject of an intransitive verb, as is "meat" in:

We cooked the meat on the barbecue.

The meat cooked quickly.

The **patient** is sometimes conflated with **theme**. See **theme**, section 3.

pattern grammar

See under **colligation**.

paucal

This is the grammarians' name for function words or phrases that express low quantities or levels of something, such as *LITTLE*, *LESS*, *A FEW*, *SEVERAL*. They contrast with **multal** words and phrases which refer to large quantities, such as *MUCH*, *MANY*, *A LOT*. Both sets have multiple grammatical roles as determiners, pronouns, and adverbs: see further **LITTLE; LESS; LESSER; LOT OF, LOTS (OF), A LOT, and LOTTA; MANY, MUCH, and MORE**.

perfect aspect

This dimension of the verb's meaning is expressed through the combination of the auxiliary verb *HAVE* and the past participle of a lexical verb. For example:

Have they come yet?

He has been waiting for seven years.

She had never heard him say it before.

As the examples show, the **perfect aspect** may be expressed in both present and past tense, creating the **present perfect** and **past perfect** respectively. For grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002), they are effectively **secondary tenses**.

The perfect aspect can also be built into passive constructions:

They have/had been encouraged to think positively.

Note that the passive perfect uses the past participle of the verb *BE* as well as that of the lexical verb.

Use of the **present perfect** has been on the increase over the last two centuries, more noticeably in British than American English. See further under **present perfect**.

perfective

In traditional grammar, **perfective** was used as an alternative term to **perfect** in identifying the **aspect** of a compound VP formed with the *-ed* participle, such as *has asked*, *had replied*. See further under **perfect aspect**.

Modern grammarians use **perfective** to refer to the category of **aspectuality** which includes both present and past perfect forms. It contrasts with the **imperfective** (or **progressive**) category, which includes the present and past **progressive** forms. See further under **aspect**, and **progressive aspect**.

performative verb

This term identifies a verb which performs the very speech act it articulates, as when the marriage celebrant says:

I hereby declare you man and wife.

Performative verbs depend for their force on very particular circumstances, as in the example above. The “I” has to be a legally registered officer of the state – or a clergyperson. The verb has to be in the present tense, embedded in the moment of communication. The “you” has to be a couple presenting themselves to be married, and the context has to be arranged and agreed on for public purposes. With all these elements in place, the utterance satisfies the truth conditions for it to be a performative verb. Were it used in the past tense (“declared”), or with any other subject than *I*, it would not be a performative verb. Thus it’s the special use of the verb which makes it performative, not that it belongs to a special class. The performative function gives it a distinct **illocutionary force**: see further under that heading.

An alternative name for the **performative** use of a verb is **speech act verb**.

period

This is an alternative name for the **full stop**, used in North America. See further under **full stop**.

periodic sentence

See **left- and right-branching sentences**.

perlocutionary effect

See **illocutionary force**.

person

- 1 **grammatical person**
 - 2 **ordering of the three persons**
-

1 **Grammatical person**

This is the property of grammar by which it identifies the roles of those involved in discourse, either as:

- speaker/writer of the text (= first person)
- listener/reader of the text (= second person)
- person or topic being talked about (= third person)

These distinctions are most fully expressed in English through different pronoun selections: *I, WE* for the first person; *YOU* for the second person; *HE, SHE, IT, THEY* for the third person. See further under **first person pronoun, second person pronoun, third person pronoun**.

The difference between **first, second, and third person** is also marked in the singular present tense of *BE*, in *I am, you are, s/he is*. In the other primary auxiliaries and lexical verbs, there are only residual differences between the **first/second person** form *I/you have* and the third person *s/he has*. In modal verbs there is no such difference at all, witness *I/you/he/we/they can, could, may*, etc.

2 **Ordering of the three persons**

When two (or all three) of the grammatical persons are coordinated, polite convention dictates that the second and/or third person should precede the first (Quirk et al. 1985; Wales 1996). For example:

You and I will be there on command.

The invitation was addressed to my husband and me.

(For the selection of *I* and *ME* in coordinated structures, see under **I and ME**, sections 2 and 3.) The conventional order for the persons is sometimes varied in line with their information status (Biber et al. 1999), as in formal correspondence:

Please let me know if you require assistance, and I and my colleagues will be delighted to help.

The writer thus emphasizes his/her own personal readiness to help, rather than passing the request onto others – which is no doubt reassuring in a letter from a government department.

personal pronoun

The English **personal pronouns** are nominal units that stand in for persons and entities referred to in the text or communicative context (see further under **pronoun**, section 3). They carry several kinds of grammatical meaning, including:

-
- 1 **properties of personal pronouns, including gender**
 - 2 **person**
 - 3 **number**
 - 4 **case**
-

1 **Properties of personal pronouns**

The English **personal pronouns** are nominal units that stand in for persons and entities referred to in the text or communicative context (see further under **pronoun**, section 3). They carry several kinds of grammatical meaning, including:

- **person:** first, second, and third person
- **number:** singular, plural
- **case:** nominative, accusative (subjective, objective)

A couple of these pronouns (the third person singular forms *HE*, *SHE*) also express **gender** in referring to male and female entities. But this use of gender is natural rather than grammatical. It does not correlate with different classes of nouns (masculine, feminine, etc.) as in other European languages such as French, German, and Italian (see further under **gender**).

2 Person

The grammatical notion of **person** relates to the fundamentals of conversation. It typically involves a speaker (first person) saying something to a listener (second person) about a third party who may or may not be there (third person):

I would say he was taller than you.
 first third second

Note that the second person pronoun (*YOU*) as well as the first person plural pronoun (*WE*) and the third person plural pronoun (*THEY*) can be used in generic (i.e. non-person-specific) ways. See further under **WE and US**, section 3; **YOU**, section 2; and **THEY and THEM**, section 3.

3 Number

The grammatical notion of **number** indicates whether one or more than one person is being referred to, though it applies to the first and third persons but not the second person:

1st person singular	<i>I</i>	1st person plural	<i>we</i>
2nd person singular + plural	<i>you</i>		
3rd person singular	<i>he, she, it</i>	3rd person plural	<i>they</i>

The third person singular pronouns (*SHE/HE*) entail a selection based on natural gender, although there are special applications of *SHE* to ships, vehicles etc. (see **SHE**, section 2). The absence of gender is usually expressed through the selection of *IT* for **inanimate** objects or concepts (see further under **IT and ITS**, section 1). The lack of a gender-free **animate** pronoun means that *THEY* is increasingly used with singular human referents (see further under **THEY and THEM**, section 2). Note that *WE/US* is also used with singular reference in some contexts of communication (see further under **WE and US**, section 3).

4 Case

This is the marking of subject or object (and other non-subject roles) which is found in the contrasting forms of English personal pronouns. It exists for the first and third persons, singular and plural (apart from *IT*), but not for the second person *YOU*. The paradigms for all persons are set out below:

	Nominative/subjective	Accusative/objective
1st person singular	<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>
1st person plural	<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>
2nd person singular + plural	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>
3rd person singular (masc.)	<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>

3rd person singular (fem.)	<i>she</i>	<i>her</i>
3rd person singular (neuter)	<i>it</i>	<i>it</i>
3rd person plural	<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>

Note that the **genitive case** or **possessive** form of all personal pronouns (*MY, OUR, YOUR, HIS, HER, ITS, THEIR*) is nowadays treated separately from the pronoun paradigm, as a subset of the class of **determiners** (see under that heading). The **independent possessive pronouns**, e.g. *MINE, YOURS, HERS*, are discussed under **possessive pronoun**.

The distinctive case forms of personal pronouns are maintained in written and more formal discourse, but they are less strictly used in informal conversation. The tendency for them to default to the accusative (or objective) case can be seen in sentence fragments and complex constructions (see further under **comparative clause**, section 3; and **gerund-participle**, section 3). Defaulting to the accusative can be seen in **coordinate structures** when the coordinate pronoun is in subject role; whereas the opposite tendency – use of the nominative – can be seen when the coordinate pronoun is in object/non-subject role. See further under **coordination**, section 5; and **I and ME**, sections 2 and 3.

phonestheme

This term refers to the association of a sequence of sounds with a certain meaning in the words of a given language. For example in *click, flicker, tick, trickle* the *-ick-* seems to denote quick, light sounds or movements. The phonestheme /sl/ seems to refer to something sticky or slippery, at least in *slime, sludge, sluice*. And /mp/ connotes something quite heavy hitting the ground, as in the verbs *bump, thump, stamp*. Yet the limited scope of a phonestheme is soon demonstrated by counterexamples. There is no stickiness/slipperiness in the /sl/ in *slight, slim, slogan*, and the /mp/ in *crimp, imp, lamp* has no sense of a falling weight.

Phonesthemes are one of the types of sound symbolism associated with a given language. Literary writers have long exploited **phonesthetic** effects in the figure of speech known as **onomatopoeia**. But because sound symbolism is language-specific, the phonesthemes of English do not necessarily apply in other languages. Even words which obviously refer to natural sounds, such as the barking of domestic dogs, are verbalized differently in different languages: compare English *woof woof* with Japanese *wan wan*, Spanish *guau guau*, Swedish *vov vov*, etc. **Phonesthesia** probably explains the origin of other English words for animal and human noises, such as *croak, hiss, neigh, quack*, as well as those for environmental sounds such as *rustle, splash*. Overall, however, relatively few words are formed purely by sound symbolism: see further under **word formation**, section 4.

phrasal verb and prepositional verb

- 1 **phrasal verbs:** e.g. *eat up*
 - 2 **prepositional verbs:** e.g. *refer to*
 - 3 **phrasal-prepositional verbs:** e.g. *meet up with*
-

Multiword verbal units such as **phrasal** and **prepositional verbs** abound in English. Though similar-looking, they diverge in their syntactic behavior.

1 Phrasal verbs

Everyday English, especially speech, is full of phrasal verbs consisting of a common verb and a particle which combine to form a single semantic unit, often paraphrasing a more formal one-word expression. For example:

<i>catch on</i> “succeed”	<i>fall out</i> “quarrel”	<i>find out</i> “investigate”
<i>get up</i> “arise”	<i>give up</i> “surrender”	<i>look up</i> “improve”
<i>pass out</i> “faint”	<i>turn up</i> “arrive”	

Some phrasal verbs are intransitive only, as in *The weather is looking up*. Others such as *put on* are transitive only, as in *Do put on your coat*. A few phrasal verbs may be either:

I will clean up the house at the weekend.

Let's clean up now.

A distinctive aspect of the transitive phrasal verb is the fact that the particle may come either before or after the object. So *clean up the house* and *clean the house up* are both grammatically possible. Though the structure is discontinuous in the second version, it's still integrated semantically.

Examples like *Let's clean up now* are analyzed by some grammarians (Aarts 1997; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) as showing that *up* and other prepositions involved in phrasal verbs can be regarded as **intransitive prepositions** rather than particles: see further under **preposition**, section 4.

2 Prepositional verbs

These are much like phrasal verbs in consisting of a strongly collocated verb and particle/preposition, which is the head of a prepositional phrase. In fact **prepositional verbs** are three or four times more frequent than phrasal verbs in the *Longman Grammar* corpus, with many belonging as much to written as to spoken discourse. Some are transitive, and like their phrasal verb counterparts, they allow an object to be interposed between verb and the prepositional phrase. Examples of the transitive prepositional verb are listed in the first column below, and the intransitive type in the second column:

<i><u>protect them from</u> harm</i>	<i><u>apply for</u> leave</i>
<i><u>remind us of</u> the past</i>	<i><u>count on</u> that argument</i>
<i><u>supply you with</u> food</i>	<i><u>diverge from</u> previous practice</i>

Note that in all prepositional verbs, the particle/preposition is always complemented by a noun phrase (and is thus clearly a **transitive preposition**). The noun phrase is designated the **prepositional object** by some grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999), suggesting that it has a proxy relationship with the verb. This is underscored by the fact that a particular preposition is licensed by the verb in such cases (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), making it more like a complement than an adjunct. See further under **complement**, section 5.

3 Phrasal–prepositional verbs

Combinations of a high-frequency verb with two fixed particles are not uncommonly used in everyday speech, as a means of paraphrasing more formal verbs borrowed from French or Latin. For example

come up with “conceive” *put up with* “tolerate” *walk out on* “abandon”

Like phrasal and prepositional verbs, the combination type may allow an interposed object or not. Those in the first column below are thus transitive, while those in the second are intransitive:

<i>let you in on a secret</i>	<i>come up with an idea</i>
<i>put it down to inexperience</i>	<i>put up with her moods</i>
<i>take it out on his juniors</i>	<i>walk out on the family</i>

In these constructions it seems that both particles/prepositions are required to complement the verb in the intended sense. They are not however compound prepositions of the same order as *into*, *onto*, etc.

- For more on the transitivity patterns of phrasal and prepositional verbs, see **transitivity**, sections 2 and 3.

phrase

In traditional grammar, the term **phrase** referred to a string of two or more words which forms a semantic unit, e.g. *a ceremonial poem*, *writer in residence*, *had written*, *quick as a flash*. In modern grammars, phrase is defined as a syntactic unit within a clause/sentence, and it can consist of one word or more than one:

Quick as a flash // *the writer in residence* // *wrote* // *a ceremonial poem*.

As illustrated in that sentence, the phrases take up distinctive syntactic roles. “Quick as a flash” is an **adverbial phrase**; both “the writer in residence” and “a ceremonial poem” are **noun phrases**, but serving as subject and object respectively. “Wrote” is a **verb phrase**, though it consists of only one word.

In fact English syntax allows for six possible types of phrases, as shown below. As syntactic units, all except the last may consist of either a multiword unit (phrase, compound), or a single word:

- **noun phrase**, with a noun or pronoun as head
the writer in residence, *he*
- **adjectival phrase**, with an adjective as head
very well known, *famous*
- **verb phrase**, with a verb as head
had written, *wrote*
- **adverb phrase**, with an adverb as head
quick as a flash, *rapidly*
- **prepositional phrase**, with a preposition as head
without delay, *up* (as in [*written*] *up*)

- **determinative phrase**, with a determiner as head
more than ten (poems)

See under individual headings for more about each phrase type.

phrase marker

See **tree diagram**.

phraseology

This has several meanings in relation to language:

- 1 the form of words in which something is expressed:

Be careful with your phraseology.

- 2 a distinctive manner of expression, associated with a particular register, style, profession, etc., e.g. ... *couched in police phraseology*
- 3 a more or less preconstructed form of words, including collocations, catchphrases, expletives, idioms, proverbs, similes, discourse markers, politeness formulae (Skandera 2007)

pied-piping

This term originated in generative grammar, to refer to the use of a preposition in front of a relative or interrogative pronoun, as in:

I found the address to which we sent the letter.

By whom was the letter signed?

In English, **pied-piping** is largely confined to formal style. In standard everyday discourse, the prepositions are usually stranded:

I found the address we sent the letter to.

Who was the signed by?

Here in the first example, the pied-piping is replaced by a **stranded preposition**, and the pronoun is deleted entirely (see further under **stranded preposition**). In the second example, the formal interrogative *WHOM* is replaced by *WHO*.

See further under **WHO and WHOM**.

plain form

This is a name for the unmarked form of English verbs, which serves for the infinitive, imperative, mandative subjunctive, and the present tense, apart from the third person singular. It is also known as the **base form**. See further under **tense**, section 1.

pleonasm

This is the iteration of an element of language with the same idea or referent in the same phrase, clause, or sentence, although it's not strictly necessary for conveying meaning. Such pleonasm may be idiomatic or stylistically motivated in the context of communication. **Pleonastic** repetition in a string of words, e.g. *unmarried bachelor*, is usually classed as **tautology**; whereas syntactically motivated repetition (**redundancy**) may be acceptable. See further under **tautology** and **redundancy**.

pluperfect

This is an alternative term for the *past perfect*: see under that heading.

plural

- 1 **plurality and grammatical number in English**
 - 2 **plurals of common nouns**
 - 3 **plurals of nouns borrowed from languages other than English**
 - 4 **plurals of compounds**
 - 5 **plurals of proper nouns**
 - 6 **plurals of national groups**
-

1 **Plurality and grammatical number in English**

Plurality is the most important expression of grammatical number in English. It refers to any quantity greater than one, so that while singular *pigeon* refers to just one of the species, the **plural** *pigeons* could refer to any number from two to infinity. As in that example the noun adds a *plural* marker, most commonly -s (see further below). Nouns are far more consistently marked for **plurality** than any other word class.

English verbs (i.e. lexical ones) show plural number only by default and only in the third person singular present tense. There the -s inflection with *he/she/it observes* contrasts with the absence of any inflection for the three plural persons: *we/you/they observe*. Note however the verb *BE*, where the first person singular contrasts with the first person plural (*I am/we are*) in the present tense as well as the third (*he is/they are*), and both first and third persons in its past tense (*was/were*). The personal pronouns provide number contrasts in distinctive forms for both singular and plural, except for *you* which can be either singular or plural in reference. Demonstrative pronouns (*this/these; that/those*) also present contrasting singular and plural forms.

The matching of the singular/plural noun in the subject NP with the corresponding forms of verbs is largely a matter of **formal agreement**, although it can be varied where a plural concept is attached to a noun not marked as plural (i.e. **notional agreement**). See further under **agreement**, sections 2 and 5–8.

2 **Plurals of common nouns**

The ubiquitous plural inflection for English common nouns is -s, as in *books, cats, houses, lights*. It becomes -es with several subsets of nouns:

- those ending in a sibilant: *bushes, churches, foxes, glasses, judges, quizzes*
- some of those ending in -o: *echoes, heroes, potatoes, tomatoes*
- those ending in -y preceded by a consonant, where the -y becomes -i: *allies, berries, copies, fairies*
- some of those ending in -f which is replaced by -v: *calves, leaves, loaves, selves*

Three very old English nouns take an -(e)n suffix for the plural: *brethren, children, oxen*. (Note also the change of vowel in *brethren*, and the Old English -r- inflection fossilized in *children*.)

Other very old nouns modify the stem vowel for their plurals:

foot > feet goose > geese man > men mouse > mice tooth > teeth

A few do not change the singular form at all for the plural (= **zero plural**):

aircraft deer fish sheep species

3 Plurals of nouns borrowed from languages other than English

Foreign words borrowed into English often bring unusual plural markers with them, which are maintained in specialized registers, especially science, music, and antiquities. In everyday discourse they tend to be replaced by the regular English plural suffix *-s*.

- **Latin plurals:** *curriculum > curricula; basis > bases; larva > larvae; matrix > matrices; stimulus > stimuli*
- **Greek plurals:** *criterion > criteria; stigma > stigmata*
- **French plurals:** *chateau > chateaux; lieu > lieux*
- **Italian plurals:** *concerto > concerti; libretto > libretti* (musical terms)
- **Hebrew plurals:** *cherub > cherubim; kibbutz > kibbutzim*

As that list shows, the greatest number and variety of types of foreign plurals can be found in Latin loanwords.

4 Plurals of compounds

The plural forms of compounds are almost all marked on the second or final base, as in:

car parks car park entrances forget-me-nots grownups shop assistants

Just a few compounds borrowed from or modeled on French phrase order mark the first base with plural *-s*:

*aides-de-camp attorneys-general courts martial
editors-in-chief sisters-in-law*

In all these, the first word is a noun, while the rest is either an adjective or postmodifying phrase. Compare Latin-derived compounds which tend to simply add *-s* to the final stem, as in:

etceteras postmortems proformas subpoenas

The addition of the plural *-s* to these compounds shows that their morphological structure as conjoint or prepositional phrases is not understood by users of modern English.

5 Plurals of proper nouns

Most proper names are pluralized simply by the addition of the regular plural *-(e)s*, as with *the Smiths and the Joneses*. This includes names ending in *-y* following a consonant, which do not display the conventional *y > i* substitution (see above, section 2), but simply add *-s*: *the Berrys and the Tandys*.

6 Plurals of national groups

Most national groups simply add *-s* for the plural forms of their national names, as in:

Americans Arabs Brazilians Germans Israelis Zulus

Those whose designations end in a sibilant generally remain unchanged in the plural, but preface it by *the*. For example:

(*the*) *British* *Chinese* *Dutch* *French*
Japanese *Portuguese* *Spanish* *Swiss*

pluralia tantum

In traditional grammar this is the collective name for some or all of the various sets of nouns which always end in *-s*, but which refer to a single object or concept, e.g. *arrears*, *glasses*, *odds*, *scissors*, *surroundings*, *trousers*. Some grammarians reserve it for aggregates or composites like *arrears*, *surroundings*; others apply it also to bipartites or other summation plurals. (See further under **-s**, section 4.)

Pluralia tantum words raise questions of agreement, as to whether it should be according to the form of the noun (its plural-like *-s*), or the singular notion it denotes. See further under **agreement**, section 5.

polar question

This type of question solicits a yes or no answer. See further under **question**, section 3.

polarity

This is the grammatical potential for sentences to be expressed either positively or negatively: so as to affirm their propositional content (**positive polarity**) or to negate it (**negative polarity**). See further under **negation**, section 1.

politeness

Politeness intersects with grammar at various points, especially in spoken discourse, as part of the pragmatics of communication (see **pragmatic**).

It mandates such things as the preferred order for listing personal pronouns, so that the first person is always mentioned second in a pair of coordinates or last in a set, as in *a meeting with the teacher, you and I* (see under **person**, section 2).

Politeness is often a factor in the selection of modal verbs, for example the older tradition of preferring *I should like* rather than the neutral *I would like* (see under **WOULD and SHOULD**, section 3).

polysemy

This term refers to a morpheme having multiple meanings. **Polysemy** is associated with well-used words which acquire additional meanings through their application to different contexts. For example the word *party*, which in essence refers to a group of people, and then comes to mean a social gathering, as well as a political group with a specific agenda, and one or other of the litigants in a legal case. As in that example, the meanings of a **polysemous** word (a **polyseme**) may be quite diverse, though traceable to a common source. Compare **homonym**.

polysyndetic coordination

See **coordination**, section 7.

portmanteau words

This is an alternative name for *blends*. See further under **blending and blends**.

positive

- For *positive polarity*, see under **polarity**.
- For the *positive* form of adjectives, see **adjective**, section 3.

possession

English nouns mark possession by the use of the *genitive* inflection ('s), as in *the girl's scarf, a driver's license*. Examples like these are strictly *alienable possession* because the item possessed can be detached from the owner. Compare *the girl's smile, the driver's eyes*, where the second noun is an intrinsic part of the person in each case, and the possession involved is *inalienable possession*. Note that the genitive *case* also marks nonpossessive relationships between two successive nouns. In *the government's decision* or *the train's slow pace*, it is one of association. See further under **genitive**, section 3.

- For the *possessive pronouns* (*MY, MINE; OUR, OURS*, etc.), see **possessive pronoun**.

possessive adjective

See under **determiner**, section 1.

possessive determiner

See **determiner**, section 1.

possessive pronoun

This term may be applied to one or two subsets of the personal pronouns:

- 1 those which embody the genitive case, i.e. *MY, YOUR, HIS, HER, ITS, OUR, THEIRS*. These (now usually called *determiners*) are always used to premodify a noun within a noun phrase, as in *my hair, your old car*. See further under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.

- 2 those with a possessive sense but used as an independent NP, i.e. *MINE, YOURS, HIS, HERS, ITS, OURS, THEIRS*. For example:

The next overseas trip will be yours.

Theirs is the satisfaction.

If you need a bottle opener, you can use mine.

Traditional grammarians used the term **possessive pronoun** to cover both sets of pronouns. Modern English grammarians distinguish the two sets as follows:

(i) <i>determinative</i> <i>possessive</i>	(ii) <i>independent</i> <i>possessive</i>	Quirk et al. (1985)
(i) <i>possessive determiner</i>	(ii) <i>possessive pronoun</i>	Biber et al. (1999)
(i) <i>dependent pronoun</i>	(ii) <i>independent</i> <i>pronoun</i>	Huddleston and Pullum (2002)

Whatever the terminology, all three treat the first set of possessive pronouns as a subset of the determiner group.

postdeterminer

See under **determiner**, section 3.

postmodifier

See under **modifier**.

postpose

This verb is used by grammarians to describe the postponement of clausal constituents, when they appear later in the clause or phrase than their canonical place. See further under **postposition**, section 1.

postposition

- 1 **postponement of a syntactic constituent**
 - 2 **use of a preposition following rather than preceding a noun phrase**
-

1 Postponement of a syntactic constituent

Postposition in English grammar is the delayed appearance of a constituent of a phrase or clause, so that it occupies a noncanonical position in the syntax. See for example the words underlined in the following:

They expressed a view more optimistic than I expected. (postposed adjective phrase)

You'll find on your desk a note from the new manager. (postposed object NP)

The exhibition makes available to the public some unusual recent works. (postposed object NP)

Postposition is often strategic, designed to enhance information delivery.

In the first example, the **postposing** of the comparative adjective after the noun serves to connect it directly with the comparative clause. The **postpositioning** of the direct objects in the second and third examples adds end weight to them.

The device also prepares them for further thematic develop in subsequent sentences, instead of being embedded in mid-sentence: see further under

topic, topicalization, and topical progression.

2 Use of a preposition following a noun phrase

In some languages (e.g. Japanese) **postposition** refers to a preposition-like word which occurs after rather than before the noun phrase it heads. See further under **adposition.**

postpositive

This term identifies one of the positions in which adjectival phrases may occur, i.e. following the head of the NP:

anything new nothing special something good

As the examples show, this commonly happens when the head is a pronoun.

The other syntactic positions for adjectival phrases are **attributive** and **predicative**: see further under **adjectival phrase**; and **adjective**, section 5.

Note that some legal and official terms regularly use the postpositive, such as *heir apparent*, *president elect*. This mirrors the regular position for adjectives in the

noun phrases of French, and is of course a historical relic of when French was used as the official language of England.

postpredicate

See under **complement clause**, section 3.

PP

See **prepositional phrase**.

pragmatic

This term refers to the interactional meaning of language, especially in spoken contexts. Thus a grammatically straightforward sentence such as *We're going tomorrow* may communicate one of several **pragmatic** meanings according to the intonation pattern with which it is uttered. The default is that with gently falling intonation the sentence puts a simple fact into the discussion. With rising intonation it becomes a question, querying the last word. With emphatic falling intonation on the last two words, it becomes a heavy-handed inclusive imperative. As the example shows, the **pragmatics** of the sentence do not necessarily correspond to its syntax (declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative). The **illocutionary force** of the sentence changes with the intonation, as does the expected response from the listener: see further under **illocutionary force**.

Note that the pragmatics of modal verbs vary very considerably with the communicative context, and the power relationships involved. So *You can go now* may give permission to a junior person to leave, or comment on the ability of another person to act.

See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 4.

pragmatic marker

See **discourse marker**.

predeterminer

See under **determiner**, section 3.

predicate

-
- 1 **predicate in traditional grammar**
 - 2 **predicate in modern grammars**
-

1 **Predicate in traditional grammar**

Traditional grammarians used the term **predicate** to refer to the propositional part of a finite clause, as underlined in:

The rains came.

We have sent them emergency food supplies.

No-one could remember such flooding of the whole town.

As the examples show, the predicate includes not only the finite verb, but also its complement(s), whether simple or complex. In this application, predicate is a syntactic concept. See further under **clause**, section 1; and **verb phrase**, section 3.

2 **Predicate in modern grammars**

Modern grammarians use **predicate** as a semantic concept to refer to the set of arguments associated with a specific verb: see Aarts (1997), Huddleston and Pullum (2002). The predicate in this sense may involve anything from one to three arguments, one of which is the verb's subject, as underlined below:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>The rains came.</i> | (= one-place predicate) |
| <i>No-one could remember such flooding ...</i> | (= two-place predicate) |
| <i>We have sent them emergency food supplies.</i> | (= three-place predicate) |

See further under **valency**, section 3.

predicative adjective

See **adjective**, section 5.

predicative complement

This is the **complement** found in two types of clauses:

- SVC constructions, e.g. *He was charming.*
- SVOC constructions, e.g. *They found him irresistible.*

The first type of complement is also known as the **subject complement**, the second as the **object complement**. For the two clause patterns, see further under **clause**, section 1.

predicator

- 1 **predicator as finite verb phrase**
 - 2 **predicator as nonfinite part of verbal group**
-

1 **Predicator as finite verb phrase**

The term **predicator** is used by English grammarians such as Huddleston (1984, 1988) and Aarts (1997, 2010) to refer to the syntactic function of the verb or verb phrase in a finite clause. It thus provides a distinct functional label for it, as does **subject** for the noun phrase, and **adjunct** for both adverbials and prepositional phrases. The predicators are underlined in the examples below:

- The jacarandas bloomed early. (SPA)*
The jacarandas had come into bloom early. (SPAA)

Compare the more widely used V for symbolizing the verb function in clause analysis. See further under **clause**, section 1 and **verb phrase**, section 1.

2 **Predicator as nonfinite part of verbal group**

In systemic–functional grammar, the term **predicator** is reserved for the nonfinite elements of the verb group, such as the infinitive or participle that complement the **finite element(s)**, for example “come” in *The jacarandas had*

come ... There it expresses both semantic and grammatical meaning (i.e. aspect). Such meanings can also be embodied in the nonfinite verb group, as in

Having come into bloom early, the jacaranda flowers carpeted the road.

In a simple verb, the predicator is analyzed as separable from the *finite*.

So in “bloomed,” the semantic content is the predicator, and the grammatical element (past tense) is the *finite* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). See further under **finite**.

prediction

This is one of the meanings expressed by modal verbs such as *SHALL* and *WILL*. The term **prediction** draws attention to the fact that statements expressed with such verbs do not constitute a *future* tense, as assumed in traditional grammar, based on the models of Latin and modern Romance languages. Rather *WILL* and *SHALL* represent forecasts of what is to happen. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3.

prefix

The **prefixes** of English are usually classed as derivational affixes, because they can generate words with new lexical meanings, as with:

- *ante-* “before” as in *anteroom, antenatal*
- *anti-* “against” as in *anti-aircraft, anti-authoritarian*
- *bi-* “two” as in *bifocals, bidialectal, bilateral*
- *macro-* “large-scale” as in *macro-economics, macropod*
- *micro-* “small-scale” as in *microclimate, micro-electronics*
- *post-* “after” as in *postprandial, postwar*
- *pre-* “before” as in *pre-exist, preselection,*
- *pro-* “in favor of” as in *proactive, pro-democracy*
- *sub-* “under” as in *suboptimal, substandard*
- *super-* “above” as in *supermarket, supersonic*
- *un-* “not” as in *unreliable, unstable*

Prefixes contribute a variety of meanings to the words they form, including position before and after, in time and place (*ante-, pre-, post-*); above/below (*sub-, super-*); relative number and size (*bi-, multi, micro-, macro-; semi-*); psychological orientation (*anti-, pro-*); negation (*non-, un-*).

A few prefixes convert an existing word from one word class to another:

- *be-* in *befriend, bejewel, belittle* noun > verb
- *de-* in *debug, demist, dethrone* noun > verb
- *en-* in *enable, endear, empower* adjective/noun > verb

Deriving words in a different word class is much more the function of **suffixes**: see further under **suffix**.

Up to two prefixes from different subsets of those mentioned above can be used to preface a given stem, in examples like:

antidisestablishmentarian polyunsaturated unpremeditated

None of the prefixes of modern English is an inflectional affix. See further under **derivational affix**.

premodifier

See under **modifier**; and **noun phrase**, section 1.

preposition

- 1 **prepositions as a word class**
- 2 **prepositions and other word classes**
- 3 **complex prepositions**
- 4 **prepositions in syntax**
- 5 **stranded prepositions**

The **preposition** word class is one of the eight which go back to classical grammar (see under **word class**, section 1). But its scope has expanded with the English language, and its membership is more open-ended than before. Its name suggests that it works as a preliminary to another unit, traditionally said to be a noun (phrase), and that the NP, not the preposition is the head of the *prepositional phrase*. Both assumptions have been substantially revised in modern English grammars.

1 **Prepositions as a word class**

The class of **prepositions** is relatively closed, in comparison with nouns or adjectives (see further under **word class**, section 3). Yet the makeup of the core preposition set varies somewhat according to the different grammatical criteria brought to bear on them. The central group of about fifty certainly includes short, single-syllabled examples and some two-syllabled ones, mostly Anglo-Saxon in origin:

<i>about</i>	<i>above</i>	<i>across</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>against</i>
<i>along</i>	<i>amid(st)</i>	<i>among(st)</i>	<i>around</i>	<i>as</i>
<i>at</i>	<i>because</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>behind</i>	<i>below</i>
<i>beneath</i>	<i>beside</i>	<i>between</i>	<i>beyond</i>	<i>by</i>
<i>despite</i>	<i>down</i>	<i>during</i>	<i>except</i>	<i>for</i>
<i>from</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>inside</i>	<i>into</i>	<i>like</i>
<i>near</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>off</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>opposite</i>
<i>out</i>	<i>over</i>	<i>round</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>than</i>
<i>through</i>	<i>till</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>toward(s)</i>	<i>under</i>
<i>until</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>within</i>	<i>without</i>

As the examples show, many prepositions express relations in space and/or time, while others express more abstract relations between entities and concepts. The most frequent prepositions are more or less bleached of individual meaning, because of their various roles in structuring and connecting the elements of the phrase and the clause. These *grammaticized prepositions* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) include:

as at by for from in of on than to with

They are the staple of noun phrases (*a cup of tea, stock in trade, respect for his superiors*), of adjectival phrases (*easy for you, interested in reptiles, contrary to received opinion*), and of prepositional verbs (*defer to, rely on, wait for*). Their regular appearances in such structures makes them **bound prepositions** (Biber et al. 1999), contrasting with others in the large set of **free prepositions** listed above. Some prepositions can be either bound or free, depending on the lexicogrammar. Compare the use of *with* in the following:

Let's go with the second group. (free preposition)

I can't part with these souvenirs. (bound preposition)

In the first sentence “with” in the sense of accompaniment heads the NP “the second group,” and the prepositional phrase is an **adjunct**. In the second “with” collocates with the verb “part” to express the meaning “give away,” and “these souvenirs” are the verb’s complement (see further under **adjunct**, section 2; and **complement**, section 5).

2 Prepositions and other word classes

Individual prepositions can often be found working as members of other word classes. Their affinity with verbs (**-ing forms**) is evident, in examples like *concerning, excepting, following, including*, and their ability to express the equivalent of a nonfinite clause:

The concert began following a minute's silence.

Whatever their form, prepositions resemble verbs in their ability to express temporal sequences, as well as purpose and comparison. In all these senses, simple prepositions also share resources with **subordinators**, such as:

after as before for like since than though while

All these can be used to preface a noun phrase, a nonfinite clause, or a finite clause. Compare the use of **AFTER** in the following set:

The band started playing after the raising of the flag. (preposition)

The band started playing after raising the flag. (preposition)

The band started playing after they raised the flag. (subordinator)

And *like* in the following:

The newer players sounded just like me. (preposition)

The newer players sounded just like I did. (subordinator)

These overlapping functions of prepositions and subordinators have generated some radical redesigning of the boundary between them in C21 grammars such as Huddleston and Pullum 2002 (see further under **subordinator**, section 1). The alternative roles for **AFTER**, **LIKE**, and others intersect with wider grammatical issues, e.g. the nominal-verbal scale for **-ing forms**, and the selection of pronouns in comparative constructions (following **AS**, **THAN**). See further under **gerund-participle**, section 1; and **comparative clause**, section 3.

Note that some simple prepositions (e.g. *near, opposite, outside*) are also used as adjectives; and others (e.g. *before, since, though, under*) as adverbs.

3 Complex prepositions

Prepositions are often found in more or less stable combinations that operate together as the head of a phrase. Examples of such **complex prepositions** include two-part examples:

<i>according to</i>	<i>ahead of</i>	<i>along with</i>	<i>apart from</i>	<i>as for</i>
<i>aside from</i>	<i>because of</i>	<i>due to</i>	<i>inside of</i>	<i>instead of</i>
<i>next to</i>	<i>owing to</i>	<i>relative to</i>	<i>together with</i>	<i>up to</i>

These two-part complex prepositions all employ one of the **grammaticized prepositions** as their final element. Note that they are the first and last elements in the most widely used three-part complex prepositions listed below:

<i>as far as</i>	<i>by means of</i>	<i>by reference to</i>	<i>in accordance with</i>
<i>in addition to</i>	<i>in case of</i>	<i>in charge of</i>	<i>in front of</i>
<i>in relation to</i>	<i>in return for</i>	<i>in spite of</i>	<i>in view of</i>
<i>on account of</i>	<i>on behalf of</i>	<i>on top of</i>	<i>with regard to</i>

The absence of the definite article in some of these three-part complex prepositions (especially those relating to place) suggests they have grammaticalized out of similar four-part prepositional phrases such as:

in the front of [the house] on the top of [the pile]

For most of the others, the divergent meanings of the three- and four-part prepositional strings also suggest that the three-part ones have evolved to form a syntactic unit. Compare:

<i>in case of [fire]</i>	with	<i>in the case of [the second application]</i>
<i>in view of [their reluctance]</i>	with	<i>in the view of [the critic]</i>

However not all grammarians allow for **complex prepositions**. Some, such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002), prefer to treat three-part prepositional strings as a head PP with a complementary NP: *in case [of fire]*. Arguably the same structure holds for two-part examples like *because [of]*, *instead [of]*, where the first element was historically two words. These Huddleston and Pullum call **compound prepositions**, a term which they otherwise apply to examples such as *into*, *upon*.

4 Prepositions in syntax

The traditional account of prepositions is that they “govern” a noun phrase. Modern grammarians find that they are **complemented** by not only NPs but several other syntactic elements. The set includes:

Let's go to town. (+ noun)
Can you go with her? (+ pronoun)
You can have it for free. (+ adjective)
They kept it going until recently. (+ adverb)

A preposition can thus head any of a number of other word classes which serve as its **complement** or **modifier** (see further under **modifier**). They may also be modified or complemented by another preposition or a **prepositional phrase**:

They are all up above. (+ preposition)

He hit the ball from behind the baseline. (+ prepositional phrase)

The various types of prepositional phrase act as complements or modifiers of other types of phrase (noun phrase, adjective phrase, etc.). See further under **prepositional phrase**, section 2.

Some prepositions also head certain types of clause, finite and nonfinite:

There's no alternative except to resign.

Don't rush into making the decision.

You'll need advice on how to proceed.

The next line of code is about where you should meet.

We should start the meeting now, in that he's always late.

As the last three examples show, prepositions can select **wh-** or **THAT-headed** content clauses (see further under **complement clause**, section 1). The last two show that this can be a finite clause, though the further implications of this analysis for the preposition-cum-subordinator are still being explored.

Apart from this very wide range of complementation patterns, grammarians now also note that a preposition can even occur without any complement, as in:

They have said they'll come by.

The president spoke with his bodyguard behind.

These are referred to as **prepositional adverbs** (Quirk et al. 1985), and as **intransitive prepositions** (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

5 Stranded prepositions

These are the prepositions found after rather before the item which they complement, sometimes conspicuously at the end of the clause or sentence. This typically occurs when their complement has been fronted, as in interrogative clauses or relative clauses. For example:

Who are you waiting for?

The book which I was talking about has just arrived.

(See under **pied-piping** and **WHO and WHOM**.) As those examples show, stranded prepositions are often the bound prepositions attached to prepositional verbs. They also occur predictably with several types of verb phrase, including nonfinite constructions with infinitival **TO**, and **-ing**. For example:

They found it challenging to keep up with.

The room needed tidying up.

In cases such as these there is no alternative to the stranded preposition, since they cannot be paraphrased with a relative pronoun – as is possible with *the person about whom I was talking*.

preposition group

In systemic–functional grammar, this is the term for a **complex preposition**. See **preposition**, section 3.

prepositional adverb

See under **BY**, section 4; and **preposition**, section 4.

prepositional passive

See under **passive voice**, section 4.

prepositional phrase (PP)

- 1 components of prepositional phrases
 - 2 prepositional phrases as complements to other phrase types
 - 3 prepositional phrases as adjuncts
 - 4 length of prepositional phrases
-

1 Components of prepositional phrases

A **prepositional phrase** typically consists of a preposition heading a noun phrase, as in:

They live in the mountains.

Here “the mountains” can be seen as complementing the preposition “in.”

However a prepositional phrase may also consist of a preposition followed by other word classes, such as adjective and adverb:

You can have it for free. (+ adjective)

They've all returned from overseas. (+ adverb)

For some grammarians, the prepositional phrase may also constitute a clause, as in:

They were forced into making false statements.

See further under **preposition**, section 4.

2 Prepositional phrases as complements to other phrase types

The **prepositional phrase** is often used to complement other types of head, and to form different kinds of phrase, including:

- noun phrases: e.g. *a set of numbers*
- adjective phrases: e.g. *tired of digging*
- determiner phrases: e.g. *less than fifty*
- adverbial phrases: e.g. *later in the day*
- verb phrases: e.g. *give it to him / it was given by him* (see **verb phrase**, section 3)

These various types of phrase illustrate the essential fact that very many prepositional phrases end in a noun. This makes them susceptible to postmodification by further prepositional phrases, and to recursive use. The point is made amusingly in the song popularized by Rolf Harris, about:

... [those who put] *the powder on the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus* ...

Chains of dependent prepositional phrases are typically headed by highly **grammaticized prepositions** (see **preposition**, section 1). Less extended chains

of prepositional phrases are an ordinary feature of nominal styles of writing: see **nominal and verbal style**.

3 **Prepositional phrases as adjuncts**

Strings of nondependent **prepositional phrases** are frequent in many types of discourse, as in the following from the Guinness Book of Records:

The world record for the most tennis balls held in the mouth by a dog at one time is five.

In this example, the verbal adjective “held” is postmodified by three independent prepositional phrases: “*in the mouth*”, “*by a dog*”, “*at one time*”. All three are prepositional adjuncts, detailing aspects of how the action was performed – for the purposes of the official record. In their relationship with the nonfinite verb “held,” they illustrate the more general point that more than one prepositional phrase may serve as **adjuncts** of the verb in a finite clause, though they are not dependent on each other. Compare:

The dog held five tennis balls in its mouth at the one time.

There each of the prepositional phrases is independently related to the verb as an adverbial adjunct. See further under **adjunct**, section 4; and **clause**, section 1.

4 **Length of prepositional phrases**

A single prepositional phrase (i.e. not a string) can vary in length from two words to six or more. The length of **prepositional phrases** correlates to a considerable extent with the type of discourse they occur in. In conversation prepositional phrases are typically two to three words, whereas those of six or more words are very much associated with writing, especially news and academic writing, according to research on data from the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999).

prepredicate

See under **complement clause**, section 3.

present continuous

See **present imperfect**.

present imperfect

This is a term for the compound English verb or verb phrase which combines the auxiliary *BE* in the present tense with a present (*-ing*) participle, as in:

Many people are still arguing about climate change.

The **present imperfect** expresses the **progressive aspect**, indicating that the action of the verb is current and ongoing. See further under **progressive aspect**.

Note that the **present imperfect** can also be used to express future meaning, especially when accompanied by forward-referencing adverbs or clausal structures.

They are arriving tomorrow.

See further under **future**.

present perfect

The **present perfect** form of an English verb is a compound of the auxiliary *HAVE* in the present tense and a past participle.

We have decided to come in June.

Everything has combined to make it the ideal date.

The present perfect verb's combination of tense and aspect reports an action as stemming from the past but relevant to the present discourse. It contributes to the sense of immediacy in reports and narratives (see further under **present tense**, section 4). In grammatical terms it functions as a kind of *secondary tense* (see further under **perfect aspect**).

Use of the **present perfect** has risen steadily in modern English, though more so in British than American English (Hofland and Johansson 1982). Research on the Longman corpus showed it was especially associated with British newswriters, who made far more use of the present perfect than their American counterparts. Its value for media writers lies in its ability to register past events in terms of the present, but it is likewise very frequent in everyday conversation (Biber et al. 1999).

Live broadcast media also make frequent use of the **present perfect**, and in combination with adverbs referring to a point in past time, although this has hitherto been considered unacceptable, for example:

They've come to the city early this morning to get tickets for the show.

Combinations like these are more often attested in impromptu radio talk than anywhere else (Elsness 2009), where the recency of an event is most salient. They have been noted increasingly over the last twenty-five years, though not in more formal writing.

Extended uses of the English present perfect such as these make it a paraphrase for the simple past tense. They resemble the grammatical shift which has already taken place in modern French, where the *passé composé* replaced the simple past form in everyday discourse (Engel and Ritz 2000). However there is no suggestion that the movement in English owes anything to French influence.

present subjunctive

See under **subjunctive**, section 3.

present tense

- 1 **present tense paradigm**
 - 2 **present tense and unbounded time**
 - 3 **present tense and future time**
 - 4 **present tense in narrative**
-

1 **Present tense paradigm**

The **present tense** is one of the two primary tenses of English (present and past), which take contrasting forms as in: *crash/crashed, dig/dug, do/did, go/went, have/had,*

help/helped, sling/slung, etc. While the **past tense** forms vary according to whether the verb is regular or irregular, the **present tense** forms are the same for all lexical and auxiliary verbs except *BE*.

<i>I/you/we/they</i>	<i>crash</i>	<i>dig</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>help</i>	<i>sling</i>
<i>he/she/it</i>	<i>crashes</i>	<i>digs</i>	<i>does</i>	<i>goes</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>helps</i>	<i>slings</i>

Thus the present tense is the same for the first and second persons, singular and plural, and the third person plural. But the third singular is distinct, with its *-s* or *-es* suffix responding to

- the orthography of the final vowel (when it is *o*, as in *does, goes*)
- the phonology of the final consonant: if it is a sibilant, the suffix is *-es*, as in *crashes*

Otherwise the suffix is just *-s*, as in *digs, helps*, etc.

Note that with the verb *BE*, there is an additional contrast between first person singular (*am*) and first person plural (*are*), although the only form with an *-s* is still the third person singular *is*. Modal verbs set themselves apart by having no inflection for the third person singular of the present tense.

2 Present tense and unbounded time

The present tense is best seen as locating an utterance in the present situation, rather than referring strictly to the present point in time. The meaning of sentences with the present tense need not be tied to present time, as in the following:

I go to the gym every Friday. (habitual)

The ostrich is the world's largest flightless bird. (universal)

The examples show how the present tense can be used to express a regular habit, or a universal fact, irrespective of time.

3 Present tense and future time

The present tense can be used to refer to future events, as do the underlined verbs:

On Monday I go to Frankfurt.

If it rains we'll hold the wedding on the veranda.

I hope you feel better soon.

In such sentences, the future is signaled by other elements of the sentence. In the first it is the adverbial adjunct "On Monday." In the second and third sentences the present tense expresses future meaning in subordinate clauses following the use of the modal of prediction "(wi)ll," and the forward-looking verb "hope" in the main clause.

4 Present tense in narrative

The present tense is sometimes used in narrative discourse to refer to past events, and is then termed the **narrative present** or **historic present**.

For example:

A great silence falls on the conversation, as if some very indelicate comment has been made, and all of us are trying to decide where we go next.

A switch to the **narrative present** can occur in mid-stream, as in:

A friend of mine was called out to fix a sink at these two girls' place. He gets in there, and they're checking him out as he's working away . . .

The use of the present tense, in primary or secondary forms (i.e. with aspect added in), helps to dramatize past events in the discourse of the present. See further under **present perfect** and **present imperfect**.

preterite

This is an alternative name for the **simple past tense**. See further under **past tense**.

primary and secondary verb form

English verbs have distinct forms to mark the contrast between the present and past tense:

present: *I laugh/he laughs* past: *I/he laughed*.

As the example shows, there are normally three **primary forms**, at least for lexical verbs and the auxiliaries *HAVE* and *DO*. The verb *BE* is unusual in having five, while modal verbs have two or just one, depending on the sense in which they are used (see **BE; modality and modal verb**, section 1; and **verb**, section 4). The primary forms embody the **finite** elements of the clause in which they occur: see further under **finite** and **tensed**.

The primary forms contrast with the nonfinite **secondary forms**. They include the infinitive (*to laugh*), and the present and past participles: *laughing*, *laughed*, as used in compound verb phrases: *is/was laughing*, *has/had laughed*. As in those examples, the secondary forms express grammatical **aspect** rather than tense (**continuous** and **perfect**, respectively). See further under **aspect**.

principal parts

The principal parts of an English verb are its two or three contrasting forms, used for the present tense, the past tense, and the past participle (if different from the past tense). The whole verb paradigm can be inferred from them. There are two principal parts for regular/"weak" verbs such as *cry/cried*, *laugh/laughed*, *whistle/whistled*; and often three for irregular verbs, as for *bear/bore/born*, *freeze/froze/frozen*, *take/took/taken* (see further under **regular verb** and **irregular verb**).

Note that some grammatical commentators mention a fourth principal part for English irregular verbs, that is the *-ing* form which constitutes the present participle. However it is simply formed from the base form of the verb except for modal verbs, and does not need to be separately specified. See further under **verb**, section 4.

private verb

This term is used by Biber (1988) for verbs that refer to the mental and emotional activities that go on inside our heads, e.g. *expect*, *hope*, *know*, *like*, *think*. **Private verbs** correlate with the **mental process** verbs of systemic-functional grammar.

They occur freely in highly involved discourse, especially in parenthetical use of *I think* and *I/you know*.

Private verbs contrast with **public verbs** that refer to physical actions, i.e. *breathe, eat, sing, stroll, talk*. These are the **behavioural** and **verbal processes** of systemic–functional grammar.

process

In Hallidayan grammar, **process** is the term used to refer to the activity expressed by the verb of the clause. It may be any of the following types:

- **material process**, using transitive and intransitive verbs, e.g. *bring, create, pay*
- **behavioral process**, using transitive and intransitive verbs e.g. *run, smile, throw*
- **mental process**, using transitive and intransitive verbs e.g. *expect, like, think*
- **verbal process**, using transitive and intransitive verbs e.g. *comment, say, tell*
- **relational process**, using copular verbs, e.g. *be, have, owe*
- **existential process**, using copular verbs, e.g. *be, occur, remain*

The **process** and the **participant(s)** are the key components of the clause, along with **circumstance(s)**: Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). See further under **participant** and **circumstance**.

proclitic

See under **clitic**.

pro-form

This is a cover term used by modern grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) for words whose role is to stand in for one or more others, in the formulation of a clause. They include:

- **pronouns** (especially the third person pronouns (*HE/SHE/IT/THEY*) which replace a whole noun phrase (see **personal pronoun**, section 1)
- **ONE** used as substitute for an NP, or the head of an NP, as in:

We all need an umbrella. I'll get one from the cupboard, and you can have the blue one in the stand.

See further under **ONE**.

- **the same** used as substitute for an NP, or a nominal clause, as in:

You say you'll be late and I'll say the same.

- **pro-verb** (auxiliary) **DO**, substituting for a VP, including any adjunct or object:

We should arrive at the same time as they do.

See further under **DO**.

- **do so**, standing in for the lexical verb and its complement in declarative clauses:

If they can't get the tickets, I will do so.

- **WHAT**, standing in for one or more words in echo questions:

I'll sign the cheque today. > You'll sign what today?// You'll do what?

See further under **question**, section 5.

Pro-forms contribute greatly to the cohesion of a text, by providing a simple *coreference* to something already mentioned, and often a shorter substitute for it. See further under **substitution** and **cohesion**.

pro-verb

See under **pro-form**.

progressive aspect

This dimension of the verb's meaning is expressed through the combination of the auxiliary verb *BE* and the present participle of a lexical verb. For example:

I am thinking aloud
she is working on it
he was being considered
they were pondering

As the examples show, the **progressive aspect** may be expressed in both present and past tense. It is also known as the *imperfect* or *continuous aspect*. Note that some grammarians use the term *progressive* to refer to the imperfective category of aspectuality. See further under **aspect**.

The progressive aspect naturally goes with *dynamic verbs* and actions which take place over shorter or longer stretches of time:

He was running for the bus.
The city has been growing steadily over the last ten years.

By contrast it used to be said that the progressive could not be used in standard English with *stative verbs* such as *believe, love, remember* – although Indian English speakers might use *I am not remembering*, etc. However, discourse analysis shows standard English speakers do in fact use progressive forms with stative verbs in particular contexts. Advertising slogans such as “I’m loving it” also show how progressives can be used to prompt positive engagement with the consumer context.

Verb phrases with progressive aspect are on the rise in modern English. They serve a variety of pragmatic functions in interactive discourse to express individual attitudes and stances (Collins 2009a). But they are also found across a wide range of written discourse, including news reporting and academic prose as well as fiction (Biber et al. 1999). In nonfiction writing, progressives are typically in the present tense, whereas in fiction they are typically in the past.

projection

- 1 **projection of syntactic structures from generative rules**
 - 2 **derivational relationship between lexical items and syntactic structures**
 - 3 **alternative projections with verbs of reporting and quoting**
-

This term has very different applications in different grammatical paradigms.

1 Projection of syntactic structures from generative rules

In transformational–generative grammar (TG), the term **projection** refers to the relationship between rules of grammar and the syntactic structures licensed by them, which are conventionally represented in *tree diagrams*. See **tree diagram**.

2 Derivational relationship between lexical items and syntactic structures

In government–binding (GB) theory, **projection** refers to the strong relationship between lexical items and particular syntactic structures. In contrast to generative grammar’s emphasis on underlying rules, GB argues for the projection of syntactic structures from the lexicon (the *projection principle*). See further under **government–binding theory**.

3 Alternative projections with verbs of reporting and quoting

In systemic–functional grammar (SFG), alternative projections in parataxis and hypotaxis are noted with verbs of reporting and quoting (either speech or thought). The contrasting paratactic and hypotactic constructions *projected* by these verbs are illustrated below:

Parataxis	Hypotaxis
<i>He said “Do come.”</i>	<i>He said that I should come.</i>
<i>He thought “She won’t come.”</i>	<i>He thought that I wouldn’t come.</i>

As the examples show, the two types of projection correspond with traditional grammar notions of direct and indirect speech. Corpus-based research (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) found direct and indirect projections were equally common with verbs of speaking, but that indirect projection was far more common with verbs of thinking – as one might expect. See further under **parataxis** and **direct speech**.

The term **projection** is also used in SFG to refer to certain other types of clauses which detail reports, ideas, and facts, especially those subordinated by *whether* and *that*:

The question whether they could come by bus was raised.
That they would be late for the ceremony was very likely.

In other grammars these are treated as **nominal**, **noun**, **content**, or **complement clauses**. See further under **complement clause**.

pronoun

- 1 pronouns as a word class
- 2 pronouns in syntax
- 3 pronouns and substitution
- 4 variation in the forms of pronouns
- 5 other pronoun-like devices

1 Pronouns as a word class

This is one of the eight classical *parts of speech*, i.e. word classes used in traditional English grammars. In modern grammars such as Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999) pronouns remain a distinct word class, whereas in Huddleston

and Pullum (2002) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) they are made a subset of **nouns**, because of their ability to head a noun phrase (see further below, section 2). All grammarians now distinguish between pronouns which head an NP, and those which premodify the head as **determiners** (see further below, section 4; and **word class**, section 2).

Pronouns themselves can be categorized into several major subgroups:

- **demonstrative pronouns**: *this, that, these, those*
- **indefinite pronouns**: *any, each, none, some; anybody, everybody etc., anyone, everyone etc., anything, everything etc.*
- **interrogative pronouns**: *what, which, who/whom/whose*
- **personal pronouns**: *I/me, you, he/him, she/her, it, we/us, they/them*
- **possessive pronouns**: *mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs*
- **reflexive pronouns**: *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves/themself*
- **relative pronouns**: *which, what, who/whom/whose, that*

Each subgroup is discussed at its individual entry. Most of the subgroups also apply to determiners (on which see **determiner**, section 1). The indefinite pronoun group includes the larger group of quantificational pronouns, such as *FEW, LITTLE, MUCH, MOST*. Note that the interrogative and relative pronouns are sometimes treated together as **wh-pronouns**, for the purposes of discussing their grammatical case, as below in section 4. What follows below are some of the shared syntactic, semantic, and discursal functions of pronouns in general.

2 **Pronouns in syntax**

As their name suggests, **pronouns** have much in common with nouns. Like them they act as head of the noun phrase in which they occur, as in the following sentence:

The president said he would visit soon.

There the pronoun “he” constitutes the noun phrase/subject of the second clause, just like “the president” in the first. What’s different is that the pronoun often constitutes the whole of the NP. Some pronouns (e.g. indefinite ones) do however allow a limited amount of postmodification, as in *each of us, most of the group*.

3 **Pronouns and substitution**

A **pronoun** substitutes for a noun or noun phrase already mentioned in the discourse, as underlined in the following:

*After hearing the children sing, I was entranced with **them**.*

(personal pron.)

*Don't take the 9 pm train. **That's** the one **which** stops at all stations.*

(demonstrative pron.) (relative pron.)

The pronoun may appear in the same sentence, as in the first example, or in a following sentence, as in the second. In traditional grammar the pronoun is seen as replacing the full noun phrase and expressing some of its grammatical properties, e.g. its grammatical number. So “them” reflects the plurality of its

antecedent (“children”), and “that” the singularity of “train”). The pronoun nevertheless takes on the grammatical case required by the syntax of its own sentence/clause, as subject/object etc., which is explicit – or can be – for interrogative/relative and personal/reflexive pronouns (see further under **case, morphology, case grammar**).

In systemic–functional grammar (Halliday and Hasan 1976), the pronoun is said to refer back to the full noun phrase and provide a cohesive tie with it. This backward-looking orientation makes the pronoun *anaphoric* (see further under **anaphora**). Discourse analysts (Brown and Yule 1983) note that the pronoun also signals that the antecedent has become a “given” rather than “new” piece of knowledge for the reader/listener, and it helps to compact information which is already shared. However it’s possible – though much less common – for pronouns to be forward-looking (*cataphoric*), and to anticipate the full detailing of the referent in a following phrase or clause:

Those of us who have lived through wartime would understand.
(demonstrative) (personal) (relative)

Here three pronouns together foreshadow the referent detailed in the embedded clause, and make it the heavy-weight subject of the second clause. Examples like this show how pronouns can be more than functionaries within the essential syntax. They contribute to the focus of individual sentences, their cohesion, and the development of the discourse.

4 Variation in the forms of pronouns

Pronouns in most of the subgroups listed in section 1 vary in their form according to their syntactic roles. The personal and *wh-* pronouns show the most fully developed paradigms, which in traditional grammar included the nominative (or subject case), accusative (or object case), dative (or indirect object case), and genitive (= possessive case). The occasionally used “independent/ absolute” form of the genitive is also a recognized member (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). Thus for the personal pronoun *I* and relative/interrogative *WHO*, the pronoun paradigm consists of:

Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Independent
<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>mine</i>
<i>who</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>whose</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>whose</i>

In modern English grammar, the genitive case form is recognized as having the syntactic function of a determiner, because it serves to premodify a noun rather than replace it. Meanwhile the independent form of the genitive, as in *The pleasure is mine*, remains a pronoun in the strictest syntactic sense, in that it replaces a noun phrase. For more on these differences, see under **possessive pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 1.

- For the full paradigms of the various types of pronoun, see further under **personal pronoun, relative pronoun, interrogative pronoun, demonstrative pronoun**.

5 Other pronoun-like devices

The various types of pronoun listed above form closed sets, all substituting for nouns (or noun phrases). English does however make use of a few additional substitutory devices, sometimes called *pro-forms*:

- *the one*, as used in the third section (second example) above, where it maintains the reference to “the 9 pm train.”
- *ONE*, used in older and literary forms of English as an indefinite personal pronoun, for example: *One does oneself no harm by asking*. (See further under **ONE**.)
- *the said/aforesaid/aforementioned* used in English legal discourse are specialized examples of pronoun-like devices, though the regular pronouns are themselves avoided in legal prose.
- *SO*, in the combination *do so*, often replaces a noun phrase. For example: *We asked the candidate to send two copies of the proposal, and she did so*. There the verb *DO* can also be seen taking on a substitutory role, standing in for another finite verb.

See further under **pro-form**.

proper noun and proper name

Both **proper nouns** and **proper names** refer to distinct entities, and are typically written with initial capital letters (see further under **capitalization**). They differ in that proper nouns are a special category of English noun which designate individual persons or places rather than classes of them, e.g. *Francis, Capetown, Uruguay*. Proper nouns thus contrast with **common nouns**, which essentially refer to a class of items (see further under **noun**, section 2). In syntax proper nouns function like ordinary nouns. They can appear as head of a noun phrase with premodifiers as in *the modern Uruguay*, or as the complement of a preposition, as in *heading for Uruguay*. They may also appear in attributive role, premodifying other nouns as in *the Uruguay government*.

Proper names for persons are phrases made up of unique or quasi-unique personal and family names:

Angela Merkel Barak Obama Mao Tse-tung

They belong to the particular person they designate, and cannot be transferred. Admittedly the same proper name is occasionally found to designate two (or more) different people, and any large metropolitan telephone directory will contain multiple *John Smiths* and *Peter Whites*. But this does not change the fact that in their respective social contexts, the names *John Smith* and *Peter White* denote particular individuals

The **proper names** for geographical features are phrases typically made up of a common and a proper noun, as are:

Cape Canaveral Christmas Island Mount Fuji St Lawrence River

Like personal proper names, they are notionally unique, even though they may be duplicated in other parts of the world – or even within the same country. There are

in fact 11 *River Avons* in different parts of the UK, but their individual localities give them distinct identities.

The **proper names** for institutions may involve several common nouns, or combinations of common and proper nouns, with other closed-class items such as prepositions and determiners:

Christian Democrats *Department of Foreign Affairs*
National Portrait Gallery *The Times* *Wells Fargo Bank*

Proper names which are the titles of creative works may be more extended, with a variety of clausal elements:

Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf? *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold.*

Whatever their internal makeup, proper names function as noun phrases within the structure of the sentence. Some, including personal names and the titles just quoted, are more or less fixed, while others allow some modification of their elements, in keeping with their syntactic or discursal role. The two types are dubbed “strong” and “weak” proper names by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), though the dividing line between them is not absolute. In their terms, geographical names such as *New Zealand* and *Long Island* are strong, in resisting the use of the determiner; whereas *the Ukraine*, *the United States of America* are weak by virtue of their redundant determiner (which can be dropped, along with other reductions), as in:

Ukraine government sources *a United States submarine*

English names for rivers are definitely weak, since many of them have alternative orderings: *(the) River Ganges*, *(the) Ganges River*, *the Ganges*.

Institutional proper names are typically *weak*, since many have abbreviated forms:

Department of Foreign Affairs > *Foreign Affairs*
National Portrait Gallery > *(the) Gallery* > *the gallery*

An additional indication of the weak type of proper name in English is the fact that the abbreviated form may be decapitalized after its first full appearance in a text. However this only happens when the abbreviated form is the head of the phrase (as in the second example above), rather the descriptor or postmodifier (as in the first).

Note that these definitions of **proper noun and proper name** are grounded in English syntax and English writing conventions. In German, the distinction between proper nouns and geographical proper names is neutralized because the latter e.g. *Ludwigsstrasse* (“Ludwig Street”) are written as one word, like English proper nouns. In French, the identity of geographical proper names is also less obvious, because initial capital letters are used only on the proper noun, not the generic elements of the proper name: thus the street address *rue des Nymphéas* equates to “Nymphéas Road” in English.

prop-IT

See under **IT and ITS**, section 2.

pro-predicate

This is a term for the verb *DO* and the combination *do so*, when they are used as substitutes for the predicate of a preceding clause. For example:

They expressed interest in coming to the display, and we invited them to do so.

See further under **pro-form**.

protasis

This is an alternative name for the antecedent in a conditional sentence. See further under **apodosis**.

pseudo-cleft sentence

- 1 syntactic structure of pseudo-clefts
 - 2 pseudo-clefts, *IT*-clefts, and reverse(d) pseudo-clefts
 - 3 discourse roles of pseudo-clefts
 - 4 issues of agreement with pseudo-clefts
-

1 Syntactic structure of pseudo-clefts

This is a type of complex sentence in which the verb of a simple main clause (e.g. *we need a plan*) is extracted with one of its arguments into a relative clause headed by the pronoun *WHAT*. For example:

What we need is a plan.

What alarmed us was the size of the task.

In the first example, the verb and its subject are constructed with *WHAT* into an independent relative clause or **nominal relative**; in the second example, the verb and its object are the nominal relative (see further under **nominal relative clause**). *WHAT* serves as direct object in the first example and subject in the second. Either way the *WHAT*-clause complements the item specified in the rest of the main clause. The term **pseudo-cleft** was coined by Jespersen (1937: 83), and taken up by Quirk et al. (1985), Aarts (1997) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002). An alternative name is **wh-cleft** used by Biber et al. (1999) and others.

2 Pseudo-clefts, *IT*-clefts, and reverse(d) pseudo-clefts

Pseudo-clefts are so called because they superficially resemble *IT*-cleft sentences in foregrounding an element of the basic clause. The three types of sentence are illustrated below:

Tom has a strange sense of humor. (basic clause)

It's a strange sense of humor that Tom has. (*IT*-cleft)

What Tom has is a strange sense of humor. (pseudo-cleft)

In this example, the pseudo-cleft extracts the subject and verb into a prefatory nominal relative with *WHAT*, while the *IT*-cleft foregrounds one of the noun phrases of the basic clause (see further under ***IT*-cleft sentence**). Note that some pseudo-cleft sentences are “uncleavable,” e.g. *What's strange about Tom is his sense*

of humor. The form of that sentence cannot be explained as the product of clefting from the basic sentence.

The *reverse(d) pseudo-cleft* – as its name suggests – reverses the order of the subject and complement of the corresponding pseudo-cleft sentence:

A strange sense of humor is what Tom has.

The reverse(d) pseudo-cleft foregrounds the complement of the pseudo-cleft sentence, which in this case is the object of the corresponding basic clause (*Tom has a strange sense of humor*).

3 Discourse roles of pseudo-clefts

Like other types of *cleft sentences*, **pseudo-clefts** contribute to the flexibility of expression. By extracting and foregrounding constituents of the simple clause, they give prominence to particular units of information, and help to vary the patterns of topical progression of the text (see further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3). Reversed pseudo-clefts have a summative role in written discourse (Collins 1982). Meanwhile pseudo-clefts are more common in conversation, according to the *Longman Grammar* (Biber et al. 1999: 963), probably because of the low information content in the foregrounded relative clause.

4 Issues of agreement with pseudo-clefts

Pseudo-cleft sentences occasionally raise questions of agreement, especially when the complement of the *WHAT*-clause in the main clause is plural.

For example:

What we've been eating are imported varieties of cheese.

The pronoun *WHAT* is number-transparent, i.e. could take either singular or plural agreement (see further under **number transparency**). It is also case-neutral, taking on either subject or object roles, which makes it doubly ambivalent. Patterns of agreement for pseudo-clefts vary especially when *WHAT* is the fronted object of the relative clause, as in the example above, although the plural agreement shown there is most likely when the noun complement is plural: “varieties of cheese” (*Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* 1989). When *WHAT* is the subject of the nominal relative clause, the agreement is normally either consistently singular or consistently plural, according to Quirk et al. (1985). For example:

What is frightening for them is the prospect of a new investigation.

What have surfaced are deeply rooted anxieties.

For the reverse(d) pseudo-cleft, the agreement is more straightforward:

The prospect of a new investigation is what is frightening for them.

There the regular (formal) pattern of agreement between the subject NP and verb prevails. See further under **agreement**, section 2.

public verb

See **private verb**.

punctuation

- 1 punctuation as an evolving system
 - 2 punctuation and sentence grammar
 - 3 light vs. heavy punctuation
 - 4 punctuation and word forms
-

1 Punctuation as an evolving system

The *punctuation system* of modern English has evolved steadily over the centuries. It originated in a simple set of marks used to mark pauses in biblical texts to be read aloud in public places. With the “school-mastering” of English grammar from the C16–C19, the punctuation system was correlated with smaller and larger grammatical units, and the comma, semicolon, colon, and full stop used to mark their respective weighting. In the later C20, the role of punctuation in information delivery to readers began to be recognized, and its importance in conveying sense units as apposed to strictly grammatical ones. Its visual functions have also been more closely analyzed in relation to nontextual material such as lists, especially as displayed on computer screens as opposed to the printed page. In these contexts the importance of linear space is now included in discussions of the punctuation repertoire (Nunberg 1990; Todd 1995).

2 Punctuation and sentence grammar

In modern English there are a few points where punctuation is required by syntax, and not optional. One is the end of a sentence, which is always indicated by a *punctuation mark*. The default punctuation is a full stop, but this may be replaced by a “heavier” mark such as the question mark or exclamation mark, if the pragmatic function of the sentence is something other than a statement.

They're here. They're here? They're here!

As the examples show, the choice of final punctuation is not necessarily dictated by the syntax of the sentence. Rather it can reflect the communicative (i.e. pragmatic) function of the utterance (see further under **pragmatic**).

Within sentences there is much optionality on the use/nonuse of punctuation. It varies with the length of the sentence: longer sentences require more punctuated breaks (with commas, colons, semicolons) to define the boundaries of information units. Punctuation (a comma) may also be needed near the start of a sentence to separate words which might otherwise be misconstrued. Compare:

All along the beach was strewn with wreckage.

All along, the beach was strewn with wreckage.

But not all adverbial adjuncts at the start of a sentence need to be commaed off when there is no potential ambiguity. Corpus-based research shows that writers tend to punctuate such phrases when they consist of five words or more, or when the adverbial adjunct is a finite clause (Meyer 1987). See further under **comma**, section 1.

The boundary between coordinate clauses may be punctuated by a comma or not, according to whether they share the subject NP. Compare:

The client rang but didn't leave a message.

The client rang, but I missed the call.

(See further under **coordination**, section 6; and **sentence**, section 1).

When the second clause is prefaced by conjuncts such as *so*, *yet*, *however*, there is an increasing tendency to use just a comma (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), as if they are coordinated, although formal grammar requires a semicolon.

Compare:

The day was just perfect, so we took all the photographic gear with us.

The day was just perfect; so we took all the photographic gear with us.

This is a detail on which punctuation practice is evolving. It goes with the fact that semicolons are less freely used in the punctuation hierarchy than previously.

Note that bullets are now often used to punctuate items in lists, where regular clausal syntax is suspended. The bullet's shape varies, but it is always positioned at the start of the listed item, and complemented by the variable line space at the end of it.

See further under individual entries for **bracket**, **bullet**, **colon**, **comma**, **dash**, **exclamation mark**, **full stop**, **line space**, **question mark**, **quotation mark**, **semicolon**.

3 Heavy vs. light punctuation

In later C20 English, the frequency of *punctuation marks* slowly decreased amid a general trend from "heavy" to "light" punctuation (Quirk et al. 1985). It aligns with the tendency towards shorter sentences (Haussamen 1994), and the common preference for "plain English" in expository writing. Minimal punctuation is used even in longer sentences, and research by Chafe (1987) found that those reading texts aloud paused more often than the punctuation of the edited text indicated. However the places where they paused and the punctuation they would have added varied considerably. Individual practice and preference is thus also a factor in variable punctuation.

4 Punctuation and word forms

Although some punctuation (e.g. hyphens) may be used to underscore the morphological structure of lexical units and noun phrases, it varies considerably. In compounds, the use of hyphens or word space as opposed to unspaced setting is optional, as in:

data processing data-processing dataprocessing

Some dictionaries, editors, and writers prefer to mark the connection between the two parts of the compound, by means of a hyphen or unspaced setting as in the second and third versions. Others rely on the semantic connection between them, and the fact that they are regularly juxtaposed to form a lexical unit, as

in the first setting. In some compounds, the issue of separating the two elements of the compound is more crucial than indicating their connection as in:

sea legs *sea-legs* *sealegs*

In such cases, either of the first two versions (punctuated by word space or a hyphen) is naturally preferred to the third setting. See further under **hyphen**, section 1; and **word space**.

Within the NP, the genitive case as determinative is normally punctuated by an apostrophe before the *s* (*'s*), as in:

the owl's claws *Felicity's bicycle* *Sunday's wonderful lunch*

In the plural, the apostrophe follows the *s* (*s'*), as in:

the owls' beaks *the girls' bicycles* *the days' relentless demands*

Note that this use of the **apostrophe** to mark the genitive plural can only be communicated in writing. Its use in institutional names is on the wane: see **apostrophe (1)**, section 5.

Other punctuation marks that contribute to the orthography of particular word forms are:

- the full stop/period, used to identify abbreviations and acronyms
- the slash/oblique stroke/solidus/virgule, used to present alternative words as in these bullet points; and timespans consisting of adjacent years (1998/9)

See further under **full stop** and **slash**.

Q

qualifier

In traditional grammar, **qualifier** was used to refer to an adjective which assigned qualities to the following noun. Thus in *the little red book*, both “little” and “red” were qualifiers. The contrasting term **modifier** was applied to the association of adverbs with verbs, e.g. the underlined in the following: *We read the book thoroughly*.

In systemic–functional grammar, **qualifier** is the term for a phrase or clause that postmodifies the head of an NP, while **modifier** is used for any adjective (**epithet**) that premodifies the head, apart from a classifier. See further under **epithet**, section 2.

quantifier

Quantification is embedded in English in more than one grammatical constituent – most noticeably in **numerical quantifiers**, both cardinals (*one, two, three*, etc.) and ordinals (*first, second, third*, etc.). These formal quantifiers are associated with the determinative phrase as postdeterminers, i.e. following any other type of determiner present, as in: *all my three grownup sons* (see further under **determiner**, section 3). In traditional grammar, and still in some dictionaries, the numerical quantifiers are classed as adjectives.

Other less numerical types of **quantification** are to be found among the “universal” predeterminers such as *ALL, BOTH*; and less specific postdeterminers such as *MUCH* and *FEW* (the **multal** and the **paucal**), which are never used with numerical quantifiers. All these **quantifying** determiners can also function as pronouns: compare:

two books / two of the books all the writers / all of the writers

For *FEW*, see further under **LESS**, section 2; and **MANY, MUCH, and MORE**.

Informal quantifiers are continually grammaticalizing out of nouns and NPs. Measures of volume can be found in nouns with the suffix *-ful*, e.g. *armful, handful, mouthful, shovelful*, especially in the plural when they come to mean just an abundant quantity. Compare:

The waiter passed with an armful of plates.

They arrived with armfuls of flowers.

The tendency to put the plural *-s* at the end of the word rather than in the middle (i.e. *armsful*) shifts the emphasis away from the specifics of *arm*, and marks the word’s passage into a generalized quantifier. **Quantifying nouns** like these

are readily coined to suit the context: *roomful, tankful, truckful*, etc. The most grammaticalized of the informal quantifiers are NPs like *LOT OF* and *LOTS OF*, but there are numerous others in everyday discourse, such as *a heap of, a pile of, bags of, loads of*, etc. See further under **non-numerical quantifier**.

quasi-modal

See under **auxiliary verb**, section 4.

question

- 1 **question function and interrogative syntax**
 - 2 **open questions/wh-questions**
 - 3 **closed, YES/NO or polar questions**
 - 4 **tag questions**
 - 5 **echo questions**
 - 6 **direct and indirect questions**
-

1 Question function and interrogative syntax

Questions are utterances that prompt the listener for a very specific answer. The prompt may be embedded in interrogative syntax involving subject–verb inversion, as in: *Will it rain tomorrow?* It may also be expressed through ordinary declarative syntax, but said with rising intonation which indicates its intended function as a question: *It will rain tomorrow?* In print, both would carry a question mark, and grammarians accept that both are questions in the pragmatic sense (see further under **pragmatic**). Questions are very much more frequent (by almost 50 to 1) in conversational discourse than in everyday writing or academic prose, according to research on the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999).

Note that the so-called **rhetoical question** is not a **question** in the pragmatic sense of seeking an answer from the listener: *Who am I to complain?* Despite its interrogative syntax, no answer is required (see further under **interrogative**).

2 Open questions/wh-questions

These are **information-seeking questions** such as:

Where did I put my glasses?

How did the concert go?

What's the time?

What color are you wearing to the wedding?

Why is the sky blue?

An open question may be prefaced by an interrogative adverb, pronoun, or determiner, most of which beginning with *wh*-words (apart from *HOW*). The question itself is phrased in interrogative syntax, and it seeks more than a monosyllabic (*YES/NO*) answer from the other party – in cases like the last, a very long answer. Alternative terms for the **open question** are **wh-question**,

used by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), *variable question* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), and *wh-interrogative* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

3 Closed, YES/NO, or polar questions

These are questions that frame the answer they are seeking, typically a YES or NO answer from the listener:

Are you coming?

Is the train on time?

Do you have an umbrella?

A subtype of closed question is the *alternative question* which provides the listener with two (sometimes three) possible answers. For example:

Should I bring a friend or come alone?

Do you need the material today, tomorrow, or on Monday?

Alternative questions offer mutually exclusive options, expressed as *disjunctive coordinates* (see further under *coordination*, section 4).

Alternative terms for the *closed question* are *YES/NO question*, used by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), *polar question* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), and *YES/NO-interrogative* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

4 Tag questions

This term refers to the two-word question which follows a fully articulated statement, turning it into a question, as in:

The plan is not fixed, is it?

We must settle the matter, mustn't we?

You mean it, don't you?

The term *tag question* (Quirk et al. 1985) serves to refer to the questioning function of the whole complex sentence, and it then contrasts with the terms *question tag* and *interrogative tag* used by Biber et al. (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) respectively, which can be reserved for the second constituent. The term *anchor* is used by the latter to refer to the first constituent on which the interrogative tag depends.

In the three examples shown above, the question tag picks up the pronoun and auxiliary/modal verb from the statement, and inverts them into a mini-question with the polarity reversed. When there is no auxiliary/modal verb, *DO*-support is inserted. The alternation of positive and negative polarity in standard English question tags makes them quite challenging for those learning English as a second language. This correlates with the fact that some dialects of British English at home and abroad prefer to use an *invariant tag* (*innit* = “isn't it?”). Research on the standard English question tags in the Longman corpus found that negative tags outnumbered positive ones by 4 to 1.

Although regular question tags mostly use the reversed polarity (positive statement + negative tag; negative statement + positive tag), the combination of positive + positive is occasionally found, as in:

Your phone is engaged, is it?

He brought his parents, did he?

The positive + positive sequence is overbearing in its tenor, and smacks of interrogation or a cross-examination in court. There is no evidence of the fourth possibility (negative + negative).

Tag questions are the most interactive type of question, in giving information as the basis for soliciting an answer. In everyday conversation they make up one in four of all questions uttered, but only about one in fifteen in fiction, according to corpus-based research (Biber et al. 1999).

5 **Echo questions**

This term refers to a range of questions that echo some element of a previous statement, question, or command. The canonical type is exemplified in:

I like experimental music. *You like it?*

Shall I go by taxi? *Go by what?*

Do what he says. *Do it?*

Echo questions commonly ask for recapitulation/repetition of something just said, and are closed questions (see above section 3). The accompanying intonation makes it either a polite reaction or an incredulous exclamation. Some echo questions suggest that the listener has missed a crucial point from the previous statement, as in:

He's a speleologist. *He's a what?*

He's coming with Ariadne. *He's coming with whom?*

Lock the door when you leave. *Lock which door?*

These are **wh-** or **open questions** (see above section 2). As all the examples show, echo questions do not have interrogative syntax, i.e. do not use subject–verb inversion, and have interrogative pronouns and determiners in the final constituent of the clause. Echo questions can in fact be constructed out of any of the four functional sentence types (see under **sentence**, section 3).

6 **Direct and indirect questions**

These terms distinguish the more and less direct ways of asking questions associated with **direct** and **indirect speech**. See further under **direct and indirect speech** and **indirect question**.

question mark

Used at the end of a sentence, the **question mark** serves one of two purposes:

- to mark the fact that it is expressed in interrogative syntax
- to indicate that the sentence is to be read as a question, despite its use of declarative syntax

See further under **question**, section 1.

When used in a grammar book at the start of an example, a question mark indicates the analyst's uncertainty about its grammaticality or acceptability. Double **question marks** imply a greater degree of uncertainty about the sentence.

quotation

A quotation purports to be the exact words spoken or written by someone. It is usually distinguished from the matrix text in which it appears by means of **quotation marks** (inverted commas), and may be grammatically independent, as often in narrative:

A distressed woman rushed forwards, gasping “My bag has been stolen.”

As the example shows, the grammar of the quotation switches into first person narrative, whereas the host sentence is in the third person. The quotation is in the present tense rather than past (see further under **direct and indirect speech**).

The projection of events in a quotation creates a more dramatic mode of discourse, which is heavily exploited in newspaper reporting.

The minister declared: “We will act if there is any evidence of malpractice.”

Even a quoted phrase can be used for sensational purposes:

The minister committed the government to action if there was “evidence of malpractice.”

In fiction texts, the traditional punctuation of the quoted language using quote marks and a preceding comma helps to emphasize its separation from the host narrative (like the colon of the newspaper quote illustrated above). In C21 this heavy punctuation has given way to lighter options of using a dash or nothing at all before the quotation; and even doing away with the quotation marks. See further under **punctuation**, section 3.

quotation marks

Pairs of **quotation marks** are used to

- set off verbatim comments made by (or attributed to) a speaker, as in:

The minister said: “There will be no tax increases under this government.”

- mark the exact words of a writer, as in:

Chomsky’s famous example of the grammatical but unacceptable sentence was “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.”

In some texts quotation marks also serve to highlight terms or uses of words to which the writer wishes to draw attention:

In a “liberal” democracy, minority views must be acknowledged.

Depending on their presumed rhetorical function, they are variously called **scare quotes**, **shudder quotes**, **sneer quotes**, **cute quotes**.

Note that **quotation marks** in American English are usually double, as in that example. In British English they are often single (Peters 2004).

quotative

This term refers to a more or less grammaticalized device used in spoken discourse to flag the fact that what follows is what was actually said or thought by someone. In British English the verb *GO* has long been used as an informal **quotative**, as in:

We met by chance and he goes “weren’t you at that protest meeting?”

The most remarkable informal quotative to emerge in the last two decades is *BE like*, as in:

He kept me waiting half an hour, and I'm like "where on earth have you been?".

First reported in the US about two decades ago (Romaine and Lange 1991), quotative *BE like* has spread worldwide among younger people (under 35s). Recent research suggests that *BE like* is displacing quotative *GO* in both northern and southern hemispheres (Terraschke 2010). However some speakers can be heard using both quotatives, as in:

And I go, how much is it? And she goes \$10. And I'm like cool!

This example from BurrIDGE (p.c. 2011) suggests that those whose speech repertoires include both quotatives use *GO* for what was said, and *BE like* for an approximation of what was said or thought.

R

raising

- 1 raising of objects
 - 2 subject raising
 - 3 negative raising
-

1 Raising of objects

This concept derives from transformational–generative grammar (TG). It refers to the way in which elements in verb complements or nonfinite clauses may be *raised* to roles higher in the syntactic structure. It helps to explain the syntactic ambiguity of the NP which is located between the matrix verb and the complement in sentences like:

She wanted John to speak his mind.

There “John,” the subject of the nonfinite clause “to speak,” becomes the *raised object* of the verb “want” in the matrix clause. With *complex catenatives*, the syntactic pressure to find an object for the controlling verb is so strong as to raise a *dummy object* in the matrix clause, as in:

We wanted it to be known by all the participants.

We wanted there to be an observer of the experiment.

Object raising also occurs in some types of causative construction, when the notional object of the nonfinite clause is raised into the matrix clause, as in:

They had the roof insulated.

He'll get the watch repaired by the manufacturer.

In all such cases, the raised object is moved forward into the matrix clause, but is semantically tied up in the complement, hence its structural ambiguity. See further under *catenative verb*, section 3; and *causative verb*.

2 Subject raising

The notion of a *raised subject* is used in TG to explain the syntax of *simple catenatives* (Type I) as in:

The visitor seemed to enjoy talking.

There “the visitor” belongs to the nonfinite verb “enjoy,” as is clear when it is paraphrased in two finite clauses:

It seemed that the visitor enjoyed talking.

Here the appearance of the dummy subject *IT* is again diagnostic, showing how the matrix verb “seemed” requires a subject, which is routinely raised from the complement in the catenative construction. The *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002) thus proposes that all Type I catenatives (*seem, keep,* etc.) have raised subjects. It also argues the case for almost all auxiliary verbs (including modal verbs) having raised subjects (see further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7).

Note that certain types of adjectives (**raising adjectives**) which can take *TO*-complements may also be construed with raised subjects. Among others, they include:

apt bound certain fated liable likely set sure

So statements may be formulated with them as either:

It is certain that the president will come.

or

The president is certain to come. (raised subject)

3 **Negative raising**

This is the syntactic phenomenon whereby a **negator** belonging to a subordinate clause is raised to the matrix clause. This is not uncommonly heard in conversation with mental process verbs and the complement clause following, as in

We did not think that they would come.

There the negator *NOT* preceding “think” strictly applies to “come” in the subordinate clause, because the sense intended is “We thought they would not come.” See further under **negation**, section 4.

raising verb

This term refers to a **catenative verb** which entails either **subject raising** (simple catenative) or **object raising** (complex catenative). See further under **catenative verb**, section 3; and **raising**, sections 1 and 2.

range

In systemic–functional grammar, this term refers to the medium or domain of the verb process, and applies to all types of process except the existential. It thus includes concepts such as the **scope** of a material process, the **phenomenon** of the mental process, and the so-called **verbiage** of the verbal process. The concept of **range** supports ergative analysis of the elements of the clause, and neutralizes the distinction made in transitivity analysis between **participants** and **circumstances**. See further under **participant**; **circumstance**; and **ergative**, section 1.

rank scale

This term is used in systemic linguistics and elsewhere to refer to the hierarchical ordering of grammatical units within a sentence. With the whole

sentence as the top level, the **rank scale** identifies its constituents level by level below, at the level of clause, phrase, word, and down to morpheme and phoneme/grapheme if so desired. At each level or rank, the constituents from the rank below are bracketed into the higher-level constituent. The bracketing is therefore most intense at the highest level, i.e. the sentence.

This is shown below in the **rank scale** representation of the sentence:

They were saying that the fires blazed all night.

- Sentence level:

[S [MC [[NP [Pron *they*]] [VP [[Vaux *were*] [V-ingp *saying*]] [SubCl [Comp *that*] [NP [Det *the*] [N *fires*]] [VP [V *blazed*]] [NP/A [Det *all*] [N *night*]]]]]]]

- Clause level:

[MC [[NP [Pron *they*]] [VP [Vaux *were*] [V-ingp *saying*]]] [SubCl [Comp *that*] [NP [Det *the*] [N *fires*]] [VP [V *blazed*]] [NP/A [Det *all*] [N *night*]]]

- Phrase level:

[NP [Pron *they*]] [VP [Vaux *were*] [V-ingp *saying*]] [Comp *that*] [NP [Det *the*] [N *fires*]] [VP [V *blazed*]] [NP/A [Det *all*] [N *night*]]

- Word level:

[Pron *they*] [Vaux *were*] [V-ingp *saying*] [Comp *that*] [Det *the*] [N *fires*] [V *blazed*] [Det *all*] [N *night*]

Although the example shows exhaustively how each unit fits into higher-level constituents of the rank scale, it is quite difficult to read, especially with all the bracketing at the end. Tree diagrams present the same information more effectively, though their formalism also has certain drawbacks: see further under **tree diagram**.

rank-shifting

This term is used in systemic–functional grammar and elsewhere to refer to the downgrading of a constituent from a higher level in the **rank scale** to function within a lower one in a given sentence. For example, a relative clause that postmodifies the head noun of an NP is thereby **rank-shifted** down to be embedded within the NP:

The fires that had blazed all through the night were finally put out by midday.

The underlined clause is a **qualifier** of the preceding NP, not a subordinate clause of the sentence. See further under **qualifier** and **rank scale**.

real condition

See under **IF**.

reciprocal relationship

See under **antonymy**.

recursion and recursiveness

Recursion or **recursive** use of a limited number of sentence constituents allows the speakers of a language to produce an infinite number of sentences. This

reduplicative

Reduplication, i.e. sheer repetition of a morpheme, is a method of word formation in many languages. In some of them it serves to mark plurality, in others to underscore the large size of the referent. In English, reduplication sometimes involves exact repetition, as in *bye-bye*, *hush hush*, *pooh pooh*, and hypocoristic formations such as *gee-gee* and *pee-pee*. Most often it involves rhyming or half-rhyming syllables, such as:

fuddy-duddy *helter-skelter* *mumbo jumbo* *razzle dazzle*
dilly dally *mish-mash* *riff-raff* *tittle-tattle*

One of the two words in a **reduplicative** may be an ordinary word of the language (usually the second, as in *razzle dazzle*, *mish-mash*, *tittle-tattle*), and the other then plays on its sound. For other types of phonologically motivated words, see **word formation**, section 4.

referential

- 1 In lexical semantics, an alternative for the **denotative** meaning of a word: see further under **connotation and denotation**.
- 2 In textual cohesion, used as an alternative for **anaphoric** (pronoun): see under **anaphora** and **I and ITS**.
- 3 In systemic–functional linguistics, sometimes found as an alternative to **experiential** in analyzing the ideational function. See further under **metafunction of language**.

reflexive pronoun

- 1 reflexive pronouns in modern English
- 2 agreement with reflexive pronouns
- 3 reflexive pronouns without antecedents

1 Reflexive pronouns in modern English

These pronouns are a distinctive set ending in *-SELF* or *-SELVES*, which typically refer back to the subject of the sentence, as in

We introduced ourselves immediately.

The standard set of **reflexive pronouns** includes:

(singular)	<i>myself</i>	<i>yourself</i>	<i>himself, herself, itself, oneself</i>
(plural)	<i>ourselves</i>	<i>yourselves</i>	<i>themselves</i>

Supplementary hybrid forms are:

- (i) **THEMSELF**: increasingly used in conjunction with singular **THEY** or indefinite third person reference – revived from C16 (see further under **THEMSELVES and THEMSELF**)
- (ii) **OURSELF**: used in conjunction with singular **WE**. This is prototypically the voice of a monarch, but also occurs following **WE** in professional health contexts, etc. (see under **WE and US**, section 3).

2 Agreement with reflexive pronouns

The **reflexive pronoun** is selected to correspond in person and number (and for the third person singular, in gender) with the subject of the clause:

I must see for myself.

The businessman shot himself in the foot.

The children behaved themselves all day.

In cases like these the reflexive pronoun serves as the object of the verb or preposition, and its position in the clause is fixed. But reflexive pronouns can also be used to emphasize any noun or noun phrase in a sentence. In these cases they generally stand immediately after the item to put the spotlight on it:

They talked to the president himself on the telephone.

You yourselves might go that way.

However when the reflexive emphasizes the subject in a short sentence (as in the second example), it can also appear at the end:

You might go that way yourselves.

3 Reflexive pronouns without antecedents

The reflexive pronouns are sometimes used without an explicit antecedent, as a bulky substitute for the regular pronoun, as in:

With yourself as project leader, the team is complete.

The idea is for Jane and myself to contact him.

This use of the reflexive may represent a kind of self-consciousness, especially in the choice of “myself” (see further under **MYSELF**).

In expressing comparisons, the **reflexive pronoun** also appears without antecedent, although it may be expressed in the surrounding text. See for example:

No one knew better than ourselves what was meant.

Other comparative and contrastive prepositions including *as*, *but for*, *except*, *like* can also take reflexive pronouns on their own.

reflexive verb

Reflexive verbs have the same person as their subject and object. In English a reflexive verb can be formed ad hoc out of other transitive verbs with a **reflexive pronoun** as its object:

The officer cut himself shaving.

Their data showed itself to be statistically unreliable.

There are however a small number of English verbs which must be constructed with a following reflexive pronoun, for example:

absent oneself avail oneself behave oneself demean oneself
ingratiate oneself perjure oneself pride oneself

Some of these verbs are French in origin, where many common verbs are reflexive in their construction. The same is true in German and Italian. For example the verb *remember* is reflexive in all three languages (*se rappeler*, *sich erinnern*, *ricordarsi*), but never in English.

regular verb

- 1 morphology of regular verbs
- 2 phonological variation in regular verbs
- 3 orthographic variation in regular verbs

1 Morphology of regular verbs

The vast majority of modern English verbs are **regular**, in that their inflections for tense and aspect are very consistent. They make regular use of the *-(e)d* suffix for both past tense and past participle:

call/called *define/defined* *pack/packed* *relay/relayed*

Compare the often idiosyncratic patterns of **irregular verbs** (see under **irregular verb**). Many formerly irregular verbs have become regularized in the course of English language history, and the trend continues. All newly coined verbs are conjugated according to the regular pattern: *I text, you texted her, we have texted each other.*

2 Phonological variation in regular verbs

Despite its regular form, the *-(e)d* suffix for the past tense and past participle of **regular verbs** is pronounced in one of three ways. The final consonant may be a /d/ sound or a /t/, or as a separate syllable with an indeterminate vowel + /d/. Just which it is can be predicted from the final consonant of the verb's stem.

- If it is either a /d/, as in *befriend, collide, end, mind*, or a /t/, as in *blast, lift, relate, transport*, the suffix will be pronounced as a separate syllable with /d/, as when you pronounce *ended, minded*, etc. and *blasted, related*, etc.
- If it ends in another voiced consonant, e.g. *define, dive, drawl, drum*, the suffix will simply be added to the stem as a /d/ sound, as when you say *defined, dived, drawled, drummed*.
- If it ends in an unvoiced/voiceless consonant (other than /t/), e.g. *fax, hop, pack, pump*, the suffix will be added to the stem as a /t/ sound, as when you say *faxed, hopped, packed, pumped*.

For the distinction between voiced and unvoiced consonants, see under **voice (2)**.

3 Orthographic variation in regular verbs

The regular spelling variations of English verbs are built into the way their inflected forms are written. The orthographic rules that apply include:

- doubling of any single final consonant of monosyllabic stems (except *ck* and *x*), as in: *adlibbed, bragged, patted, prodded, slammed, whipped*
- doubling of the final consonant of any two-syllabled stem, if it is stressed and follows a single vowel, as in: *deferred, excelled, regretted* (but not *differed, marketed*, where the stress is on the first syllable; or *repeated, revealed* with their digraphic vowels). Note however the regional differences (Peters 2004) especially for verbs ending in *l*: *travelled* (UK), *traveled* (US)
- loss of final *e* of the stem, as in *escaped, excited, refined, replaced*

- substitution of *i* for *y* if the stem ends *i*, *-y* after another consonant: *allied*, *beautified*, *carried*, *tried* (but not *allayed*, *buoyed*, *delayed*, *toyed* where *y* follows a vowel)
- These orthographic rules apply to regular verbs before any suffix beginning with a vowel, thus not only *-ed* but also *-ing* and *-er*.

regularization

See under **irregular verb**, section 13; and **analogy**.

relational opposite

See under **antonymy**.

relational verb

See under **copular verb**.

relative adverb

The adverbs *when*, *where*, *why* are not uncommonly used as subordinators to connect a relative clause with relevant noun phrases, referring to time, place, and reason, as in:

... *the time/moment/instant/day* when *they arrived* ...

... *the place/spot/house* where *we were living then* ...

... *the reason* why *we enjoyed the chaos* ...

Of the three **relative adverbs**, *where* is by far the most frequent across spoken and written discourse, because it can be applied to physical locations as well as abstract areas of knowledge (Biber et al. 1999), as in *the bit where* (referring to a movie) and *the case/cases where* (in academic discussion).

Relative adverbs work like relative pronouns in signaling the forthcoming **relative clause**, except that they stand like subordinators outside it, unlike the core (*wh-*) **relative pronouns** which are constituents within it. See further under **relative pronoun**, sections 1 and 2.

Like all relative pronouns, **relative adverbs** are omissible when they refer to non-subject NPs in the relative clause, as in:

the day they arrived

the reason we enjoyed the chaos

See further under **relative pronoun**, sections 3 and 5.

relative clause

- 1 **relative clauses and their function**
 - 2 **relative clauses and relativizers**
 - 3 **restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses (defining and nondefining)**
 - 4 **sentence relative clause**
 - 5 **linking relative clause**
-

1 Relative clauses and their function

The **relative clause** is a type of subordinate clause which modifies a noun phrase in the main clause or one higher in the hierarchy. In traditional grammar

they were known as **adjectival clauses**, because of their role in describing the head of the NP to which they are attached.

2 Relative clauses and relativizers

The **relative clause** in written English is usually prefaced by a **relativizer** (relative pronoun or relative adverb), as in:

The proposition that we received was to take a half-day off.

However in spoken relative clauses, the relativizer is often omitted if it refers to something other than the subject (= **zero relativizer**):

The proposition [] we received was to take a half-day off.

This leaves only a syntactic **gap** to signal the relative clause, except that the juxtaposition of two noun phrases, the second of which is a subject pronoun, also helps to draw attention to the clause boundary. Relative clauses like these are sometimes called **contact clauses**, for obvious reasons. See further under **gap and gapping**.

3 Restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses

Relative clauses may be subdivided into the **restrictive** and **nonrestrictive** types illustrated below:

The longer reviews that were solicited still had to be considered.

The longer reviews, which were solicited, still had to be considered.

The first sentence shows the **restrictive relative clause**, where the relative clause serves to restrict the scope of the NP it modifies. (It means that only a subset of the “longer reviews” were considered, i.e. only those “solicited.”) The second sentence meanwhile illustrates the **nonrestrictive relative**, where the relative clause leaves the scope of NP untouched, and implies that all the “longer reviews” were solicited. “that” is the pronoun used in the restrictive relative clause, as usually happens; while “which” with the associated pair of commas marks the nonrestrictive relative clause, but with rather more variability. For more on the choice between **THAT** and **WHICH**, see **relative pronoun**, section 3. The question of punctuation with nonrestrictive relative clauses is discussed under **comma**, section 1.

Alternative nomenclature for the restrictive/nonrestrictive relative clause as used by Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999) is **defining/nondefining clause**, used by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), among others. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) use the terms **integrated** and **supplementary**, foregrounding the syntactic rather than the semantic difference between the two types of relative clause. The integrated (restrictive) relative clause is embedded in the matrix clause, whereas the supplementary (nonrestrictive) type is simply subordinated to the higher clause.

4 Sentence relative clause

The **sentence relative clause** differs from others in not attaching itself to a particular NP in the higher clause but to the proposition of the whole clause. For example:

John said we should go by train, which was exactly what we wanted to do.

The sentence relative typically expresses an attitude or judgment, and can occur in conversation on its own (i.e. **unembedded**), as in the following sequence:

They agreed to pilot funding of the project. Which was exactly what we wanted.

This unembedded use of sentence relative clauses raises the otherwise low frequency of the relative pronoun *WHICH* in conversational discourse (Biber et al. 1999).

5 **Linking relative clause**

This is a kind of extension of the sentence relative clause, more often heard than seen:

... Unless you get 92, which some universities are not going to give those marks.

The “which” of the **linking relative** suggests a spurious relationship with the superordinate clause, and so it functions more like a coordinator (*AND*). It suggests the speaker’s desire to put **end weight** on “those marks,” which is otherwise a given. Linking relatives present redundancy which would normally be edited out by writers/editors. See further under **end weight**; and **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 2.

- For the **nominal relative clause** or **independent relative clause**, see under **nominal relative clause**.

relative pronoun

- 1 **relative pronouns as a set**
 - 2 **relative pronouns and relative clauses**
 - 3 **WHICH vs. THAT as relativizers**
 - 4 **alternations with relative adverbs**
 - 5 **zero relative pronoun/zero relativizer**
-

1 **Relative pronouns as a set**

Relative pronouns are the words *WHO*, *WHOM*, *WHOSE*, *WHICH*, which typically introduce relative clauses. *THAT* is usually included since it regularly substitutes for *WHO*, *WHOM*, *WHICH*, though not for *WHOSE* or following a preposition. The **wh-set** (not including *THAT*) are also **interrogative pronoun** (see further under that heading).

The modern **wh-relative pronouns** provide a contrast between human and nonhuman/inanimate entities, with *WHO/WHOM/WHOSE* referring to human referents, and *WHICH* to animals and inanimates. This distinction evolved during C17, and is notably absent in the 1611 translation of the Lord’s prayer: *Our Father which art in heaven ...* The use of *WHICH* has contracted in modern English, so that it now refers mostly to inanimates and non-domestic animals. Its use in relation to corporate bodies remains a point of variation (see further under **WHICH**).

WHO, *WHOM*, *WHOSE* are all inflected for grammatical case like the English **personal pronoun** (see further under that heading). Thus *WHO* is essentially nominative, *WHOM* accusative, and *WHOSE* genitive, as in:

He's the applicant who fits the job perfectly. (nominative/subject role)

She's the applicant whom we all like best. (accusative/object role)

This is the one whose application runs to 16 pages. (genitive/possessive role)

Despite its traditional role as the nominative, *WHO* has long been used for the accusative as well (see further under **WHO and WHOM**). *WHOSE* is sometimes thought to be only usable with human referents, but this is not so (see further under **WHOSE**).

2 Relative pronouns and relative clauses

Relative pronouns all serve to signal the start of a relative clause, and are indeed a constituent of it (its subject or object). This role is clear for the **wh-relative pronouns** because of the case-marking (subject/object) and coreferential information (human/nonhuman; subject/object) embedded in them, correlating with their antecedent and marking their role within the relative clause. *THAT* as a relativizer is semantically neutral and grammatically unmarked as to subject or object role, though this is assigned on the analogy of the **wh-relativizers**. It does signal the subordination of the following clause, like the subordinator *THAT* in complement clauses. This is why grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1056) analyze *THAT* with relative clauses as a **complementizer** rather than a **relative pronoun**. See further under **complementizer**.

3 WHICH vs. THAT as relativizers

The choice between *WHICH* and *THAT* as **relative pronoun** is sometimes said to mark the difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses (see further under **relative clause**, section 3). Yet research by Biber et al. (1999) showed that their distribution is affected by various other linguistic factors, including:

- *WHICH* is associated with more literary and academic writing, whereas *THAT* as a relative pronoun occurs in more everyday writing, e.g. newspapers. In 70% of academic texts in the Longman corpus, *WHICH* was actually used more often in restrictive relative clauses than *THAT*.
- *THAT* is used in relative clauses about twice as often in American conversation as in British conversation.
- Relative clauses with demonstrative pronouns as head usually take *WHICH* as relativizer: *That's the color which I was looking for.*
- Relative clauses with indefinite pronouns (*ANYONE*, *EVERYTHING*, etc.) as head usually take *THAT* or **zero relativizer** (see section 5 below).
- *THAT* is preferred following superlative modifiers: *It's the smallest bike that I've ever ridden.*
- *WHICH* is preferred as the distance between the head noun and the relative clause increases.

For the use of commas with *WHICH*, see under **comma**, section 1.

4 Alternations with relative adverbs

After NPs referring to time, place, reason, either relative adverbs or *THAT* may be used, or no relative pronoun at all (i.e. *zero relativizer*):

That was the time when/that/[] we planted all those trees.

It was the place where/that/[] we first met.

The reason why/that/[] I put on weight was giving up smoking.

As the examples show, use of *THAT* entails the loss of the preposition associated with the alternative *WHICH* construction (*the time/place at which ...*), but it is effectively covered by the use of the *relative adverb* as subordinator.

5 Zero relative pronoun/zero relativizer

In everyday discourse, the relative pronoun is frequently absent in standard English from the start of a relative clause, at least when it refers to its *object*, as in:

He interviewed the applicant [] his boss had recommended.

In fact English discourse relies heavily on the *zero relativizer* (or *bare relative*) for non-subject referents. It was found in 80–90% of instances with human referents in texts in the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999).

Compare the conventional presence of the relative pronoun when it refers to the *subject* of the relative clause:

He welcomed the visitor who/that had just come by train.

In informal discourse it is nevertheless possible to omit the subject relative pronoun following an *IT*-cleft or existential construction:

It's the visitor [] just came by train.

There's someone [] just came by train.

These constructions never leave the identity of the subject of the relative clause in any doubt.

relativizer

This is a functional term used by Biber et al. (1999), among others, to refer to the larger set of relative pronouns including *WHO*, *WHOM*, *WHOSE*, *WHICH*, and *THAT* plus the relative adverbs *when*, *where*, *why*, all of which may introduce relative clauses (see further under *relative clause*, section 2). And since the *relativizer* is often omitted (except when referring to the subject of the relative clause), its absence becomes an additional mode of “connection” between the relative and main clause. Compare:

This is the day that/which we were waiting for.

This is the day [] we were waiting for.

The second sentence illustrates the so-called *zero relativizer*. See *relative pronoun*, section 5.

Note that the use of *THAT* as a relativizer for subject or object raises the question as to whether it should be analyzed as a *complementizer* or *relative pronoun*: see *relative pronoun*, section 2; and *complementizer*.

remote condition

See under **IF**.

residue

In systemic–functional grammar this is the term for the elements of the clause remaining once the subject and finite elements are excluded. The **residue** is underlined in the sentence below:

That young cricketer will be an asset to the club, won't he?
 (subject + finite) (finite + subject)

The residue thus resembles the traditional grammarian's *predicate* but excludes the finite element. See **predicate**, section 1.

restrictive relative clause

See under **relative clause**, section 3.

resumptive pronoun

See under **redundancy**.

reverse(d) pseudo-cleft sentence

See **pseudo-cleft sentence**, section 2.

rheme

See under **thematic**, section 1; and **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 1.

rhetorical question

See under **question**, section 1.

right dislocation

See under **dislocation**.

right-branching sentence

See under **left- and right-branching sentences**.

root

In comparative philology, the **root** is the common Indo-European source from which the *stems* of words in classical and modern languages are derived. Thus the **root** *cur(s)-* meaning “run” in Latin is embedded in derivatives borrowed into English such as *current*, *cursive*, *incur*, and French derivatives such as *course*, *incursion*, both later borrowed into English. See further under **stem** and **base**.

root modality

This term includes *deontic modality* as well as *dynamic modality*. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 2.

run-on

Dictionary entries often add extra forms of the headword at the end, to show its further morphological relatives. So the words *magical* and *magically* might be

added as **run-ons** at the end of the entry for *magic*, to indicate to readers that they are members of the same *lemma* (see under **lemma**). But because their meanings can simply be derived from those of the headword, they are not glossed themselves. In smaller dictionaries especially, run-ons help to increase the coverage of the volume, while economizing on the amount of space given to the less-used forms of words.

- Compare **secondary headword**.

S

-s

- 1 plural *-(e)s* suffix for most nouns
 - 2 suffix for third person singular present tense
 - 3 adverbial suffix
 - 4 collective suffix
 - 5 familiarity marker
-

1 Plural *-(e)s* suffix for most nouns

The *-s/-es* suffix is the standard plural suffix for English common nouns (*dogs, foxes*): see under **plural**, section 2. It is used also for the plurals of proper nouns (*Smiths, Triggses*): see under **plural**, section 5.

2 Suffix for third person singular present tense

The *-(e)s* suffix used with *HE/SHE/IT* in the present tense of lexical verbs (regular and irregular) marks the singular number of the verb:

<i>attends</i>	<i>buys</i>	<i>delays</i>	<i>drags</i>	<i>mumbles</i>	<i>sells</i>
<i>buzzes</i>	<i>finishes</i>	<i>fixes</i>	<i>lurches</i>	<i>passes</i>	<i>touches</i>
<i>buries</i>	<i>carries</i>	<i>embargoes</i>	<i>lassoes</i>	<i>liquifies</i>	<i>torpedoes</i>

The *-es* inflection occurs when the stem ends in a sibilant sound, or an *o*, or a *y* not preceded by another vowel; otherwise it is *s* (see further under **plural**, section 2). The same suffix appears with the third person singular **present tense** of auxiliary verbs *HAVE* and *DO*: *has, does*. This inflected third person singular form contrasts with the uninflected forms of the verb that go with all three persons in the plural (*WE/YOU/THEY*) as well as with the first person singular *I*. See further under **present tense**, section 1.

3 Adverbial suffix

The adverbial *-s* suffix survives in adverbs such as *besides, unawares* and especially directional adverbs: *eastwards/westwards/upwards/downwards* in British English. It is no longer productive in American English. In former centuries it was used much more widely, though some instances are now disguised by their orthography, e.g. *once, twice, thrice*, where the *-ce* replaces earlier *-es*; and *against, amidst* and others, where the adverbial *-s* has a *t* added, perhaps by false analogy with the superlative, or simply as an excrescent final stop sound following the fricative /s/.

4 **Collective suffix**

Apart from its use in marking the plural, the *-s* suffix is associated with various sets of words that represent a collectivity, and habitually appear with a final *s* and never in singular form. In older grammars they were referred to by the Latin term *pluralia tantum*, roughly translated as *summation plurals*. Some modern grammarians (e.g. Huddleston and Pullum 2002) regard them as *plural-only count nouns*, since the corresponding singular forms (if they exist) are not countable in the same sense. These *pluralia tantum* nouns include:

arrears dregs earnings innings molasses tailings

Collective words of this kind represent an accumulation of elements which are not meaningful as individual items. Other examples are words for an agglomeration of structures united by a common function, e.g.:

barracks diggings drycleaners gasworks
headquarters premises printers stables

Yet another set identified by *-s* consists of words expressing more abstract relations, involving duality, engagement, or some necessary relationship:

amends (just) deserts dues (we are) friends/pals
for keeps quits starters thanks

Other nouns which are plural in form but singular in their denotation to include are the *bipartite* nouns (*binoculars, scissors, trousers, etc.*) and names of diseases (*measles, etc.*). None of these are plurals in the countable sense, and collectivity is their key semantic (Wickens 1992). Some of them are grammatically ambivalent in terms of syntactic agreement: see further under **agreement**, section 5.

5 **Familiarity marker**

The *-s* suffix has some hypocoristic uses, associated with casual speech among friends and familiars. Words and expressions with the *-s* as a familiarity marker include:

gone bananas/bonkers have my druthers up for grabs
the guilts gives me the heebie-jeebies got the hots/the jitters

This use of the *-s* as a hypocoristic suffix can also be seen in formations associated with talking to small children (Mühlhäusler 1983). For example:

beddie-byes cuddles dindins sleepies stinky-poohs

Both sets of examples illustrate how hypocoristic *-s* can be added to other hypocoristic suffixes, such as *-ie*. See further under **hypocoristic**.

scare quotes

See **quotation marks**.

scope

The term **scope** refers to the extent of influence or “jurisdiction” of a grammatical *operator*, e.g. the operation of tense over the verb phrase, or

of negation with its larger or smaller linguistic scope. See further under **operator**, section 1; and **negation**, section 4.

second person pronoun

Modern English has only one **second person pronoun**: *YOU*, used everywhere for singular and plural reference. But there are colloquial variants associated with particular regions of the English-speaking world, such as *youse*, *you'all*, *y'all*, *you guys*. All are more explicitly plural than the standard pronoun. See further under **YOU**.

In earlier English (up to about AD 1575), the pronoun *YE* (together with *YOU*) was used for the **second person plural** pronoun – as in the Christmas carol: *O come all ye faithful* (see further under **YE**). There were then separate second person pronouns for plural and singular, with *THOU/THEE* for the **singular second person**. See further under **THOU and THEE**.

- For the **first person pronoun** and **third person pronoun**, see under those headings.

secondary form

For the **secondary forms** of verbs, including the infinitive and present and past participles, see under **primary and secondary verb form**.

secondary headword

Any dictionary-style reference book is structured by means of alphabetically ordered entries, each of which begins with a **headword** (or phrase) to show its particular focus. In many dictionaries, entries may also contain one or more **secondary headwords**, which are related morphologically and/or semantically to the headword. They function as headings for a subset of related usages, and to flag information about them. Some of the entries in this book use secondary headwords for further information about the meaning and use of the grammatical term which serves as headword. See for example **process**.

- Compare **run-on**.

secondary tense

See further under **perfect aspect**.

selection(al) restriction

This term is used in the context of transformational grammar to refer to semantic restrictions on the co-selection of words that realize constituents of a clause. It highlights the way words combine selectively with one another because of their inherent semantics or the semantic categories to which they belong. For example the activity of certain types of verb presupposes a human subject. Thus mental process verbs such as *expect*, *fear*, *hope* most often **collocate** with a human subject, or at a pinch, an animal:

The child expected her mother to be there.

My dog expects his breakfast as soon as I get up.

Mental process verbs do not take plants or inanimate items as their subjects, so the collocation in *The palm tree expects to be watered* is anomalous – except as an anthropomorphic joke. It draws attention to the **semantic restrictions** inherent in mental process verbs, and to the larger semantic categories (human/nonhuman, animate/inanimate) which underlie language usage. For some verbs the semantic restrictions are much tighter, and relate to much smaller subcategories. The intransitive verb *shatter*, for example, can only collocate with something brittle such as glass. It makes no sense to say *The pillow shattered*, even if there are feathers everywhere. That combination of words is semantically flawed, reminding us of a less obvious subcategory of objects (brittle vs. pliable). Semantic **subcategorizations** often restrict the syntactically possible combinations of words. These are important input to **lexical–functional grammar** (see further under that heading).

Note that **selectional restrictions** are discussed under the headings of **colligation** and **collocation** by grammarians outside the transformational–generative school. See further under **collocation** and **colligation**.

-SELF and -SELVES

These suffixes (singular and plural) are used to form the English reflexive pronouns:

<i>myself</i>	<i>yourself</i>	<i>himself/herself/itself</i>
<i>ourselves</i>	<i>yourselves</i>	<i>themselves</i>

See further under **reflexive pronoun**.

semantic override

This term is used by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to refer to the way in which semantic notions associated with the head noun of the subject NP may **override** the syntactic rules of agreement, as in:

The gasworks is on the corner.

Our government have been slow to recognize the problem.

In either case, the grammatical number of the noun, “gasworks” as plural in form, and “government” as singular, has been overridden in the number of the finite verb. The examples show **notional** rather than **formal** agreement between the subject and verb. **Semantic override** can be optional, as in those examples; or obligatory, as in:

The police have been quick off the mark.

See further under **agreement**, sections 2 and 5.

semantic prosody

See under **colligation**.

semantic restriction

See under **selectional restriction**, **collocation**, and **colligation**.

semi-auxiliary

See under **auxiliary verb**, section 4.

semicolon

The **semicolon** was invented in C17 as a mark of punctuation intermediate between the comma and the colon, when long, periodic sentences were in vogue. It was well used for much the same reason by Victorian writers such as Anthony Trollope and Henry James.

Nowadays the **semicolon** is mostly confined to very particular structures:

- (i) To mark the boundary between two main clauses juxtaposed without a conjunction, as in:

The college would be closed for the summer; it would reopen in September.

In such sentences the semicolon allows the two closely related statements to be linked in the same sentence.

- (ii) To serve as a second (heavier) level in the punctuation of a complex series, as in:

With the college closed there would be no business for the downtown cafes; empty houses at the one local cinema, with its weird mix of horror and intellectual movies; and inaction at the local gym and swimming pool.

The use of the semicolon helps to mark off the major units in that series, and allows for commas within one or more of the units. Were the units separated with commas, there could be confusion with the unit-internal comma.

- (iii) To mark the ends of longish or internally punctuated items in a list:

Australia's major metropolitan newspapers are as follows:

- *in NSW, the Sydney Morning Herald;*
- *in Queensland, the Courier-Mail;*
- *in South Australia, the Advertiser;*
- *in Tasmania, the Mercury;*
- *in Victoria, the Age;*
- *in Western Australia, the West Australian.*

This use of semicolons in punctuating lists is long-established in government and legal documents, but decreasing elsewhere, especially on the internet.

Instead, line space is increasingly recognized as a closing punctuator for items in lists, and nothing else is needed. See further under **line space**.

semideterminer

This term is used by Biber et al. (1999) to refer to words that function on the border between adjectives and determiners, such as *certain, next, other, same, such*. See further under **determiner**, section 5.

semimodal

See under **auxiliary verb**, section 4.

sense relations

These are the semantic relations that hold between words, as opposed to those involving their referents in the real world. Different kinds of **sense relations** are involved in *synonyms*, *antonyms*, *meronyms*, and *hyponyms*. See further under **antonymy**, **hyponymy**, **meronymy**, and **synonymy**.

sentence adjunct

See under **adjunct**, section 4.

sentence adverb

See under **adverb**, section 3.

sentence

- 1 **sentence types: simple, compound, complex**
 - 2 **sentence fragments**
 - 3 **sentence functions: statement, question, command, exclamation**
 - 4 **sentence length**
 - 5 **information structure within the sentence**
-

The **sentence** is the basic unit of written discourse, defined orthographically as a string of words punctuated with a final full stop. Grammatically speaking a sentence normally consists of at least one finite clause. In fact they vary considerably in construction, using different selections from the core set of clause patterns, and combining them into longer units. Their length is quite variable, as is the way they contribute to the overall delivery of information in a paragraph by their own information structure.

1 **Sentence types: simple, compound, complex**

There are three essential structural types of sentence:

- A **simple sentence** is one which consists of one clause only, making a single predication:

A stitch in time saves nine.

Great minds think alike.

Simple sentences are by definition single **main clauses**, able to stand alone (see **clause**, section 4). They stand out from more complex ones in the text around them, whether they are aphoristic like the examples above or not.

- A **compound sentence** consists of two or more main clauses, which are **coordinated** as being of equal weight. For example:

The winds blew and the waves roared around our boat.

I came, I saw, I conquered.

In the first example, the two main clauses are joined by the coordinator *and*.

In the second example, the three main clauses are simply joined by commas, in **asyndetic coordination**. See further under **coordination**, section 7; and **comma**, section 1.

- A **complex sentence** consists of at least one main/matrix clause, where one or more subordinate clauses may be **embedded** and/or attached:

He who pays the piper calls the tune.

It's shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

As the story went, a man rushed into the shop and requested that we help him.

For the various types of **subordinate clause**, see **clause**, section 4.

2 Sentence fragments

In ordinary conversation, the sentences uttered may not be fully formed like those illustrated above in section 1. When taking turns to speak, conversationalists often produce sentences whose wording builds partly on the one before, without repeating every element. For example

Where are you going?

To see a movie.

Which one?

Haven't decided.

Everyday sequences like that can consist of fully formed sentences as well as nonfinite **sentence fragments** with one or more elements of the regular clause omitted. For example, the second sentence above has neither a subject nor verb, though both are understood by **ellipsis** from the first sentence (see further under **ellipsis**). Likewise the subject of the fourth sentence ("I") is unstated but understood from the conversational context, as complementary to the "you" of the first sentence. The use of sentence fragments and elliptical connections between them makes for efficient and highly cohesive discourse. See further under **cohesion**.

Note that many **exclamations** and some **interjections** are also sentence fragments, as are the unembedded **sentence relative clauses** prefaced by **WHICH**. See **relative clause**, section 4.

3 Sentence functions: statement, question, command, exclamation

English sentences can express different pragmatic functions which correlate to some extent with their syntactic form. The four functional types are:

- **statements**, i.e. sentences which usually declare something, and tend to conform to declarative clause patterns such as SVO, SVA, SVC (see **clause**, section 2; and **declarative**).
- **questions**, i.e. sentences which typically seek an answer from the listener(s), often formulated with some kind of interrogative subject-verb inversion, e.g. VSA, as in *Are you there?* See further under **interrogative**; and **question**, section 1.
- **commands**, i.e. sentences which typically issue an instruction to do something, usually in imperative form without any subject being expressed, e.g. *Get out* (VA). See further under **imperative**.
- **exclamations**, i.e. sentences which are emotive utterances to claim the listener's attention. They may be expressed in **exclamative** syntax in sentence fragments such as *What a sight!*, *How amazing!*, or in other syntactic forms, e.g. as

questions (*How does he do it!*), statements (*Here's cheers!*), imperatives (*Oh come on!*). See further under **exclamative**.

As that last set of examples shows, the function of a sentence may well diverge from canonical use of the grammatical form in interactive discourse.

4 **Sentence length**

The average length of sentences varies considerably, depending on the genre and register of discourse. Research on sentence lengths in the American Brown corpus (Francis and Kucera 1982) showed that the average length for sentences in nonfiction (news reporting) was just under 21 words; but averaged 24 words in bureaucratic and regulatory documents. Meanwhile the average sentence length for fiction writing ranged from 13 to 17 words per sentence. This suggests that Rudolf Flesch's (1955) benchmark for sentence length – an average of 15 words – per sentence, is on the low side for nonfiction.

5 **Information structure within the sentence**

Any sentence has a kind of *beginning weight* and *end weight*, so the first constituent and the last one occupy the most prominent positions in the sentence. These in turn contribute to the ongoing delivery of information through the paragraph, and maintaining *topical progression*. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, and **end weight**.

sentence relative clauses

See under **relative clause**, section 4.

sequence of tenses

In classical Latin the tense of the verb in a main clause influenced that of the verb in a following subordinate clause, especially in reported speech. This principle was taken up by traditional grammarians in modern English, and parallels to it can be seen in examples like the following, where the tenses of both verbs are matched in the present and the past, according to the tense of the verb in the main clause. Compare

He says they are coming today.

He said they were coming today.

The switching of the verb in the subordinate clause from present to past in the second sentence is known as **backshifting**. It is associated especially with reported speech and reported thinking. See further under **direct and indirect speech**.

Backshifting of the tense in a subordinate clause is also to be seen in conditional clauses, as in:

She will be ecstatic if he answers the call.

She would be ecstatic if he answered the call.

She would have been ecstatic if he had answered the call.

That set of sentences shows the backshifting of the verb in the subordinate clause from present tense, to past tense, to past perfect. In the process the condition shifts from being an open to a totally closed condition: see further under **IF**.

In formal writing and reporting, the **sequence of tenses** is usually practiced, whereas in everyday discourse it is not necessarily observed. For example:

He thinks they left for Alice Springs yesterday.

I heard on the radio that the highway is blocked.

In neither case is the sequence of tenses rule observed, for good reasons. If the verb of the subordinate clause in the first example is adjusted into the present tense, or that of the second into the past tense, the meaning of the sentence would be different, or at least ambiguous. In such cases, the pragmatics of communication take over to ensure that the tense sequence works to support the intended meaning.

SEVERAL

This serves as an indefinite pronoun and postdeterminer in English. See further under **indefinite pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 3.

SFG

See **systemic–functional grammar**.

SHALL and WILL

See under **WILL and SHALL**.

SHE and HER

-
- 1 **SHE/HER and HERS: grammatical roles**
 - 2 **applications of SHE to nonfemale referents**
 - 3 **generic SHE**
-

1 **SHE/HER and HERS: grammatical roles**

These are the three forms of the third person feminine pronoun, the only expression of feminine gender in English grammar (see further under **gender**). Their primary use is to refer to female persons, with *SHE* as the **nominative** form, and *HER* as the **accusative/dative** form:

The queen said she would consider the appeal. (nominative – subject)

The appeal moved her to tears. (accusative – direct object)

The prime minister sent her a message. (dative – indirect object)

In all three grammatical roles, the feminine pronoun functions as an NP within the clauses. However *HER* is also the **possessive** form of *SHE*, as in:

She waved to her supporters.

This use of *HER* is now classified as **determiner** (see further under **determiner**, section 1).

Note also *HERS*, the **independent** form of the feminine pronoun, used in:

Those gloves on the table are hers.

See further under **pronoun**, section 4.

2 Applications of SHE to nonfemale referents

Although *SHE/HER* is primarily associated with female humans or animals, the pronoun has traditionally been used to refer to certain kinds of inanimates. One example is the rhetorical practice of referring to one's mother country as *SHE*, as when speaking of *Britain and her allies*. Another is the sailors' use of *SHE* to refer to their ship: *God bless this ship and all who sail in her*. This convention was reaffirmed by *Jane's Defence Weekly* as recently as 2007, despite attempts to formally end it on the grounds of its being sexist and/or archaic.

In casual and colloquial discourse, *SHE* is used – especially among men – to refer to inanimates of the environment (*She's a rough sea today*); vehicles such as cars and trucks (*Fill 'er up*); and tools of the trade (*She cuts like a beauty*); and even items of food and drink, e.g. of a bottle of beer (*I put her down ... bloody quick*). In Australian usage (Pawley 2008), *SHE* can refer to the whole context of a situation (*She'll be jake*, i.e. "It'll be alright"). Similar applications of *SHE/HER* to inanimates are attested in other parts of the English-speaking world (Trudgill and Chambers 1991; Wales 1996; Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2004).

3 Generic SHE

In affirmative action, especially among feminist writers, there have been attempts to establish a *generic SHE* in counterpoint to generic *HE* (see further under **generic pronouns**). In theory, generic *SHE* (like generic *HE*) would include both genders, yet its primary gender association (feminine) gets in the way when it's introduced in unlikely contexts such as the following:

Before calling the electrician, make sure you can tell her where the fuses are.

Generic *SHE* works unobtrusively when associated with traditional female roles, e.g. those of the primary care-giver for a baby, or the kindergarten teacher:

The teacher needs to be consistent in responding to the infants in her care.

Elsewhere, even when the majority of the profession is female (as in nursing), generic *SHE* still seems to pre-empt the gender of person who can fulfill the role:

No nurse would disregard such signs, unless she was totally overworked.

The effect of generic *SHE* is counterproductive if the longer-term aim is to induce more men to become nurses and break down the gender stereotype.

Some alternative strategies for including both genders are listed under **HE and/or SHE**.

S/HE

This combination pronoun is the only widely known example of the numerous attempts since the 1850s to create a gender-neutral or epicene alternative to the regular pronouns *HE* and *SHE*. First recorded in the 1970s, *S/HE* is listed in English dictionaries rather than grammars, and talked down in usage books. That apart, it suffers from being limited to the role of subject pronoun (nominative), and has no equally well-known form for the object pronoun (accusative/dative). Various candidates including *em*, *hem*, *herim*, *him/er*, *shim*, and *zim* have nevertheless been proposed (Baron 1986).

short passive

See under **passive voice**, section 2.

SHOULD and WOULD

See **WOULD and SHOULD**.

shudder quotes

See under **quotation marks**.

simple sentence

See under **sentence**, section 1.

SINCE

As a subordinator, *SINCE* is used to preface adverbial clauses of time and cause/reason, though both types of meaning sometimes seem to be invested in it. See further under **subordinator**, section 1.

As a preposition, *SINCE* can be complemented by NPs as well as nonfinite clauses, compare:

Since my arrival in Australia... *Since coming to Australia...*

See further under **preposition**, section 2.

singular

This is the grammatical term which contrasts with *plural* in expressing one rather than more than one. Thus *computer* is said to be singular while *computers* is plural. In English, as in many European languages, singular and plural make up the two categories of grammatical number (see further under **number**). As in that example, the singular is the base or unmarked form of the word, and the plural form is usually a modification of it (see under **plural**, section 1). While **count nouns** like *computer* have contrasting singular and plural forms, **mass nouns** like *information* have only one form which is collective rather than singular in meaning: see further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

Singular/plural contrasts are also expressed in English personal pronouns (e.g. *I/WE*) and demonstrative pronouns (e.g. *THIS/THESE*) (see further under **personal pronoun**, section 3; and **demonstrative pronoun**). In the present tense of most verbs, the third person singular is marked with the inflection *-(e)s*, contrasting with the absence of any inflection in the other persons (see further under **present tense**, section 1). The matching of singular subjects with singular verbs and pronouns (and plural with plural) is a fundamental of number **agreement** in English syntax. See further under **agreement**, sections 2 and 3; and **number**.

slash

This punctuation mark, also known as the **oblique stroke**, **solidus**, or **virgule**, has very limited uses. It nevertheless has several meanings in punctuating adjacent words, especially to show that the two words are alternatives, as in:

and/or *his/her* *parent/guardian* *s/he* *spouse/partner*

In all but the first example, the use of the **slash** is *disjunctive*, in that it invites readers to select one of two choices (see further under **coordination**, section 4). But the expression “and/or” allows readers three choices: to take one, or the other, or both of the offerings, as in:

The exam will be run on a Saturday and/or Sunday.

Thus “and/or” is highly ambiguous in its meaning, signaling options which may or may not be available.

The **slash** is also conventionally used to mark successive years as a span of time, as in *the 2005/6 financial year*. It effectively includes both years.

Other minor uses of the **slash** are as an alternative to the long hyphen in marking a geographical span, as in *the Sydney/Hobart yacht race*; and a reciprocal relation, as in *an oil/water interface*, or *UK/US diplomatic exchanges*. Their potential ambiguity is resolved by the final word in the phrase.

Note that the **slash** (/) used in punctuating is sometimes called the *forward slash*, because its complement, the *backslash* (\) is used in certain types of computer programming.

sneer quotes

See under **quotation marks**.

SO

- 1 **SO as a degree adverb and intensifier**
 - 2 **SO as connective adverb**
 - 3 **conjunctive roles of SO**
 - 4 **SO as substitute word**
 - 5 **SO with negators: NOT SO, SO NOT**
-

SO has expanding roles as an adverb and conjunction, one merging with the other, which can be observed especially in spoken discourse. Its frequency in conversation is two to three times greater than in writing (Biber et al. 1999).

1 **SO as a degree adverb and intensifier**

The core role for *SO* is as an adverb of degree, as in:

That movie is so powerful.

We were so pleased to hear they were taking a holiday.

The examples show how *SO* modifies adjectives and past participles of verbs, often with intensifying effect. It is a booster rather than maximizer (see further under **intensifier and downtoner**).

The force of *SO* is often articulated or benchmarked in a following subordinate clause of result or comparison:

The river is so polluted that it's not safe for swimming.

This walk is not so difficult as the one up the north face of the peak.

In this role, *SO* operates as a **subjunct** of the phrase it appears in (see further under **adverb**, section 3).

2 **SO as connective adverb**

SO can be used to refer to how something is or should be done, as in:

In this restaurant we lay the cutlery so.

They talked of a meeting on Sunday, and so it was arranged.

They used public transport. So should we all.

In all three cases SO refers to an arrangement or method already indicated. In the first sentence this relies on the physical context of the remark. In the second and third it is mentioned in the previous clause or sentence, and SO makes a cohesive connection with it (see further under **cohesion**).

3 **Conjunctive roles of SO**

In its adverbial roles, SO lends itself to the role of conjunction, and it regularly appears as part of two **complex conjunctions**: namely **AND SO** and **SO THAT**:

It was a personal invitation and so we couldn't take partners.

I went so that at least one section of the company would be represented.

In the combination **AND SO**, the complex conjunction expresses a result, whereas **SO THAT** may express purpose (as shown) or result (see further under **adverbial clause**, section 1).

Both of these complex conjunctions are frequently reduced to SO:

It was a personal invitation so we couldn't take partners.

I went so at least one section would be represented.

This marks the passage of SO towards becoming an independent conjunction. Its status as a marginal conjunction is discussed in all descriptive grammars (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) because of the optionality of coordinator **AND**, and subordinator **THAT** with it. See **conjunction**, section 4; and **subordinator**, section 2.

4 **SO as substitute word**

When SO is used as a connective adverb (see section 2 above), it often substitutes for more than the adverbial element which is the focus of the coreference. For example:

Will you be back soon? I hope so.

Here SO fills in for “be back soon,” not just the adverb “soon.” Its larger role as a substitute word is found when it combines with the pro-verb **DO**, as in:

Have you brought back the tickets? I did so yesterday.

The combination “did so” substitutes for the whole predicate of the previous question. See further under **pro-form**.

5 **SO with negators: NOT SO, SO NOT**

In combination with **NOT**, SO provides the comparative key for the following comparative clause, for example:

He's not so athletic as my last boyfriend was.

“Not so” articulates an unequal comparison, overriding the usually equalizing effect of “as” (see further under **comparative clause**, section 4). The combination

of *NOT SO* in the matrix clause with *AS* in the comparative clause can be seen as a kind of **correlative conjunction** (see further under **conjunction**, section 5).

A new combination of *NOT* and *SO* has them in the opposite order as an emphatic negative, as in: *He's so not my boyfriend*. In this strictly informal idiom, *SO* is breaking new ground as an intensifier of the otherwise nongradable adverb *NOT*. See further under **adverb**, section 4.

solidus

See under **slash**.

SOME

This serves as an **indefinite pronoun** and **central determiner**: see further under **indefinite pronoun**; and **determiner**, section 3.

SOMEBODY, SOMEONE, and SOMETHING

All these are indefinite pronouns in being nonspecific, yet they are assertive: see under **indefinite pronoun** and **nonassertive**.

space

White **space** is now recognized as a tool in the punctuation repertoire:

- in punctuating compounds: see further under **word space**
- in marking the boundaries between sentences
- in delimiting the items in lists: see further under **line space**

speech act verb

See under **performative verb**.

split infinitive

The English infinitive appears in two forms:

- the **TO-infinitive**, as in ... *wanted to go*
- the **bare infinitive** form, as in ... *would go*

The *TO*-infinitive is the canonical form conventionally used in dictionaries and in grammars, to distinguish it from finite forms of the present tense (*I/you/we/they go*) and the imperative (*Go!*). This helps to explain why the *to* was regarded as inseparable from the verb, and an expression like *To boldly go* as a **split infinitive**. Sensitivity to **splitting** the infinitive was a concern of grammarians from C18 on, reactivated by computer style checkers of the late C20, which can easily identify the structure. Corpus-based research suggests that split infinitives are not very common, and probably occur more often in spoken than written discourse (Quirk et al. 1985). The elements that most often split the infinitive are intensifying or focusing items, such as *actually*, *really*, *ever*, *even*, *at least*. When they occur with quasi-auxiliary verbs such as *be going to*, and especially catenative verbs (*try to*, *want to*), it is natural enough that the intensifier comes between *to* and the complementary verb, because *to* is conventionally attached to the controlling verb.

statement

In traditional and modern grammar, **statement** is a term for the default type of written sentence whose function is to state a fact or proposition. With this function it contrasts with three other functional types of sentence: *command*, *exclamation*, *question*: see further under **sentence**, section 3.

Statements are formulated in *declarative* syntax, where the subject precedes the verb and its complement(s). The typical patterns for the order of items in a declarative clause are set out under **clause**, section 1. The verb in a statement is in the *indicative mood*. See further under **indicative**.

stative verb

See under **dynamic verb**.

stem

This term was used in comparative philology to refer to the extensions and variations of the roots that occur in classical languages. Thus the root *fāc-* in the Latin verb “make” is expressed as the **stem** *fēc-* for the past tense and *fact-* for the past participle. The past participle stem is the base for many modern English words such as *factor*, *factory*, *manufacture*.

In English grammar, **stem** is also used for the minimal form of a word to which affixes may be added, as *allow* is the stem for *disallow* and *allowable*. The stem is also the form to which inflections may be added, as in *allows/allowing/allowed*, which together constitute a **lexeme** (see further under that heading). A stem is typically a **free morpheme**, although not always in exactly the same form. For example, the stem *early* is certainly free, but it is not the minimal form to which affixes are attached; rather it is the variant *earli-* found in *earlier*, *earliest*. In the case of classical compounds such as *lexicography*, both stems are in fact **bound morphemes**. See further under **allomorph**, section 4; and **allograph**, section 4.

Note that for some English grammarians (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985), the **stem** can be subsumed into a larger morphological unit (termed **base**), from which further words may be derived. Thus *friendly* is the base for *friendliness*, not the stem *friend*. See further under **base**.

stranded preposition

This is the modern grammarians’ term for the preposition that appears at the end of the sentence, especially when separated from the relative or interrogative pronoun which is its complement. For example:

This is the bus which/that I was waiting for.

In fact this preposition is semantically and syntactically attached to the preceding **prepositional verb**, which does not allow the object to displace it, as in *turn it off*. Other contributing factors are the fact that the relative pronoun is often omitted in everyday discourse; and if it were *THAT*, it could not be preceded by “for” anyway.

For all these reasons, stranded prepositions are the unmarked construction for phrasal and prepositional verbs (see further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**; and **preposition**, section 5). Corpus-based research by Biber et al. (1999) shows that constructions with stranded prepositions far outnumber the paraphrases with *WHICH/WHOM* in conversation and everyday prose (news and fiction). Only in academic and formal writing are the *wh*-paraphrases more common, as in:

This is the bus for which I was waiting.

Here the **stranded preposition** is moved back in front of the relative pronoun, but the awkwardness of the word order is evident. It was nevertheless the preferred order according to prescriptive usage guides which urged writers not to “end a sentence with a preposition.” Their advice was satirized in the remark attributed to Winston Churchill: “This is a sort of English up with which I will not put” (Gowers 1948). The construction satirized by Churchill is known by grammarians as ***pied-piping***: see further under ***pied-piping***.

strong verb

See **irregular verb**.

subcategorization

See under **selection(al) restriction**.

subject

In modern English grammars, the **subject** is the clausal constituent (NP) which is foregrounded in active declarative sentences. It is typically the agent of a transitive or intransitive verb, as in:

The soloist raised his instrument to his shoulder. (transitive)

The soloist played very brilliantly. (intransitive)

In expository prose the grammatical subject can often consist of a complex NP, as in the following passive sentence:

Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini was brilliantly played by the soloist.

Note that in that (passive) sentence, the grammatical subject is in fact the object of the corresponding active sentence. Compare:

The soloist played Rachmaninov's Rhapsody ... very brilliantly.

The passive/active distinction is discussed further under **voice (1)**, section 2.

In analyzing the arguments of the verb, the subject is regarded as an **external** argument, and its position in the passive version (tucked away in the *BY*-phrase) shows why. Meanwhile the verb's objects (direct and indirect) are the **internal** arguments. In the examples above, the direct object *Rachmaninov's Rhapsody ...* is juxtaposed to the verb in both active and passive versions of the sentence. See further under **valency**, section 2.

Note that in interrogative clauses, the subject is displaced so as to follow the verb:

Did the soloist play very brilliantly?

How did he manage the Rhapsody?

In imperative clauses, the subject is normally deleted:

Listen to the soloist.

See further under **clause**, section 2.

subject case

See under **nominative**.

subject complement

See under **predicative complement**.

subject territory

This term is used to refer to the clausal position immediately preceding the verb in the standard declarative clausal patterns (SVO, SVA, etc). It helps to explain the pressure on pronoun case selection when it is prominent in the clause as part of the subject NP. Compare:

My singing amazed the friend's dog.

Me singing amazed the friend's dog.

The second formulation is the one now commonly used when the *gerund-participle* is object of the verb or complement of a preposition. But when used as the subject NP, as in that first sentence, the pronoun typically reverts to the genitive form *my*, *his*, etc., prefiguring its nominal rather than verbal status. See further under **gerund-participle**, section 3.

The concept of **subject territory** also helps to explain the long-standing tendency to use *WHO* rather than *WHOM* as the interrogative pronoun at the start of a question, whatever its constituent role within the syntax of the following clause. See further under **WHO and WHOM**.

subjective case

See under **nominative**.

subjunct

A **subjunct** is a subclass of adverbs including those like *very* which modify other adverbs or adjectives. They operate within adverbial, adjectival, or verb phrases – rather than affecting the structure of the clause (see **adverb**, section 3).

Subjuncts are often adverbs of degree, and serve as *intensifiers*. See further under **intensifier and downtoner**.

subjunctive

- 1 subjunctive mood
 - 2 past (*WERE*) subjunctive
 - 3 present (mandative) subjunctive
 - 4 subjunctive formulae
-

1 **Subjunctive mood**

In Old English grammar, the *subjunctive mood* was expressed in sets of verb forms that contrasted with those of the indicative (see further under **mood**). The subjunctive forms were used to express events and processes that were hypothetical rather than factual, in the present and past tense. In modern English, very little remains of the subjunctive resources, with only one form left for the past subjunctive, and the third person singular form only for the present subjunctive.

2 **Past (WERE) subjunctive**

The *past subjunctive* survives now only for the verb *BE* in the form *WERE*, which is used for all persons, singular and plural, but only distinguishable from the regular past tense for the first and third persons singular. It is still used in hypothetical statements such as:

If I were you, I would accept the post.

And in conditional statements such as:

If he were willing to come, I would go too.

Even in these particular contexts, the *WERE-subjunctive* is increasingly replaced by the indicative *was* for the first and third person singular. On the fronting of *WERE* in hypothetical conditions, see section 4 below.

3 **Present (mandative) subjunctive**

The present subjunctive can still be found for the verb *BE* and many lexical verbs in mandative constructions, where an obligation, recommendation, or suggestion is being expressed, as in:

The school insisted the child be accompanied by a parent to the meeting.

I wouldn't recommend that she take any action over it.

For more on the present subjunctive, see **mandative subjunctive**.

4 **Subjunctive formulae**

Other older uses of the **subjunctive** survive in formulaic utterances and archaisms, underlined in the following examples:

Be that as it may ... Come what may! Far be it from me ... God bless you
God save the Queen Heaven forbid! the powers that be ...

These archaic formulae use the present subjunctive to embrace the unknown, and to express a wish or a kind of third-person imperative.

Note that the fronting of the subjunctive verb in the first three formulae is no longer possible for the present subjunctive, but is still available for the past subjunctive in expressing hypothetical conditions: *Were I still in my twenties ...* See further under **hypothetical**.

subordinate clause

Most modern English grammars recognize four types of finite **subordinate clause**: *adverbial clauses, comparative clauses, relative clauses, and complement or*

content clauses (previously known as *noun* or *nominal clauses*). See further under **clause**, section 4, and individual headings.

subordination

This term refers to the dependency of a clause lower in the syntactic hierarchy on one higher, either a main or matrix clause (see further under **clause**, section 4). This subordinate syntactic relationship is also known as *hypotaxis*. It contrasts with *coordination*, also known as *parataxis*. See further under **coordination**, section 1; and **parataxis**.

In modern English grammar, subordination covers the relationship between the main clause and any *subordinate clause* which is adverbial or comparative, usually marked by an explicit **subordinator** (see further under that heading). The term **subordination** is also widely used to refer to the dependency relationship between the matrix clause and any complement/content clause, or relative clause, which are prototypically marked by *THAT* or relative pronouns. In systemic–functional grammar, both complement/content clauses and (defining) relative clauses are regarded as embedded rather than subordinate clauses. See further under **relative clause**, section 3; and **embedded clause**.

subordinator

-
- 1 simple subordinators
 - 2 complex subordinators
 - 3 marginal subordinators
-

1 Simple subordinators

Subordinators are the subclass of *conjunctions* which introduce adverbial and comparative clauses and signal their *subordination* to the main clause. In traditional grammar they were termed *subordinating conjunctions*. They include:

after *although* *as* *because* *before* *if* *lest* *like* *since*
than *that* *though* *till* *unless* *until* *whether* *while*

The fact that subordinators introduce finite clauses has been the defining property which sets them apart from the counterpart prepositions that introduced nonfinite clauses or NPs (see further under **preposition**, section 2). Modern grammars now recognize that nonfinite clauses as well as finite ones may be licensed by the same controlling verb or subordinator/preposition, and the boundaries are less clear-cut. But the class/role of subordinator continues to be recognized in modern grammars following Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), and to be distinguished from those of *complementizer* and *relative pronouns (relativizers)*, which introduce or mark subordinate clauses (see further under **complementizer** and **relativizer**).

The overlapping functions of **subordinators** and prepositions in introducing finite and nonfinite clauses is the grounds on which some grammarians (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) reassign most subordinators to the class of

preposition. This radical step is proposed for the temporal subordinators *after*, *before*, *since*, *till*, *until*, which as prepositions very often take *-ing* or NP complements. With those reassigned, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) find reason to do the same for other members of the traditional class of subordinating conjunction, leaving only three subordinators: *THAT* as head of a declarative content clause, and *WHETHER* and *IF* as heads of an interrogative content clause: (see further under **IF** and **THAT**). This redrawing of the boundaries between subordinators and prepositions is nevertheless rather uncomfortable in applying the term *preposition* to an item that heads a finite clause.

2 **Complex subordinators**

These are multiword subordinators recognized by most grammarians (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), such as:

<i>as if</i>	<i>even if</i>	<i>even though</i>	<i>in case</i>		
<i>as far as</i>	<i>as long as</i>	<i>as soon as</i>	<i>just as</i>		
<i>except that</i>	<i>given that</i>	<i>in order that</i>	<i>in that</i>	<i>on condition that</i>	<i>so that</i>
<i>assuming that</i>	<i>provided/providing that</i>	<i>seeing that</i>	<i>supposing that</i>		

As the examples show, **complex subordinators** are derived from a wide variety of sources, including adverbs, adjectives, participles, and prepositional phrases, in combination with regular subordinators: *as*, *if*, *that*, *though*. In fact *THAT* is often omitted:

She intended to drive provided [] they found the keys.

He would go supposing [] he was well enough.

The omission of the complementizer *THAT* from these **complex subordinators** is typical in speech.

3 **Marginal subordinators**

Though conjunctions are technically a **closed class** of words, new ones – especially new subordinators – grammaticalize out of pre-existing words of various kinds. Some are adverbs (adjuncts) by tradition, for example *directly*, *immediately*, *once*; others are conjuncts such as *however*, *so*, *yet*. Yet others have evolved out of phrases, as shown above in section 2. **Marginal complex subordinators** continue to evolve out of noun phrases, as in *the way*, *the reason*, *the instant*, *the moment*, *the time*, typically with zero complementizer. These serve as alternatives to regular subordinators, especially in conversation. See for example:

They don't bake bread the way (like) they used to.

We recognized him the instant (as soon as) we saw him.

Although marginal subordinators such as *the way* can be explained as elliptical forms of *in the way that ...*, corpus-based research shows that the expanded form occurs far less often than the contracted one (Peters 2012). They are thus well advanced down the path of grammaticalization as subordinators.

substitute word

See **pro-form**.

substitution

In traditional grammar the pronoun and other *substitute words* were seen as standing in for other words or phrases when they are mentioned on a second or subsequent occasion. However discourse analysts such as Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish between:

- **substitution**, as in the relationship between *DO (SO)* and the predication it replaces, or *ONE* and the NP it replaces
- **reference**, in the relationship between third person pronouns and the NPs they represent in ongoing discourse

In the first case, the substitute word is purely anaphoric in its replacive role; whereas in the second, the referential pronoun is both anaphoric and cataphoric. See further under **anaphora** and **cohesion**.

suffix

Suffixes are the type of affix which attaches to the end of a word's stem. The term includes both inflections and derivational affixes, as underlined in:

assisting *beauties* *children* *images* *planted* *taken*
assistance *beautiful* *childish* *imagery* *plantation* *takeings*

The **inflectional** suffixes in the first line of examples are those that go with the word class of the stem. So the verb stems *assist*, *beautify*, *plant*, *take* have verbal inflections, while the noun stems *child* and *image* have their respective plural inflections (see further under **inflection**).

The **derivational** suffixes in the second line convert all the verb stems into a different word class, so that *assist* becomes a noun, *beauti-* an adjective, and *plant*, *take* become nouns. Meanwhile the noun *child* is converted to an adjective, and the concrete noun *image* becomes an abstract noun. Either way the suffix marks the grammatical identity of the word (see further under **derivational affix**).

Note that all inflectional affixes are suffixes, whereas derivational affixes may be prefixes or suffixes. See further under **prefix**.

summation plural

This is the term used by some grammarians for a type of noun which always ends in *-s*, but whose meaning is collective rather than plural, for example: *dues*, *innings*, *molasses*, *remains*: see further under **-s**, section 4.

- For the questions of grammatical agreement that they raise, see under **agreement**, section 5.

superlative

See under **adjective**, section 3; and **adverb**, section 4.

superordinate

In semantics the superordinate acts as the cover term for a particular class of items. So *fruit* is the superordinate for the various words – *banana*, *pomegranate*, *peach*, *mango* – that can be included in the class. See further under **hyponymy**.

superordinate clause

This is an alternative name for the **matrix clause**. See further under that heading.

supplementary relative clause

See **relative clause**, section 3.

supplementive clause

These are nonfinite **adverbial clauses**, typically filling out the latter part of the sentence. See under **adverbial clause**, section 2.

suppletion and suppletive form

The term **suppletion** refers to the introduction of an extraneous form to fill out gaps in a grammatical paradigm. In English it can be seen in historical replacement of one of more parts of a particular verb with **suppletive forms**, borrowed from another lexeme or from alternative dialects. For example, the verb *GO* has the suppletive form *went* for its past tense and past participle (borrowed from the verb *wend*). The modern English verb *BE* includes a mix of dialectal forms: alongside the base form *BE*, the present tense forms *am*, *is*, *are* (all beginning with vowels), and the past tense forms *was*, *were* beginning with *w*. See further under **irregular verb**, section 11.

Suppletion can also be found in the forms used to express degrees of comparison for the adjectives *good* > *better*, *best*, and *bad* > *worse*, *worst*. It occurs also among nouns, for example group nouns like *people*, *police*, *staff*, for which suppletive forms have to be found for the singular, as in *person*, *policeman*/*policewoman*, *staffer*. The need for suppletive forms in the singular can also be seen in the paraphrases used with certain mass nouns, e.g. *a piece of information*/*furniture*, and for bipartite nouns, as in *a pair of overalls*, *scissors*, etc., which are not plurals in the ordinary grammatical sense. See further under **-s**, section 4.

surface structure

The term **surface structure** is used in transformational–generative grammar to refer to the grammar of a sentence as it is actually uttered or used in discourse, in contrast with its notional **deep structure**. See further under **transformational–generative grammar**.

SVOA, SVOC, SVOO

See **clause**, section 1.

synecdoche

This Greek-derived term refers to the part–whole relationship between words. See under **meronymy**.

synonymy

This term refers to the semantic relation of likeness or close similarity between pairs of words, which are then *synonyms*. Pairs such as *begin*, *start* are readily classed as synonyms, because they both denote the initiation of an action. They pass the basic test of **synonymy**, in that one could easily substitute for the other in the same sentence without any change of meaning. Compare:

I began reading James Joyce's Ulysses.

I started reading James Joyce's Ulysses.

There are no differences in their denotation or connotation. But if we ask whether *commence* would make a third synonym in that set, the parity is less exact.

Although *commence* can be used with an *-ing* complement, it is less common than the *TO*-infinitive. Apart from its collocational preference, *commence* is a good deal less frequently used than either of the others (Biber et al. 1999), which goes with it being stylistically different. It belongs in a more formal style – a higher register – than *begin* and *start*. These issues show that true synonymy (i.e. identical meaning in terms of denotation, connotation, collocation, and style) is more elusive than one might expect, and involves multiple parameters of meaning.

- Compare **antonymy**.

syntagm and syntagmatic

See under **paradigm**, section 1.

syntax

Syntax is the backbone of grammar, concerned with the structures which constitute sentences, and the combinations of words into phrases and clauses that form predications. The *syntactic* constituents of any sentence can be represented in detail at different levels, in terms of the so-called *rank scale*, or by means of a *tree diagram*. See further under **rank scale**; **tree diagram**; and **clause**, section 4.

The other key element of grammar is *morphology*, with which we analyze the lexical structure of words, the inflectional paradigms of individual *word classes* which intersect with the syntax of the clause, and the derivational patterns used in English word formation. See further under **morphology**; and **word class**, section 3.

systemic–functional grammar (SFG)

This C20 grammar associated with Michael Halliday and his colleagues steps back from focusing on the sentence as the fundamental unit of grammar, and analyzes its structures and functions in terms of larger discourse principles (the *metafunctions of language*). Its key reference is Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. See further under **metafunction of language**.

T

-t

For the use of this suffix to mark the past forms of some verbs, see under **-ed**; and **irregular verb**, sections 3, 5, and 6.

tag question

This type of question consists of a brief interrogative unit which hangs on a declarative statement, as in:

The young ones won't come, will they?

You saw the weather forecast, didn't you?

The **tag question** usually reverses the polarity of the statement: a positive tag follows a negative statement, and a negative tag follows a positive statement. It uses the same auxiliary verb as the statement, or if there is none, harnesses the *DO* auxiliary (see further under **DO**). It replaces the subject NP with a personal pronoun, matched for number and person. See further under **question**, section 4.

TAM

This is the descriptive grammarians' acronym for the categorial properties of verbs: **tense, aspect, mood**. In its application to the English verb phrase, the acronym is now often used to refer to **tense, aspect, modality**, since mood is now only a vestigial category, and modality has assumed increasing importance. See further under **tense, aspect, mood**, and **modality and modal verb**.

tautology

This refers to the repeated expression of the same idea in a single phrase or predication, which is seen as superfluous. For example the *free gift* used in advertising copy; or the phrase *in the classroom context* from eduspeak, where "context" adds an unnecessary superordinate concept to the preceding adverbial. Some **tautologies** like these are sanctioned by common usage, others reflect a lack of clarity in the use of words. For example:

New innovations in technology are reported every day.

The crowd completely filled the stadium.

In such cases, the tautology has a "weaseling" effect, undermining the meaning of one or both words underlined.

Compare **redundancy**, and see also **pleonasm**.

tense

- 1 verb tense forms in English: present and past
- 2 tense in modal verbs
- 3 future tense in English
- 4 uses of the present tense
- 5 tense, aspect, mood/modality
- 6 sequence of tenses
- 7 tense and time

1 Verb tense forms in English: present and past

The English verb system provides a two-way contrast between present and past **tense** in the forms of most verbs.

The **present tense** uses the unmarked form of both regular and irregular verbs for all persons except the third person singular, which adds an *-(e)s* inflection:

I go you go he/she/it goes we go they go

The unmarked form (*go*) is termed the **base** (Quirk et al. 1985) or **plain present** form (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). As such it is indistinguishable from the form used for several other parts of the verb, including the **imperative**, the **bare infinitive**, and the **mandative subjunctive** (see further under **imperative, infinitive, mandative subjunctive**).

The **past tense** is differentiated from the present for all **regular (weak)** verbs by the *-(e)d* inflection, as in *dance/danced, depart/departed*. Most **irregular (strong)** verbs also contrast the past tense with the present, but by means of changed vowels and/or consonants, as with *drink/drank, teach/taught* (see further under **irregular verb**). Just a few irregular verbs, such as *cast, hit, put, rid*, have no morphological contrast between past and present tense, except in the third person singular which is marked by the *-s* inflection.

English verbs other than the modals also have what have traditionally been called the **present participle** and the **past participle**:

- present participle:

being dancing doing drinking driving having putting

- past participle:

been danced done drunk driven had put

Despite their names, these participles are not **tensed** in the sense of being the finite head of the verb phrase. Rather they combine with other tensed forms, as in:

am being driven to the airport ... had been doing the accounts ...

where they express verbal **aspect** (continuous or perfect). As those examples show, neither the present nor past participle decides the tense of the verb phrase, but rather the operator (*am, had*). For this reason they are **secondary** forms of the verb (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). The present participle is often now called the **-ing participle**. See further under **-ing form**, sections 1 and 4; **operator**; and **tensed**.

2 Tense in modal verbs

Modals such as *CAN/COULD*, *MAY/MIGHT*, *SHALL/SHOULD*, *WILL/WOULD* have traditionally been explained as expressing **tense** contrasts between present and past, in line with their individual histories. This contrast is now much attenuated and found for some senses only, e.g. *CAN/COULD* when expressing ability. Instead the former present and past forms of modal verbs are each invested with particular types of modal meaning (see further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3). Modal verbs have no participial (i.e. secondary) forms.

3 Future tense in English

Unlike many European languages from the Romance and Slavic families, English has never had a **future tense**, in the sense of a distinct set of verb inflections for expressing future time, such as are found in classical and romance languages. The English future tense has traditionally been constructed out of the combination of *WILL* or *SHALL* and the tenseless infinitive: *they will come*, *we shall go*. However constructions with *WILL* and *SHALL* have long seemed ambiguous as to whether they express a prediction or an intention, prompting arbitrary rules from C17 on about which meaning went with each of the personal pronouns (see under **WILL and SHALL**, section 1).

4 Uses of the present tense

The English present tense (marked by the -s inflection for third person singular and otherwise unmarked) is not always associated with present time, as of something happening strictly here and now. It can be used to phrase a time-independent state of being (past, present, future), as in *The tiger is a carnivore*, or a universal truth: *A stitch in time saves nine*. The present tense may carry a habitual sense: *She comes this way every week*. It is also the canonical form for verbs which perform some kind of speech act: *I declare you man and wife* (see under **performative verb**). The present tense is used regularly in stage directions in play scripts: *In walks the ghost*, and more occasionally in live commentaries: *Beggs scores the goal of the match*, as a kind of **narrative present**. These and several other uses of the present tense to refer to non-present events are discussed further under **present tense**, sections 2, 3, and 4.

5 Tense, aspect, mood/modality

The tense of English verbs is interwoven with their grammatical aspect, mood, and/or modality. Together they not only contribute to the time specifications of the events described, but modulate their projection in the context of communication. Thus the **present perfect** (tense + aspect) brings a past event into the present of the discourse, spoken or written (see further under **present perfect**). Both present and past perfect forms can be seen as providing a **secondary tense**. See further under **perfect aspect; mood; and modality and modal verb**, sections 1 and 2.

6 Sequence of tenses

In complex sentences, the tense of the subordinate clause may be correlated with that of the main clause. This was regularly so in Latin, and the classical rules

continue to be observed in formal English style and in certain constructions. They are nevertheless challenged by pragmatic issues in everyday communication: see under **sequence of tenses**.

7 Tense and time

The points detailed above show collectively that there is no one-to-one correlation between tense and time, despite the morphological contrast between past and the unmarked present form in the English verb system. The verb's tense works in conjunction with other grammatical features of the verb phrase, with time adverbs embedded in the clause, and within the pragmatic and communicative dimensions of the discourse.

tensed

This term indicates that a verb, verb phrase, or clause is marked in some way for tense, and therefore *finite*. The **tensed** verb may be inflected as either *past* (by means of *-ed* or other inflection), or *present* (by means of *-s* in the third person singular but otherwise unmarked – just the *plain* form). So for most grammatical persons (first, second, and third person plural), the verb is tensed for the present form only by the absence of contrastive marking for the past tense. The one exception is the auxiliary verb *BE*, for which there are three distinct forms for the present tense (*am, is, are*), and two for the past tense (*was, were*). But for almost all lexical verbs, the past and two present forms constitute the tensed or primary forms of English verbs (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). See further under **primary and secondary verb form; tense**, section 1; and **verb**, section 4.

tetragram

See under **collocation**, section 1.

textual function

See under **metafunction of language**.

THAN

In modern English *THAN* functions as a subordinator and a preposition in formulating comparisons, though its prepositional role has proved contentious. The original *Oxford Dictionary* made a point of saying that *THAN* as a preposition could only be followed by *WHOM* (apparently excluding the personal pronouns), thus underscoring its role as a conjunction. This did not prevent it from acting as the prepositional head of an NP, as in:

This magazine is much larger than its predecessor.

THAN is most frequently found with comparative phrases and clauses in academic writing, as opposed to newspaper prose or fiction writing, in the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999), no doubt because analytical comparisons of things are effective in critical dialectic. But personal comparisons prevailed in conversational data in the corpus, especially those formulated with a preposition with a following accusative pronoun. This runs counter to the

prescriptive view that *THAN* with a personal pronoun following should take the nominative pronoun in a finite clause; and if there was evidence to the contrary, it was either an elliptical clause, or ungrammatical usage. Compare:

Hillary works faster than I expected.

Hillary works faster than I.

Hillary works faster than me.

When the following pronoun is the subject (nominative) pronoun *I*, this is arguably an elliptical clause with *THAN* as subordinator, seeing that ellipsis (and other forms of lexical reduction) is strongly associated with **comparative clauses** (see further under **comparative clause**, section 3). But when *THAN* is followed by the object (accusative) pronoun *ME*, it is clearly operating as a preposition. The fact that both accusative and nominative forms can be found in fiction writing suggests that there is some hypercorrection of the default accusative to the nominative form (Quirk et al. 1985). See further under **hypercorrection**.

The frequent use of *THAN* as a preposition in speech leads some speakers to construe it that way even in what might otherwise be a comparative clause, for example:

Hillary works faster than what I expected.

Ironically this suggests the speaker's discomfort with using *THAN* as the subordinator for the comparative clause – as if it produces a kind of **gapping** for them. But the fused relative NP it creates is often regarded as nonstandard English (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). (See further under **gap and gapping**.)

Note by way of contrast the use of *THAN* in passive comparative clauses, for example:

Hillary works faster than was expected.

There *THAN* serves as a quasi-relative pronoun. The construction is standard English.

THAT

- ▶ For the uses of *THAT* as a demonstrative pronoun and determiner, see **demonstrative pronoun**; and **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.
- ▶ For its use in prefacing a complement clause, see **complementizer**, sections 1 and 2.
- ▶ For its uses as a relative pronoun, see under **relative pronoun**, sections 1, 2, and 3.
- ▶ For its role in complex subordinators, see under **subordinator**, section 2.

THAT or WHICH

For the choice between *THAT* and *WHICH* as relative pronouns, see **relative pronoun**, section 3.

THE

THE is the **definite article**, used as a **determiner** with count nouns, singular and plural, and with noncount nouns:

Please put the kettle on.

The teacups are on your left.

The sugar is there.

It is a **central determiner**: see further under **determiner**, section 3.

The prime function of *THE* is to signal definiteness and give specificity to a common noun which is communicatively salient in the context. Much of the time it refers to a **given** item, making cohesive bonds with a previous nonspecific reference:

I brought a chocolate cake and a few biscuits. With the cake we'll have plenty.

(See further under **cohesion** and **given and new**.) *THE* is also used non-cohesively to identify the following noun as a generic item in the immediate or wider context:

I heard it on the radio.

The panda is an endangered animal.

THE is the ubiquitous marker of NPs in English, and the most frequent word in written English of all kinds (Francis and Kucera 1982; Hofland and Johansson 1982).

Note that *THE* is not normally found with proper nouns, which are by their nature specific. Only when they are pluralized personal names, such as *the Smiths*, *the Joneses*, or else part of a traditional geographical name, as in *The Hague*, *The Lebanon*, are they found in English as part of the literal translation from another language.

THEE

See under **THOU and THEE**.

THEIR

- For the grammatical uses of *THEIR*, see under **personal pronoun**, section 4; and **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.
- For its contextual meanings, see under **THEY and THEM**.

THEIRS

This is the **independent** form of the third person plural pronoun. See further under **possessive pronoun**.

THEIRSELVES and THEIRSELF

See under **THEMSELVES and THEMSELF**.

thematic

This term has several different applications:

- 1 In systemic–functional grammar, the **thematic** element is the informational starting point (i.e. **theme**) of the sentence and is complemented by the **rheme**

(see further under **theme**, section 2). In information structure theory, the terms **topic** and **comment** are used in the same way. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 1.

- 2 In case grammar, **thematic role** refers to any of the semantic roles assigned to an element of a clause, e.g. Agent, Patient, Goal.
- 3 In government-binding theory, **thematic role** is an alternative term for **theta role**: see under **valency**, section 4.

thematic structure

- 1 In information delivery, **thematic structure** is the distribution of information within a sentence, i.e. its **topic**, **comment**, and **focus**. See further under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 1.
- 2 In modern grammatical analysis (e.g. Aarts 1997), **thematic structure** refers to the set of thematic roles figured by the verb. So the thematic structure for *John kicked the dog* involves two thematic roles: [1. NP: Agent; 2. NP Patient]. They represent two different types of **verb argument**: those like 1 which serve as subject are sometimes referred to as the **external** argument, while those like 2 occurring within the predicate are the **internal** arguments. See further under **valency**, section 2.

thematization

See under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 3.

theme

-
- 1 **generalized subject of a discourse**
 - 2 **primary unit of information structure in a sentence**
 - 3 **one type of thematic role**
-

1 Generalized subject of a discourse

Outside linguistics, **theme** is often used to refer to the generalized subject of the discourse, as in

The theme of his speech was to be as positive as possible.

The theme in this sense may be formulated and worded in alternative ways, as discussed in Brown and Yule (1983).

2 Primary unit of information structure in a sentence

In systemic-functional grammar, **theme** is the primary unit of information in a sentence, complemented by the **rheme**. The theme is typically referential content, and by default coincides with the subject NP, as in the following:

The mood of the audience improved in the course of the speech.

Note however that the first constituent unit may be an adverbial, making it rather than the subject NP the theme.

Very soon the mood of the audience improved.

However their attention lapsed after a while.

In the second sentence, the first theme is a contrastive conjunct, which in Hallidayan terms gives the sentence both a *textual* and a *topical* theme. Other grammars use the terms *topic* and *comment* in place of this use of *theme* and *rheme*. See under **topic, topicalization, and topical progression**, section 1.

3 One type of thematic role

In government-binding theory, *theme* is one of the types of *theta role* (i.e. *thematic role*), referring to the role of the NP which is in motion or in a state or location. The distinction between *theme* and *patient* is not entirely clear-cut. See further under **deep case** and **patient**.

THEMSELVES and THEMSELF

THEMSELVES is the standard form of the reflexive pronoun for *THEY*, and the natural form whenever the referent is plural, as in:

They helped themselves to the drink supply.

Everyone helped themselves to the drink supply.

Yet with a singular referent, *THEMSELVES* seems less apt, and *THEMSELF* occasionally appears instead:

Each person helped themselves to the drink supply.

THEMSELF has historically been excluded from English grammars, though it was in use up to the mid-C16, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989). After that it disappears until the later C20, with scattered citations in the Longman corpus, the British National Corpus, and the Cambridge corpus (Peters 2004). Its resurgence is no doubt connected with the greatly increased role of *THEY* in singular reference (see **THEY and THEM**). The status of *THEMSELF* is somewhat equivocal in Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 494): it is “attested in the standard dialect from 1970s,” but the example is annotated as “grammatical in some dialect(s) only.” Editorial software and internet search engines are still inclined to automatically replace *THEMSELF* with *THEMSELVES*, which no doubt continues to reinforce the occurrences of the latter. Yet the fact that both *-SELVES* and *-SELF* are current in the third person plural reflexive should be no surprise, given the availability of *yourself* and *yourselves*, according to the number of the referent.

Two other forms of the third person plural reflexive pronoun are still attested in modern English, though not mentioned at all in modern English grammars: *THEIRSELVES* and *THEIRSELF*. These have long been regarded as nonstandard (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989; *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* 1989), perhaps because they do not match up with the unmistakably accusative form of the masculine third person reflexive pronoun: *himself*. Compare the ambiguous *herself* (which could be accusative or genitive). *THEIRSELVES/THEIRSELF* do however match the forms of the first and second person reflexives (*myself*, *yourself*). See further under **reflexive pronoun**, section 1.

THERE

This adverb has always been multifunctional, though its core semantic is as a demonstrative adverb of place:

Up that river – we lived there when we were children.

THERE is easily used to point to something concrete (in the actual setting), or more abstractly, in referring to a place on the map. Either way this use of **THERE** is **deictic** (see further under **deixis and deictic**). It means “in that place,” complementing *here*, meaning “in this place.”

The demonstrative and focal uses of **THERE** have long coexisted with its less emphatic use at the start of a clause, evolving from:

There comes a man with a pitchfork.

to

There comes a time in the affairs of men ...

The second example shows the evolutionary path towards purely existential use of **THERE** with the verb **BE**, as in:

There is every hope of recovering the lost ring.

In existential sentences like these, **THERE** takes the place of the verb's subject, and in that respect works as a **dummy subject**, like **prop-IT**. See further under **IT and ITS**, section 2.

Examples of existential **THERE** can be found from Old English on, and it was already frequent in speech by C17, judging by the first example of the contracted form *there's*, to be found in Shakespeare, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The singular contracted form *there's* is increasingly formulaic and followed as often by plural as singular NPs:

There's tears in her eyes.

There's enough rooms to sleep a few guests.

There's five of them in the family.

In conversation *there's* is found more often with a plural NP than *there are*, in data from the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999). As the examples show, its complement is often quantitative, though more or less specific (e.g. *a lot of*, *lots of*). Like other quantifying expressions, they allow variable patterns of agreement: see further under **agreement**, section 7).

THEREFORE

This is both a connective adverb or **conjunct**, and a marginal conjunction. See further under **adverb**, section 3; and **conjunction**, section 4.

THESE

For the use of this plural **demonstrative pronoun** and **determiner**, see under **demonstrative pronoun**.

theta role

This term is used in government-binding theory for the **thematic role(s)** set up by particular verbs. See further under **government-binding theory**; and **valency**, section 4.

THEY and THEM

- 1 morphology of *THEY, THEM*
- 2 singular use of *THEY*
- 3 generic use of *THEY*

1 Morphology of *THEY, THEM*

These are the common forms of the third person plural pronoun of English, with *THEY* marking the nominative case and *THEM* the accusative.

<u>They</u> invited us.	We invited <u>them</u> .
(nominative, subject)	(accusative, direct object)

Note that the accusative form is also used for the indirect object, as in:

We sent them an invitation.

Unlike its singular counterparts (*he, she, it*) *THEY* is gender-free, and can refer to masculine, feminine, and inanimate entities.

- ▶ For the use of *THEIR*, see under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.
- ▶ For the independent pronoun *THEIRS*, see under **possessive pronoun**.

2 Singular use of *THEY*

Plural use of *THEY/THEM* is still its default value, as in:

The airline returned their overdue suitcase to them.

However its use with singular reference can be traced back to C16, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989); and its value as a gender-free third person singular pronoun has been affirmed since the nonsexist language movement of the 1970s. It has thus come to replace generic *HE* in many contexts, less and more formal, in English-speaking countries generally (Peters 2004), despite the grammatical discomfort for some people. Major dictionaries including the *Merriam-Webster* (2000) and *New Oxford* (2005) enter the singular use of *THEY/THEM* among the definitions of the pronoun. The latter notes that its use after indefinite pronouns and determiners such as *each, every, everyone/thing*, etc. is established, and likely to extend to indefinite nouns (i.e. ones prefaced by the indefinite articles *a/an*).

Note that the singular use of *THEY* has fostered the use of *THEMSELF* in recent decades. See further under **THEMSELVES and THEMSELF**.

3 Generic use of *THEY*

THEY/THEM has also long been used generically, especially in informal speech, as in:

There was a “them or us” attitude.
They don’t bake bread like they used to.

This use of the third person plural pronouns is nonreferential, i.e. there is no specific plural NP to which it refers back. The second sentence shows how it serves as an ad hoc subject for the topic, and creates active rather than passive voice for the clause. See further under **voice (1)**.

third person pronoun

The singular **third person pronouns** provide a three-way distinction between male and female gender (*HE* and *SHE*), and the inanimate *IT*. Both *HE* and *SHE* are inflected for case (accusative/dative (*HIM/HER*) + genitive (*HIS/HER*)), while *IT* inflects only for the genitive (*ITS*).

The plural **third person pronoun** (*THEY*) is neutral as to gender and animacy, but does inflect for the accusative/dative (*THEM*) and genitive case (*THEIR*).

Note that in modern grammars, the genitive or possessive case of these and all personal pronouns is included with the **determiner** word class. See further under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3.

- For the subject/object cases, see **HE and HIM, SHE and HER, IT and ITS**, and **THEY and THEM**.

THIS

For the uses of this singular demonstrative determiner and pronoun, see under **demonstrative pronoun**.

THOU and THEE

This is the **singular second person pronoun** which was in regular use in English up to the end of C16. *THOU* (the nominative case) contrasted with *THEE* (accusative), as in the Shakespearean sonnet:

Thou art more lovely and more temperate. (nominative)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (accusative)

This grammatical (case) distinction was preserved in the language of prayer up to the later C20, long after *THOU/THEE* had disappeared from everyday discourse.

The disappearance of *THOU/THEE* from the English pronoun system coincides with the rise of *YOU* as the all-purpose second person pronoun. In earlier (Old and Middle) English *THOU/THEE* (singular) had contrasted with *YE/YOU* (plural second person), and the distinction was maintained in the “authorized” translation of the English Bible (1611), as in:

O thou of little faith.

Ye shall not see me henceforth ...

But the singular/plural distinction between addressees was no longer being observed in secular prose of C17, and Ben Jonson’s dictum “*Thou* to one and *you* to many” (in his posthumous *English Grammar*, 1640) would have seemed positively archaic. It does however reflect the fact that *YOU* had by then displaced *YE* as the case-free form of the pronoun (see further under **YE**). Meanwhile the singular/plural grammatical distinction had been overlaid by more pragmatic considerations, so that the two forms were used to distinguish closer and more public social relations: *THOU/THEE* for more intimate address to an individual, and *YE/YOU* for the neutral, general form of address (singular or plural). This historical shift in the English second person pronouns is analogous to that of the so-called “T- and V-forms” of second person pronouns in other European languages (Brown and Gilman 1960).

Note that the possessive forms of *THOU/THEE* were *THY* and *THINE*, of which:

- *THY* is nowadays classified as a *determiner* (see **determiner**, sections 1 and 3).
- *THINE* is an *independent pronoun*: see under **possessive pronoun**.

three-part verb

See **verb**, section 4.

three-place predicate (3-place predicate)

See under **predicate**, section 2; and **valency**, section 3.

THUS

This is both a connective adverb (*conjunct*) and a marginal conjunction. See further under **adverb**, section 3; and **conjunction**, section 4.

TILL and UNTIL

See under **UNTIL and TILL**.

timeless present

See **present tense**, section 4.

TO

This is one of the highly *grammatized prepositions* of English (see under **preposition**, section 1). Its regular functions include formulating infinitives (*to go*), and paraphrasing the indirect object in ditransitive constructions (*sent a card to her*): see further under **object**. It is also a well-used particle with phrasal, prepositional, and phrasal-prepositional verbs (*turn to, defer to, give in to*). See further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

topic, topicalization, and topical progression

- 1 topic and information delivery
 - 2 topic and comment vs. given and new
 - 3 topicalization
 - 4 topical progression
 - 5 multiple topics
-

1 Topic and information delivery

The term **topic** is used by grammarians in analyzing sentences from the communicative perspective, and the relative prominence of information in them. The topic is the unit of information which appears at the beginning of an English sentence and the focal point for further development. Often, though not necessarily, it is the grammatical subject of the sentence. Compare the underlined topics in the following:

Our family goes bike-riding on Sunday.

Every Sunday our family goes bike-riding.

The topic of those sentences in each case is “what it is about,” to which further information will be attached. This information which forms the rest of the sentence is called the *comment*. In the first sentence it corresponds to the *predicate* of the clause; in the second it includes both subject and predicate. The topic lays the informational groundwork in terms of identifying the agency of action, as in the first example; or emphasizing contextual information with a circumstantial (adverbial) adjunct, as in the second. The adverbial topic may also take the form of a phrase or a clause.

Note that there are two standard nomenclatures for these concepts in information delivery. **Topic** and *comment* are used by Biber et al. (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002); whereas Quirk et al. (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) use *theme* and *rheme*. Neither **topic** nor *theme* is free of entanglement with its ordinary use to refer to the general subject or gist of discourse. But since *theme* is also applied by some grammarians to the arguments of the verb, it seems better to use **topic** for the initial information unit of the sentence.

2 **Topic and comment vs. given and new**

Both these pairs refer to information structure and delivery, and they may apply to the same constituents some of the time. But while **topic** and *comment* apply to the vehicles (“slots”) for information delivery within the sentence, *given* and *new* relate to the status of information in the ongoing construction of text. The two coincide in the following sentences:

I flew to Bangkok overnight. It gave me a fresh view of Asian ways.

In the first sentence, the *topical* subject “I” refers back to a person already named or assumed in the context, and is therefore given; while “it,” the topic of the second sentence, is obviously given, having been introduced in the sentence before. In each case the rest of sentence is the comment which adds fresh information and is therefore new.

Note however that writers and speakers can move a fresh item into the topic position as if it was given, by reformulating it:

I flew to Bangkok overnight. The bustling capital of Thailand gave me a fresh view of Asian ways.

Though the paraphrase “bustling capital of Thailand” brings new information to the second sentence, its appearance in topic position implies that it is given. See further under **given and new**.

3 **Topicalization**

Topicalization (also termed *thematization*) refers to the manipulation of information into topic position, for reasons of emphasis or information delivery. This can of course be achieved by the various movements and transformations available in English syntax, including moving adverbial adjuncts to the front of a sentence, as in:

My clock stops every Sunday. ⇒ *Every Sunday my clock stops.*

Or by transforming an active sentence into a passive one:

The policeman stopped the bus. ⇒ *The bus was stopped by the policeman.*

Other resources for topicalization are the marked sentence constructions of **left-dislocation** and **pseudo-clefting** (see under **dislocation** and **pseudo-cleft sentence**). Topicalization can also be achieved by informal kinds of **fronting** found in conversation, as when the clausal object is fronted:

I can't stand fireworks. ⇒ *Fireworks I can't stand.*

In all such cases, the **topicalized** item becomes more prominent in the sentence than the unmarked (active) subject. See further under **fronting**.

4 **Topical progression**

Topical progression is important in any extended discourse, to keep developing ideas and mobilizing arguments. In any kind of discourse, topical progression is achieved by ensuring that there are connecting links of given information from sentence to sentence, e.g. by topical use of pronouns, as illustrated in section 2 above. In academic and official writing the topic is also a vehicle for changing the subject or switching the perspective. Weighty adverbial adjuncts, prepositional phrases, and stock participial phrases are commonly found at the start of a sentence for this reason, as in:

With the election settled, they returned to the department's regular business.

Considering the size of the budget, we must expect bigger taxes somewhere.

These examples show how the topical item can be used to flag the boundaries between structural units in the discourse, by summarizing what has preceded or refocusing attention on a new issue.

5 **Multiple topics**

Although topic/comment analysis seems to imply that there is only one topic per sentence, closer analysis of the front end suggests that there may be more than one. This accords with the fact that the subject of the verb can be preceded by adverbials and adjuncts of many kinds. Systemic–functional analysis (using **theme/rheme** for **topic/comment**) allows for up to three types of sentence theme, from each of the macrofunctions of language, i.e. the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. For example:

Well then, Kate, surely that expense is on us.

That sentence begins with **textual themes** (continuative “well” and connective “then”), linking up with the preceding discourse, followed by **interpersonal themes** (a vocative, and an attitudinal adverb), followed by the **ideational** or **topical theme**: “that expense.”

TOTAL OF

Like other quantificational phrases, **TOTAL OF** is partly grammaticalized, by the evidence of the variability in its agreement with the following verb. Compare:

A total of 350 soldiers have died in Afghanistan.

The total of 350 deaths exceeds any previous toll for soldiers serving in peace time.

As the first example shows, plural agreement goes with “a total of,” suggesting that the singularity of *TOTAL* can be overridden by notional and proximity agreement with “soldiers.” In the second example, “the total of” retains formal agreement with the singular with verb, and “of 350 deaths” becomes a postmodifier. See further under **agreement**, sections 2 and 7.

traditional grammar

This is a generic label for the type of English grammar whose concepts and terminology can be traced back to the grammar of Latin. Classical terms and concepts were the tools of pioneering English grammarians of C17 and C18, and they remained the backbone of grammar teaching throughout the English-speaking world until the 1960s, through widely used school texts like that of Nesfield (1900–61), which was revised and republished in successive editions until 1961. English dictionaries also used traditional grammar terminology as their grammatical apparatus until quite recently.

In the fresh analyses of English grammars of the latter decades of C20, some of the terminology of traditional grammar remains, though frequently put to new purposes, as explained in the entries in this book.

transferred negation

See **negation**, section 4.

transformational–generative grammar (TG)

The transformational–generative approach to English grammar was conceived by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s, as a way of explaining how a language was continually created, using a finite set of rules to convert the underlying elements of *deep structure* into the *surface structure* of communication.

Transformational rules not only generated the essential declarative clause structure, but could account for their mutation into the form of questions, and how an active sentence could be converted into a passive one. They could also explain ambiguous structures which cannot be disambiguated by their surface grammar, e.g. *Public servants are revolting*. For this, transformational–generative grammarians made full use of *tree diagrams* despite their limitations: see further under **tree diagram**.

transitive verb

See under **transitivity**, section 1.

transitivity

- 1 **transitive and intransitive verbs**
 - 2 **transitivity and phrasal verbs**
 - 3 **transitivity and prepositional verbs**
 - 4 **types of transitive construction: monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive**
 - 5 **types of intransitive construction**
 - 6 **transitivity as a clausal function**
-

1 Transitive and intransitive verbs

The concept of **transitivity** is grounded in the nature of the verb: whether it is **transitive**, i.e. has a following direct object, or **intransitive**, meaning that it does not have an object – though it may be followed by other constituents (e.g. **complement**, **adjunct**) which complete the clause (see further under **clause**, section 1). English verbs have traditionally been classified in dictionaries as either transitive or intransitive, to distinguish the syntax of the following:

They left the key in the door. *They left abruptly.*
(transitive) (intransitive)

As the examples show, the sense or usage of the verb affects its transitivity. In fact the verb *leave* and many others are **ambitransitive**, though they vary in the extent to which one or other construction is used (Biber et al. 1999).

The behavior of English verbs challenges the traditional transitive/intransitive distinction in several ways. Grammarians have long recognized that there are cases where the object of a transitive verb was “understood” in the context – sometimes called **absolute** constructions (see further under **absolute**, section 2). There are also increasing numbers of **middle constructions** or **middle intransitives**, where the subject of the intransitive verb is its patient not the agent, as in:

The kettle boiled. *They frighten easily.*

(See further under **ergative** and **mediopassive**.) Other challenges to the traditional dichotomy come with phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs, because of the equivocal status of the particle/preposition following them (discussed further in sections 2 and 3 below).

2 Transitivity and phrasal verbs

English phrasal verbs sit on the fence between transitivity and intransitivity, because of the particle which is integral to their meaning, which may follow the verb immediately, or come after another constituent, as in the following:

He turned off the light. *He turned the light off.*

In the first version the object’s appearance is delayed, but its syntactic role is clear because of the idiomatic bond between “turn” and “off,” combining to express the transitive sense “switch off.” The second version is clearly transitive, with “the light” juxtaposed to the verb as its object, and “off” shifted to follow it. But the particle maintains its semantic bond with the verb, whether it occurs before or after it, suggesting that it forms a lexical unit that is essentially transitive. The mobility of the particle is the distinguishing characteristic of these phrasal verbs.

Note that some phrasal verbs are intransitive, as can be seen in examples such as:

The fire alarm went off immediately.

The close semantic bond between verb and particle in “went off” can be seen in the way it serves as a paraphrase for “sounded,” but there’s no object to make it transitive. The idiomatic bond still distinguishes it from freely formed constructions with the same elements. Compare the use of “went off” in the following sentence, where it means “drove off”:

He went off the highway.

Here “off” simply serves as a preposition complemented by “the highway.” “Went” does not bond with “off” as a phrasal verb, but is an ordinary intransitive verb followed by a prepositional (adverbial) adjunct.

3 **Transitivity and prepositional verbs**

Prepositional verbs are regularly constructed with a particular particle, which is juxtaposed to the verb when there is no object, but comes after the object if there is one. Compare:

The statement calls for a response.

We thanked them for the report.

In the standard grammatical analysis, the first sentence is intransitive, and the second transitive. Yet the preposition “for” has a critical role in both examples. It is closely connected with the verb in each case (in fact selected by it), and the noun phrase following may be seen as its **prepositional object** (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999). Other grammarians such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002) note that the prepositional phrase is a complement rather than an adjunct, and would treat “for a response” as an **oblique (object)** of the verb (see further under **oblique**, section 2). This would explain the fact that the two elements of the verb stay together even if the clause is passivized: *Some response is called for*. For more about the **prepositional passive**, see **voice (1)**, section 4.

4 **Types of transitive construction**

In modern English grammar, several types of transitivity are recognized:

- **monotransitive**: the simplest type of transitive construction, when the verb has a single (direct) object as its complement (SVO):

They brought food. We haven't enough money.

- **ditransitive**: the construction in which the verb licenses both an indirect and a direct object, as with many verbs of communicating (SVOO):

She gave him the letter. We sent them our greetings.

- **complex transitive**: when the verb licenses both a direct object and an obligatory complement or adjunct (SVOC, SVOA), as with (a) verbs of deeming, and (b) verbs of locating an object:

(a) *Most viewers thought it worthwhile. We found it a wonderful opportunity.*

(b) *It put a smile on their faces. People placed wreaths at the palace gates.*

Other complex transitive constructions recognized by Quirk et al. (1985) are those consisting of:

- O + TO-infinitive: *She thought him to be a fool.*
- O + bare infinitive: *They saw the car leave early.*
- O + -ing clause: *I heard someone crying.*
- O + -ed clause: *We had the watch repaired.*

- For alternative ways of analyzing these transitive constructions, in terms of **arguments of the verb** or verb **valencies**, see **valency**, sections 2 and 3.

5 Types of intransitive construction

These are constructions in which there is an obligatory adjunct (SVA), and obligatory complement (SVC), or else no complement at all (SV). They include:

- motion/activity clauses: formed with verbs of movement or activity, these define its direction, quality, etc:

They flew high. The road went down. We played well.

An alternative term for this type of construction is **complex intransitive**.

- copular clauses: these are construed with the copula verb *BE* or other **linking verbs** that express either (i) a state of being or (ii) a change of state:

The house is not small My friend seemed doubtful. His voice became intense.

See further under **copular verb**.

- absolute construction: the simplest intransitive construction of all, where the verb requires no complementation:

The bells rang. She died. I see. The vessel was sinking.

This construction is relatively uncommon, as found in *Longman Grammar (1999)* research.

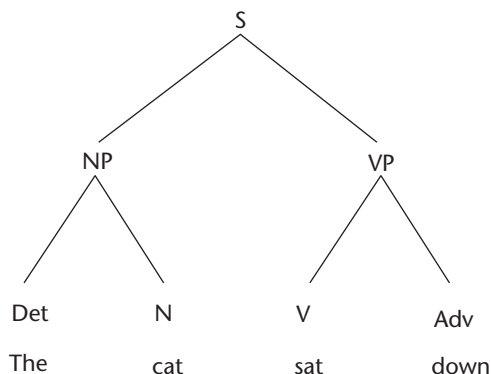
- For alternative ways of analyzing these intransitive constructions, in terms of arguments of the verb or verb valencies, see **valency**, sections 2 and 3.

6 Transitivity as a clausal function

The classical transitivity system (transitive vs. intransitive) has been substantially reanalyzed in modern English grammars, with alternative analyses of its application to the various constructions discussed in the sections above. One of the most radical analyses is that of systemic–functional grammar, where transitivity is the resource with which material events are represented within the clause as different types of process (material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, existential), involving different agency relationships between the Participants, especially Actor and Goal (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). However the authors also emphasize the importance of **ergative** elements within the lexicogrammar of English, with discretionary constructions of agency within the Medium and Range involved in the process, and the not uncommon use of the **middle voice**. With this approach, the authors focus on the **medium** or **range** of the verbal process, and the distinction between **circumstances** and **participants** becomes blurred in the roles of **agent**, **beneficiary**, and **range**. It helps to account for the flexibility with which semantic raw material may be constructed into the clause, and represents a kind of rapprochement between the systemic–functional and the lexicalist approach, with its emphasis on the arguments licensed by the verb. See further under **systemic–functional grammar** and **lexical–functional grammar**.

tree diagram

Tree diagrams are a widely used way of displaying the constituents of a clause or sentence and showing their structure and dependencies. A simple example would be:



As is evident, the term **tree diagram** is not a well-chosen metaphor, in that its configuration is that of an upside-down tree. It is however conventionally used in **immediate constituent analysis (IC)**: see further under that heading.

The practice of using **tree diagrams** to represent sentence structure was developed by American structural linguists and taken up in Chomsky's publications of the 1950s. Yet he and other generativists were critical of tree diagrams. Their hierarchical structure requires constituents at each grammatical level to be nested in the one above, so that syntactic properties can be systematically inherited and passed to the surface structure. Constituents which stand outside the kernel NP + VP (e.g. sentence adverbs) are difficult to place, and the tree diagram does not cope well with discontinuous elements. These and other problems prompted the development of transformational–generative grammars in the 1960s.

Note that the term **tree structure** is used by some grammarians to refer to the abstract syntactic structure which is rendered through a **tree diagram**. In practice the distinction is often neutralized. Other terms used for the tree diagram are *parse tree* and *phrase marker*.

triadic predicate

This is an alternative name for the *three-place predicate*. See under **valency**, section 3.

trigram

See under **collocation**, section 1.

trivalent verb

See under **valency**, section 3.

two-part verb

See under **verb**, section 4.

two-place predicate (2-place predicate)

See under **predicate**, section 2; and **valency**, section 3.

U

unattached participle

See **dangling participle**.

uncount noun

See **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

unification

In various modern grammars (GPSG, HPSG, LFG), **unification** is a key concept used in explaining how two separate categories can combine into one, provided they do not contain conflicting features. This is apt in accounting for shared information across separate nodes of the tree structure, e.g. syntactic agreement between the NP subject and the VP.

unmarked

See under **marked form, marking, and markedness**, section 2.

unreal condition

See under **IF**.

untensed verb

- 1 Among transformational–generative grammarians, **untensed verb** is used as a synonym for **nonfinite verb**, and applied to forms such as the infinitive and the participles. See further under **nonfinite verb**.
- 2 Some grammarians use **untensed verb** to refer to the base form used for the mandative subjunctive, and for the unmarked forms of the present tense (i.e. all but the third person singular). These are finite but **untensed**, in the sense of having no morphological marker for tense. See further under **tensed** and **mandative subjunctive**.

UNTIL and TILL

Though **TILL** is sometimes thought to be an abbreviated version of **UNTIL**, these two have quite independent origins. Both serve as prepositions and subordinators: see further under **subordinator**, section 1.

US

See under **WE and US**.

V

valency

- 1 valency as a linguistic concept
 - 2 valency and verb arguments
 - 3 valency and transitivity
 - 4 valency and theta roles
 - 5 valency and other word classes
-

1 Valency as a linguistic concept

The linguistic term **valency** reflects its origins in chemistry, where it refers to the power of certain elements to combine with or displace hydrogen or other atoms. The term was first applied to French and German syntax by Tesnière (1959) and others, and to English grammar in Allerton (1982). In North America, **valence** is used as an alternative to **valency**.

Valency refers to the way individual lexemes require particular sets of dependents in the construction of syntax. English grammarians mostly focus on valency in the set of noun phrases that attach themselves to particular verbs. For example, the fact that the verb *come* is usually construed with a subject noun phrase alone (plus adverbial): *we are coming home*; whereas *send* usually takes a subject noun phrase as well as two kinds of object noun phrases: *we sent you an email*. Although valency originated in structural and dependency approaches to syntax, it has increasingly been applied to the configuration of semantic roles within the clause, as in *lexical-functional grammar* and *construction grammar* (see further under those headings). It can thus refer to the number of noun phrases associated with the verb, as well as the types required by it. See further below, section 4.

2 Valency and verb arguments

The noun phrases which attach to particular English verbs in **valency** classifications are often referred to as the **arguments** of the verb. They can be subclassified into **internal arguments**, i.e. the direct and indirect objects which occur within the verb phrase, and the **external argument**, i.e. the subject which is outside it, as in Levin's (1993) account of 3,000 English verbs. Thus the sentence *She emailed me the pictures* illustrates both types. Some grammars (e.g. Biber et al. 1999) extend the notion of argument to adverbial adjuncts and prepositional phrases which are integral to the construction of a particular verb. They therefore classify the verb *remind* as having three arguments in the sentence: *The pictures reminded me of home*. Constructions

like *He patted her on the knee* and *They admired him for his idealism* are likewise discussed by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) as having three arguments. The passive counterpart of such sentences, e.g. *He was admired by them for his idealism*, is also configured with three arguments.

Yet many verbs present more than one valency pattern. Thus the verbs *admire*, *pat*, *remind*, exemplified with three arguments in the previous paragraph, can also be constructed with two arguments, as in:

They admired his idealism.

He patted her knee.

Today's date reminded me.

A large number of verbs can take either one or two arguments, in fact almost half (47%) of those in the Longman corpus (Biber et al. 1999). Very high frequency verbs such as *show* were found to take a large variety of one-, two-, and three-argument constructions, depending on the sense being articulated. Verb valencies may be expressed in terms of the maximum number of arguments *licensed* by a particular verb, or the number required by it. (See further under **licensing**, section 2.)

3 Valency and transitivity

The concept of **valency** in its applications to verbal syntax overlaps considerably with that of **transitivity**. They differ substantially in that valency embraces all the arguments of the verb including the subject, whereas transitivity focuses on the patterns of complementation associated with the verb. Their respective terminologies are listed in parallel below, as well as others that paraphrase them.

Valency	Transitivity
avalent (= zero valency)	
monovalent, univalent (1-place predicate)	intransitive
bivalent/divalent (2-place predicate)	(mono)transitive (+ direct object = SVO)
trivalent (3-place predicate)	ditransitive (+ direct + indir. object = SVOO) or complex transitive (= SVOA, SVOC)

The term **avalent** is applied to structures using *IT* as a dummy subject. Canonical examples are “climatic” statements like *it is snowing*, *it's freezing*. In such cases the subject makes no semantic contribution to the sentence and is not counted as an argument of the verb. The same applies to the use of *IT* as dummy subject in *It's midnight* and *It was decided that we should cancel the picnic*, which each have only one argument: in the noun complement, and the following content clause respectively (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). Note also that dummy objects, e.g. the use of *IT* in *You made it!* (when referring to arriving successfully), are also discounted in terms of verb valency, so that “made” in that statement is **monovalent** rather than **bivalent**. See further under **IT and ITS**, section 2.

The variations in the terminology of valency in English, including the mix of Greek and Latin prefixes, reflect the contributions of grammarians from a variety of different theoretical and analytical positions. Note also that all

types of verb argument (including the subject) are embraced as *participants* in the transitivity of the clause in systemic-functional grammar. See further under **participant**; and **transitivity**, sections 4 and 6.

4 Valency and theta roles

Grammars which focus not only on the number of verb arguments but their semantic roles use additional terminology to express them. In government-binding (GB) and case grammar, the arguments or *predicates* of the verb are analyzed in terms of their *theta roles*, i.e. their semantic roles as agent, patient, locative, etc, rather than their syntactic roles as subject/object, etc. See further under **thematic**, sections 2 and 3.

5 Valency and other word classes

Although valency relations are most often discussed in relation to English verbs, the concept is also applied to adjectives and nouns in analyzing their patterns of complementation. Valency patterns for English adjectives, nouns, and active and passive verbs can be reviewed at the Erlangen Valency Pattern Bank, online at www.patternbank.uni-erlangen.de.

verb

- 1 roles of the verb
 - 2 major classes of verbs: auxiliary, modal, and lexical
 - 3 regular and irregular verbs
 - 4 verb inflections and syntax
 - 5 tense, aspect, voice, mood, and modality
 - 6 semantic classification of lexical verbs
 - 7 transitivity and verb complementation
 - 8 catenative verbs
 - 9 copular verbs (linking verbs)
-

1 Roles of the verb

Semantically speaking, **verbs** are the word class whose members express an action, process, or state of being. Syntactically they are the key constituent of any clause, as the nucleus of the various types of predicate (see **clause**, section 1). Verbs are the *predicators* of the finite clause, and present in nonfinite ones (see further under **predicator**; and **clause**, section 5). They occur both singly and in strings where different types of verb combine to form *verb phrases*, expressing the tense, aspect, voice, mood, and modality of the sentence. See further below, sections 4 and 5; and **verb phrase**, section 1.

2 Major classes of verbs

Verbs are conventionally divided into two or three types: *auxiliary verbs*, *modal verbs*, and *lexical* or *full verbs*, as illustrated in the following sets:

- auxiliary (primary): *BE, HAVE, DO*
- modal auxiliary: *CAN, COULD, MAY, MIGHT, MUST, SHALL, SHOULD, WILL, WOULD*
- lexical: *come, go; begin, end; raise, lower; advance, retreat*

The first and second types are *closed* classes, whereas the third is *open*, continually deriving new members, especially by *conversion* and *affixation*. See further under **derivation**; and **word class**, section 3.

In verb phrase construction, the first and second types of verb appear in conjunction with particular forms of the third type, as in:

I am coming we have come they can come he should come

In functional terms, both the modals and primary auxiliaries are auxiliary verbs for the main verb (“come”) in such clauses. However *main verb* has long been used to refer to the third type, and as a synonym for *lexical verb*.

Note that the primary auxiliaries can also occur as full lexical verbs (just like the third type) and license direct objects and subject complements, as in:

We have no answers yet. He was speechless.

The fact that auxiliary verbs also have roles as lexical verbs is one strand in the reanalysis of verbal syntax by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), who argue that there is no need to recognize auxiliary verbs as a separate category (see further under **BE** (as copular verb) and **HAVE**, section 4). Auxiliary verbs can then be reanalyzed as *catenative verbs*: see further under **catenative verb**, section 4.

3 Regular and irregular verbs

English **verbs** have traditionally been classified into *regular* and *irregular* types. Older names for the two were *weak* and *strong* verbs, reflecting their origins and distinctive forms in Old English and Old Germanic languages. The regular (weak) type makes use of a dental suffix /t/ or /d/ (not false teeth!) to form their past tense, as in *pack/packed, depart/departed*. The irregular (strong) type uses a variety of internal vowel changes as well as additions and changes to their stem consonants to mark the past tense and past participles: *sing/sang/sung, write/wrote/written*.

The number of *irregular verbs* has been steadily decreasing over the centuries, from an inventory of more than 300 in Old English to less than 70 in modern English (Fries 1940). There are now only remnants of the original seven irregular verb classes, and many members have gone or are going regular, one way or another, for example *strive* > *strived* (where once *strove* was used). The movements and trends vary slightly in different varieties of English, and in standard and informal usage (Peters 2009b). Meanwhile the number of *regular verbs* is continually increasing. See further under **regular verb** and **irregular verb**.

4 Verb inflections and syntax

- (i) The *base* form (i.e. the uninflected form) is the one in which English **verbs** are always cited. It is used for the infinitive (often prefaced by *TO*), and for several other finite parts of the verb, including the imperative, and most parts of the present tense:

<i>(to) have</i>	<i>Have a heart</i>	<i>I have, you have, we have</i>
<i>do</i>	<i>Do it well</i>	<i>I do, you do, we do</i>
<i>pack</i>	<i>Pack your bags</i>	<i>I pack, you pack, we pack</i>
<i>sing</i>	<i>Sing your loudest</i>	<i>I sing, you sing, we sing</i>

The verb *BE* is exceptional, in using the base form for the infinitive and imperative, but other (*suppletive*) forms for the present tense in standard modern English. See further under **suppletion and suppletive form**. Note that the base form is called the *plain* form by Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

Most English verbs vary in their form in accordance with their syntactic roles. All the primary auxiliaries and all lexical verbs take an *-s* inflection to agree with a third person singular subject for the present tense:

s/he has s/he does s/he packs s/he sings s/he writes

These *-s* forms fill out the present tense paradigm: see further under **present tense**. Only the modal verbs (*MAY, MIGHT*, etc.) lack the *-(e)s* inflection in their present tense.

- (ii) The **past tense** of all the primary auxiliaries and almost all lexical verbs is marked either by adding a dental suffix, and/or changing the vowel and or associated consonants of the stem.

is > was has > had does > did pack > packed sing > sang write > wrote

Exceptions to this pattern are the invariant irregular verbs whose stems already end in dental consonants, such as *cut, hit, rid, shut*.

For regular verbs, the dental suffix serves not only for the past tense, but also the past participle, active or passive. Compare

s/he packed s/he has packed the luggage was packed

But most irregular verbs use a differently inflected form for the past participle, see for example:

s/he sang s/he had sung the anthem was sung loudly

The past tense and forms of irregular verbs fall into a number of patterns. See under **irregular verb**, sections 4, 5, and 7–10.

- (iii) An **-ing** suffix is used on all primary auxiliaries and all lexical verbs to form the so-called “present” participle of the verb, as in:

being having cutting packing singing writing

In fact this *-ing* participle can be used to express either present or past actions in combination with finite forms of the auxiliary *BE*, as in:

The cake was being cut. S/he is packing her bags.

Thus the past or present reference of the *-ing* participle is expressed through the finite predicator (*was, is*), while the participle itself expresses the continuousness of the action and contributes to its **aspect** (see next section). Note that the modal verbs have no *-ing* forms.

In traditional grammar, the past form(s) of the verb and its base form were referred to as its **principal parts**, as with *pack/packed; write/wrote/written*. They were respectively **two-part verbs** and **three-part verbs**. The *-s* and *-ing* inflections were never included in the count, because both were derivable from the base form.

5 Tense, aspect, voice, mood, and modality

Verbs are the exponents of several dimensions of grammatical meaning within the verb phrase. *Tense* in the primary sense of present/past tense is expressed through the form of the finite verb, as shown in the previous section. But most of the other dimensions are expressed within the verb phrase.

- the **aspect** of the verb (continuous or perfect) is expressed through combinations of the auxiliary *BE* + present participle or the auxiliary *HAVE* + past participle. This is also treated as a **secondary tense** by some: see further under **aspect**.
- the **voice** of the verb (i.e. passive) is expressed through combinations of the auxiliary *BE* + past participle. The active voice is expressed through any other simple verb or verb phrase: see further under **voice (1)**, section 2.
- the **modality** of the verb (intention, obligation, etc.) is expressed through combinations of modal verbs + base form: see further under **modality and modal verb**.

Note that **mood** (i.e. present subjunctive) is expressed through the base form of the verb. The past subjunctive form exists now only in *were*. See further under **subjunctive**, section 2.

6 Semantic classification of lexical verbs

Apart from their formal groupings, English verbs seem to fall into loosely defined semantic groups, according to the particular type of action, process, or state they express. Attempts to classify them diverge considerably however. Working “top-down” there is the simple dichotomy of verbs into those that express **stative** meanings (e.g. *know*) and those with **dynamic** meanings (e.g. *learn*), although the dividing line is not clear-cut, and depends on the context of usage. Finer classifications developed “bottom-up” have tended to proliferate the number of semantic groups: more than eighty are identified by Quirk et al. (1985), while Huddleston and Pullum (2002) work with thirty-three such groups. The question then is how well they cover the full range of possibilities. Other grammars (Biber et al. 1999) work with a much smaller set of core semantic domains and eight associated verbal groups. They are, in order of relative frequency in the Longman corpus:

- activity (*bring, buy, carry, run*)
- communication (*ask, say, talk, tell*)
- mental (*expect, know, love, think*)
- causative (*allow, cause, enable, help*)
- simple occurrence (*change, develop, increase, occur*)
- existence (*live, stay*)
- relationship (*contain, include, represent*)
- aspectual (*begin, continue, start, stop*)

A somewhat similar set of verbal processes is used by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), six types in all:

material behavioral mental verbal relational existential

But the authors note that these are fuzzy categories, with many borderline cases.

One special semantic group recognized by all grammars is the *performative verb* or rather performative uses of verbs such as *apologize, grant, promise, pronounce*. These have a distinct pragmatic function as individual *speech acts*: see further under **performative verb**.

7 Transitivity and verb complementation

English verbs take a great variety of complements, according to their semantics and their inherent grammar. However these semantic and syntactic factors often help to predict the particular clause patterns they construct. Thus copular verbs with their existential and aspectual meanings appear in SVC clauses, while intransitive verbs tend to appear in SVA clauses. Verbs of giving are ditransitive, appearing in SVOO clauses, while verbs that involve the placement of objects are *complex transitives* appearing in SVOA clauses (see further under **transitivity**, section 4). But subject-driven active patterns can often be turned into passives or ergative constructions, with the arguments of the verb reconfigured. See further under **valency**, section 2; and **voice (1)**, section 3.

8 Catenative verbs

These have been recognized as a distinct class of verb only in the last three decades, though membership of the group is still somewhat fluid. Two types of catenative belonging to the core set are illustrated in the following:

They seem to like our approach.

She remembered putting the keys on the shelf.

As in those examples, catenatives forge links with nonfinite forms of other verbs, either in the form of *-ing* participles or *TO*-infinitives (not bare infinitives). See further under **catenative verb**, section 3.

9 Copular verbs (linking verbs)

The core member of this class of verbs is the verb *BE*, when used to link a subject with its complement, as in: *New Year's Day was sunny*. The term *copular verb* includes a variety of other linking verbs with slightly different functions, expressing either a current state (*seem*), the result of a process (*become*), or a sensory perception (*look*). See further under **copular verb**.

verb argument

See under **valency**, section 2.

verb complement clause

See under **noun-complement clause**.

verb phrase (VP)

- 1 a verb-headed unit
 - 2 finite verb/operator of a clause
 - 3 verb + complement
-

1 A verb-headed unit

The term **verb phrase** has been put to different uses in English grammar, but especially to describe a multiword unit headed by a verb. In traditional grammar it served to distinguish a simple finite verb such as *(it) finished* from more complex forms consisting of more than one element:

<i>is finished</i>	<i>was finishing</i>	<i>will finish</i>
<i>has been finished</i>	<i>could be finishing</i>	<i>had to finish</i>
<i>might have had to be finished</i>	<i>would have to be finishing</i>	

The verb phrase can thus include a modal verb and/or one or more auxiliary verbs before the lexical verb, which appears in one of its four nonfinite forms (past participle, *-ing* participle, and *TO*-infinitive or bare infinitive). These preceding modals and auxiliaries serve to attach grammatical meanings such as modality, aspect, and voice to the lexical verb and the whole verb phrase (see further under **verb**, section 5). But modern grammars also allow that a finite lexical verb such as *(it) finished* is a complete verb phrase.

Most grammarians regard the lexical verb as the head of the **verb phrase**, even when it follows dependent verbs which specify its grammatical meaning. In these respects the structure of the verb phrase is exactly like that of the noun phrase, where the head follows dependent elements such as determiners and adjectives, as noted by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) in their discussion of the **verbal group**, their term for the verb phrase. However Huddleston and Pullum (2002) argue for reinterpreting the verb phrase as being headed by its finite operator, with the nonfinite elements (any additional auxiliaries and the lexical verb itself) as subordinate elements. See further under **auxiliary verb**, section 7.

2 Finite verb/operator of a clause

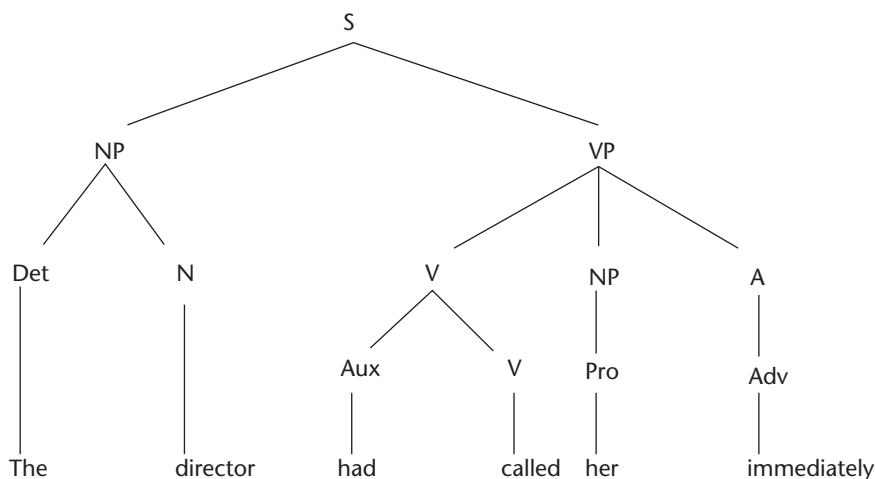
Although **verb phrases** like all those illustrated in the previous section are finite, modern grammars also recognize nonfinite verb phrases. Some nonfinite examples are underlined in the sentences below:

Having [just] been to Hong Kong, I am not ready to go there again next week.
The melody line was supposed to be played on the harp.

As shown in those examples, the nonfinite verb phrases may serve as compacted subordinate clauses, or as complements of adjectives or catenative verbs. See further under **clause**, section 5; and **catenative verb**, section 2.

3 Verb + complement

In transformational–generative grammar (TG), **verb phrase** is used to refer not only to the finite verb (simple or complex) but to its complement(s) as well, i.e. objects and or associated adjuncts. In the conventional analysis, the verb phrase then complements the subject noun phrase, as the key elements of the clause/sentence. The two (NP and VP) are shown in the tree diagram below.



In this TG use of **verb phrase**, the term comes close to meaning the same as the traditional term *predicate* (see **clause**, section 1).

With these various applications in different grammatical theories, the meaning of the term **verb phrase** clearly needs to be put on the table at the start of a grammatical discussion.

verbal group

This is the term used in Hallidayan grammar for the verb phrase as a syntactic unit: see **verb phrase**, section 1.

verbal noun

See under **gerund**.

verbal style

See under **nominal and verbal style**.

verb-complement clause

See under **noun-complement clause**.

virgule

This is an older term found in the US for the punctuation mark now known elsewhere as the **slash**. See further under that heading.

vocative

See under **case**, section 1.

voice (1)

- 1 the grammatical concept of voice
 - 2 active and passive voice in English
 - 3 middle voice (mediopassive)
 - 4 voice and valency
-

1 The grammatical concept of voice

Voice is a term and concept inherited from the grammar of classical languages. There it referred to alternative paradigms of inflections for verbs, which set the relationship between the verb and its subject, whether it was active or passive.

2 Active and passive voice

These are expressed in English grammar through different types of clause structure:

The local mayor had introduced the guest speaker. (active voice)

The guest speaker was introduced by the local mayor. (passive voice)

The passive voice is distinguished by having a verb phrase that contains a part of the auxiliary verb *BE* (“was”) and the past participle of the main verb (“introduced”). This structure makes the subject the *patient* of the action (see further under **case grammar**). Compare the active version in which the subject is the agent of the verb. Thus the **voice** sets up both semantic and syntactic relationships through the formulation of the verb phrase. See further under **passive voice**, section 1.

The **active voice** can be expressed through multiple forms of the verb phrase:

- simple tense forms, present or past: *introduce, introduced*
- present subjunctive (= mandative): [*suggest that he*] *introduce*
- compound verb forms expressing aspect: *is introducing, has introduced*
- compound verb forms expressing modality: *can/might/should/will introduce*

In all these forms and the variants of the auxiliaries and modals, the subject of the verb remains the agent. See further under **mandative subjunctive**; and **modality and modal verb**, section 1.

3 Middle voice (mediopassive)

In classical grammars a middle voice or *mediopassive* construction was recognized along with the active and passive. It has not attracted much attention in English until recently, but can be seen in everyday examples like:

The kettle boiled. *This hotel is renovating.*

In both examples the form of the verb phrase is active but the semantic relationship between the subject and verb is passive. Some commentators distinguish between two types of middle voice in English: see further under **middle construction** and **mediopassive**.

4 Voice and valency

The traditional grammar concept of **voice** highlights the way in which many clauses may be expressed as active or passive. The ease of this transformation made it one of the basic rules of transformational grammar, and a central plank in other grammars for analyzing the underlying grammatical structure. In systemic–functional grammar (Halliday 1985) it was built into a flexible understanding of transitivity as the primary focus of the clause, according particular roles to the various *participants* (see further under

participant). It has since led Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to an alternative analysis of the ergativity underlying English grammar.

Meanwhile further analysis of transitivity in the traditional sense, i.e. verb complementation for monotransitive, ditransitive, and complex transitive verbs, has been extended into the concept of verb **valency** (Allerton 1982; Levin 1993). See further under **valency**, section 3.

For the *agentless passive*, *get-passive*, and *prepositional passive*, see under **passive voice**.

voice (2)

The phonological concept of **voice** is a fundamental property of sounds: whether or not they are accompanied by vibration of the vocal cords. All vowel sounds are produced with vocal cord vibration, whereas consonant sounds vary. The English consonant inventory includes a number of pairs, one of which is **voiced** (the first row below) and the other **unvoiced** or **voiceless** (the second row):

/b/	/d/	/g/	“dg”	“th” as in “then”	/v/	/z/
/p/	/t/	/k/	“ch”	“th” as in “thin”	/f/	/s/

Other voiced consonants of English with no unvoiced counterparts are:

/j/	/l/	/m/	/n/	“ng”	/r/	/w/
-----	-----	-----	-----	------	-----	-----

The one other unvoiced consonant is /h/.

The presence/absence of **voicing** has impacted on the spelling of the past tense inflection of English verbs over the course of history, which is visible in cases like *build/built*, *send/sent*. However in many cases spelled with *-d* or *-ed*, the difference affects only the pronunciation, not the spelling. See further under **regular verb**, section 2.

volition

This term is used as an alternative to **intention** by some grammarians in the analysis of the meanings of modal verbs. See further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3.

VP

See **verb phrase**.

W

WE and US

- 1 morphology of *WE/US*
 - 2 exclusive and inclusive uses of *WE*
 - 3 specialized inclusive uses of *WE/US*
-

1 Morphology of *WE/US*

These are the two common forms of the English first person plural pronoun: nominative *WE* and accusative or dative *US*:

We'll be able to call you rather than have you call us or send us a text message.

↑ (nominative – subject) ↗ (accusative – direct object) ↑ (dative – indirect object)

For more on the *nominative* and other grammatical cases, see under **personal pronoun**, section 4.

Note that *OUR*, the possessive form of *WE/US*, is discussed under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3. For *OURS*, the independent possessive pronoun, see under **possessive pronoun**.

2 Exclusive and inclusive uses of *WE*

In the example above, *WE/US* is used *exclusively*, to signal the separateness of the speakers and listeners in the dialogue. The first person plural pronoun is nevertheless often used *inclusively*, as when the director of the company or the leader of the government says:

We must all be prepared to make savings.

In such cases, the speaker is presumably undertaking to participate in the cost-cutting exercise while putting much of the burden on the listeners. The same is true of the broadcaster who asks the journalist in the field:

What do we know about the resources of the insurgents?

Here “we” includes not only the journalist supplying the information and the broadcaster who is thus instantly informed, but also the vast unseen audience – the “global media.”

3 Specialized inclusive uses of *WE/US*

These include:

- **“Medical” WE:** In the contexts of medicine and health care, the use of *WE* by the person in authority is often not as inclusive as it sounds, as when a doctor says to the patient:

We should try walking a few more steps each day.

This “medical” *WE* (Wales 1996) is rather like covert second-person reference (equivalent to *YOU*). Yet the doctor’s use of *WE* suggests taking some responsibility for the action, and to that extent is inclusive use of the first person.

- **“Royal” *WE*:** The so-called “royal” *WE* is often explained as the monarch’s projection of his/her role as head of government and spokesperson for its position. The *WE* used in a royal statement is also a way of including the advisers and consultants who have contributed to it. But when the contents of the statement are personal (as in “we are not amused,” allegedly said by Queen Victoria), the royal *WE* becomes a thinly veiled *I*. This covert singular usage of *WE* becomes the more notorious on the lips of non-royal speakers, e.g. the former British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher – although she too had to make statements on behalf of her government.
- **“Authorial” *WE*:** Another inclusive use of *WE* is often found in expository texts announcing to readers what is to come:

In chapter 2 we will lay the theoretical groundwork ...

And when seeking closer engagement with readers:

Let us consider the possibility that they are false negatives ...

A quite different, exclusive use of *WE* is sometimes found in academic writing, when a single author uses the pronoun to refer to his or her own research activity:

We found that there were no false negatives, only false positives.

Some find this use of the plural pronoun reprehensible, as if the writer is appropriating the “royal” *WE*. It nevertheless helps a writer who wishes to avoid using the vertical pronoun (*I*) too often and making the text sound too egocentric. When there are multiple authors, the use of *WE* is perfectly legitimate.

- **“Generic” *WE*:** Some rhetorical uses of *WE/US* leave it quite open as to who is included in the reference. Compare:

We farmed in the southern hemisphere as if it were the northern hemisphere.

We now know that the earth moves around the sun.

The reference group for *WE* in cases like these includes *YOU* and *I*, but many more as well. In the first example it might include the nation, e.g. Great Britain/Australia as well other European colonialists. In the second, the reach of *WE* could be far greater – to include every scientifically informed culture. The indeterminacy of *WE* doesn’t affect the main proposition, but is simply a way of projecting it in more personal terms.

- **“Allusive” *WE*:** In very specific contexts, *WE* can be used to denote a third party, not either you or I. It does however rely on our shared knowledge of that party. This is the stereotypical comment between members of the same office about the boss’s uptight behavior:

We are in a bad mood today.

This oblique use of *WE* for a third party referent is paradoxical, seeming to separate and exclude the referent (moody person) from the otherwise inclusive

WE applying to members of the group. It manages to incorporate all three persons in the first person plural pronoun.

WERE-subjunctive

This is the only surviving form of the past subjunctive to be found in modern English. See further under **subjunctive**, section 2.

wh-cleft

See under **pseudo-cleft sentence**.

wh-question and wh-interrogative

See under **question**, section 2.

wh-word

This term includes the set of relative and interrogative pronouns/determiners, adverbs and adverbial subordinators beginning with *wh-*, i.e.

what when where which who whom whose why

HOW is usually included in the **wh-word** set, because of its similar role as an interrogative pronoun and adverbial subordinator. See further under **complementizer**, section 1; and **interrogative pronoun**.

WHAT

- 1 **WHAT as pronoun or determiner in direct questions**
- 2 **WHAT as subordinator/pronoun in indirect questions**
- 3 **WHAT in nominal relative clauses**
- 4 **WHAT in exclamations**
- 5 **WHAT vs. WHICH as determiners**
- 6 **WHAT as substitute word**
- 7 **redundant WHAT**

WHAT doubles as a pronoun and determiner in interrogative and relative clauses of various kinds, and in syntactic structures which have challenged grammatical analysis.

1 **WHAT as pronoun or determiner in direct questions**

The most prominent use of *WHAT* is its sentence-initial appearances as pronoun and determiner in direct questions. For example:

What would you like? (pronoun)

What food will we bring? (determiner)

While *WHAT* in the first sentence above is the object of the clause, it can also serve as the clausal subject, as in:

What is her name? What are your plans?

In those two examples, the contrasting singular and plural verbs anticipate the number of the following NP, which complements the pronoun *WHAT*. This illustrates the fact that *WHAT* itself is neutral as to grammatical number, and

its agreement with the verb is determined by the NP that follows: see further under **number transparency**.

2 **WHAT as subordinator/pronoun in indirect questions**

In indirect questions *WHAT* serves the dual function of subordinator and pronoun subject, object or other NP role in the complementary clause, depending on its structure. For example:

We meant to ask what was in the parcel. (subject)

We meant to ask what the parcel contained. (object)

See further under **indirect question**.

3 **WHAT in nominal relative clauses**

A similar-looking use of *WHAT* is its role as complementizer/relative pronoun in **nominal relative** or **wh-relative** clauses. For example:

I won't forget what you said.

What you said was unforgettable.

The second example illustrates the role of *WHAT* in the **pseudo-cleft sentence**, a grammaticalized use of the nominal relative clause. Note that the verb of the main clause in a pseudo-cleft sentence may be singular or plural depending on its complement. See further under **pseudo-cleft sentence**, section 4.

4 **WHAT in exclamations**

An NP beginning with *WHAT* (*A*) is one of the two types of **exclamative syntax** used to formulate exclamations, as in:

What great days we had!

What an amazing plan!

See further under **exclamative**.

5 **WHAT vs. WHICH as determiners**

As an interrogative determiner in direct questions, *WHAT* seems interchangeable with *WHICH*, as in:

What train will you catch back?

Which train will you catch back?

Some suggest that *WHAT* simply asks for a decision, whereas *WHICH* allows a selection from some alternatives (Quirk et al. 1985); yet the perlocutionary effect is the same. See further under **illocutionary force**.

As the relative determiner, *WHAT* clearly cannot be interchanged with *WHICH*, witness:

They survived on what food they could find in the nearby forest.

They survived on which food ...???

Note that while both *WHAT* and *WHICH* are central determiners, only *WHAT* can appear as a **predeterminer**, in declarative and exclamative clauses:

They knew what a good man he was.

What a great day we had!

6 WHAT as substitute word

WHAT appears as a substitute for one or more words in echo questions, as in:

I wouldn't go there. > You wouldn't what?

See further under **pro-form**.

7 Redundant WHAT

In impromptu speech, WHAT sometimes appears superfluously in comparative clauses following *than*:

The pizza arrived sooner than what I expected.

This seems to reflect the ambivalence of *THAN* as preposition and subordinator: see further under **THAN**.

WHETHER

This subordinator introduces interrogative content clauses, as in *We asked whether she could come* (see further under **subordinator**, section 1).

WHETHER combines with *OR* as a pair of **correlative subordinators** in conditional-concessive clauses. See further under **conjunction**, section 5.

WHICH

In modern English, WHICH has become the relative/interrogative pronoun and determiner for all nonhuman referents. It is applied to objects, abstract concepts, animals, and plants. For example:

I don't know which hat to buy.

Which suits your complexion best?

I must decide which horse to ride.

Which has the easiest gait for a beginner?

WHICH is one of the central determiners: it can be followed by numerals, as in:

Which two scenes did you enjoy most?

See further under **determiner**, section 3.

As a pronoun, WHICH contrasts with *WHO*, in that the latter refers to human beings, and is marked for case (nominative *WHO*, accusative/dative *WHOM*), whereas WHICH is invariant (see further under **pronoun**, section 4).

Yet WHICH varies with *WHO* as the relative pronoun referring to corporations:

I would work for any company which pays me well.

I would work for any company who appreciate(s) my creativity.

The examples show how "company" as an economic unit attracts WHICH, while as a human organization it allows WHO, and singular or plural agreement, like other collective nouns: see further under **agreement**, section 5.

- For the choice between *OF WHICH* and *WHOSE*, see under **WHOSE**.
- For the choice between WHICH and WHAT, see under **WHAT**, section 4.
- For the use of WHICH and THAT as relative pronouns in **restrictive** and **nonrestrictive relative clauses**, see **relative pronoun**, section 3, and **relative clause**, section 3.

- For the use of *WHICH* in *sentence relatives/sentence relative clauses*, see under **relative clause**, section 4.

WHILE

The core business of this subordinator is expressing time relations, as in:

He bought a radio while she was browsing in the antique shop.

But with just a slight change, a sense of contrast is added in, as in:

He bought a radio, while she browsed in the antique shop.

WHILE can also carry a concessive sense, as in:

While they enjoyed the holiday, they thought it was over-priced.

Apart from prefacing those various kinds of adverbial clause, *WHILE* very occasionally takes on the role of a *wh*-adverb:

We discovered it in the years while we were away.

See further under **subordinator**, section 1; **adverbial clause**, section 1; and **relative adverb**.

WHO and WHOM

As relative and interrogative pronouns, *WHO* and *WHOM* are both human in reference, contrasting with *WHICH*, which refers to anything nonhuman, animal, vegetable, abstract, or concrete.

WHO is the nominative form, substituting for a subject NP, as in:

Who are you?

I wondered who would come next.

WHOM is the accusative/dative form, substituting for an NP object of the verb or a preposition:

Whom did you appoint?

We didn't know whom to expect.

To whom did you send the letter?

They gave it to the man to whom it was addressed.

These uses of *WHOM* are nowadays considered rather formal style. In everyday discourse *WHO* would replace *WHOM* in the first three sentences, along with displacement (i.e. **stranding**) of the preposition in the third sentence to the end:

Who did you send the letter to?

In the fourth example, the *WHOM* would probably be omitted, and the preposition again stranded:

They gave it to the man it was addressed to.

See further under **stranded preposition**.

The replacement of interrogative *WHOM* by *WHO* in direct questions (e.g. *Who did you appoint?*) probably reflects the fact that the pronoun is in **subject territory**, which in normal declarative clause order would be occupied by the verb's subject, and by a pronoun in the nominative case. The choice

between *WHO* and *WHOM* remains debatable in a sentence where it heads a parenthetical subordinate clause, as in:

They asked me who(m) I thought was best suited to the task.

The dilemma results from the fact that the relative pronoun could be interpreted as the object of the parenthetical clause (underlined) and/or the subject of the complement clause.

WHOSE

This is the possessive form of *WHO/WHOM* as interrogative pronoun and determiner, as in:

Whose is this computer?

Whose house are we going to?

In this prominent position *WHOSE* is very clearly human in its reference. The same is true when it is used as the relative pronoun in a nominal relative clause:

We talked about responsibility and discussed whose it should be.

But when used as determiner in an ordinary relative clause, *WHOSE* can have either a human or nonhuman referent, as in:

This is the book whose cover is so glamorous.

Despite the persistent idea that *WHOSE* as relativizer should not be used with inanimates, there is substantial counterevidence in the *Longman Grammar* corpus. In academic prose, 75% of the instances of *WHOSE* were used to modify inanimate nouns, while 25% of those in news writing referred to corporations and other collective bodies rather than people (Biber et al. 1999).

In formal writing, those wishing to avoid *WHOSE* with inanimates make use of *OF WHICH*, the so-called *pie-d-piping* construction (see further under **pie-d-piping**). In informal speech some resort to *that's*, as in *I bought the book that's cover is so glamorous.*

WILL and SHALL

- 1 historical convergence of *WILL* and *SHALL*
- 2 current functions of *WILL*
- 3 distinctive roles for *SHALL*
- 4 relationship between *WILL/SHALL* and *WOULD/SHOULD*

1 Historical convergence of *WILL* and *SHALL*

While the forms of these two verbs show their separate origins (*WILL* as a verb of volition, *SHALL* as a verb expressing obligation and necessity), by early modern English they had largely converged in expressing futurity in its intentional and predictive aspects. The coexistence of the two verbs prompted C17 grammarian John Wallis, in his *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* (1653), to assign them complementary roles in the personal pronoun paradigm, as shown below:

1st person (<i>I, we</i>)	<i>will</i> (prediction)	<i>shall</i> (intention)
2nd person (<i>you</i>)	<i>will</i> (intention)	<i>shall</i> (prediction)
3rd person (<i>he/she/they</i>)	<i>will</i> (intention)	<i>shall</i> (prediction)

This system was proposed for declarative sentences, with reversals of it for each person in interrogative sentences. It was taught as the English future tense for 250 years, though it was never in line with the evidence of usage, as Fries (1925) was able to show on the basis of a corpus of English drama from C17 on. The idea that the meaning of modal verbs varies with the grammatical person is nevertheless recognized by modern grammarians: see under **modality and modal verb**, section 4.

2 Current functions of WILL

In C20 English, *WILL* very largely took over from *SHALL* the role of expressing futurity, both as prediction and intention, i.e. its epistemic use, as in *They'll be there by now*. Evidence from the *Longman Grammar* corpus shows *WILL* is far more common in all registers and in both spoken and written discourse. This includes instances of the contraction 'LL, as is proper since they can scarcely be contractions of *SHALL* for phonetic reasons. Perhaps this overwhelming trend reflects the greater force/strength of *WILL* in comparison with *SHALL*: see **modality and modal verb**, section 3 (table).

When the evidence of questions is factored in, the dominance of *WILL* is confirmed. More than 97% of questions asked with the second and third persons used *WILL*, in evidence from the British National Corpus (Peters 2004). Only with first person questions was *SHALL* found in abundance. This is the one point at which Wallis's rules seem to have prevailed, at least in the UK (see section 1 above). With the second and third person questions, *WILL* is overwhelmingly preferred.

3 Distinctive roles for SHALL

The marked role of *SHALL* in first person questions, as in

Shall we dance? Shall I try to resolve the issue?

seems to convey a strong sense of politeness. If *WILL* is substituted, the questions seem more neutral in their overtones.

The other distinctive role for *SHALL* is in third person singular declarative statements in legal documents, e.g.

The Directors shall file a report on Company finances twice a year.

This is the regulatory language of the law, where *SHALL* still carries its intrinsic modal sense of obligation and necessity. *WILL* is also sometimes used this way, in emphatic statements like: *You will do your homework before going out to play*, said by the more powerful person to the less powerful one in a dyad. Needless to say, this is not a legal statement.

4 Relationship between WILL/SHALL and WOULD/SHOULD

Historically *WOULD* and *SHOULD* were the past tenses of *WILL* and *SHALL*. This is now only a minor aspect of their use: see further under **WOULD and SHOULD**, section 1.

WITH

This is one of the highly grammaticized prepositions of English, used to express instrumentality, as in *opened it with a screwdriver*. It also serves as the particle in a

variety of phrasal and prepositional verbs. See further under **preposition**, section 1; and **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**.

word

- 1 words as orthographic units
 - 2 words, compounds, and acronyms
 - 3 variant word forms and lexemes
 - 4 homonymic pairs and sets of words
 - 5 lexical and functional (“grammatical”) words
 - 6 simple, complex, and compound words
-

1 Words as orthographic units

At first sight, words are easily identified as the minimal unit of written English, i.e. strings of letters bounded by space. Yet the spaces between words are an artifact of the written medium. In spoken English strings of words are joined up in a continuous flow – which is why those who speak every word separately sound like daleks or science-fiction characters with machine-generated speech. So our notion of the individual **word** is very much related to reading them as separate units on the printed page.

2 Words, compounds, and acronyms

Even the written **word** presents some problems of definition. For example, are *ice-cream* and *editor-in-chief* to be regarded as single words? By using hyphens to link their components, we imply that they are single lexical units. But what if they appear with spaces rather than hyphens between their components? This entails the question of whether a compound consisting of two or more separable words should be regarded as a word, even if it is hyphenated together as a single unit (see further under **compound word**, section 1). A similar issue arises with acronyms and especially initialisms, such as *DVD*, *HIV*, and *UFO*, whose compound nature is clear when each letter is pronounced as a separate syllable. Both compounds and acronyms/initialisms are like multiword units in their construction. But while the combination of elements in compounds is semantically motivated, the elements in other multiword lexical units are mostly bound together by collocation: see further under **multiword lexical unit**.

3 Variant word forms and lexemes

A different theoretical question is raised by closely related **words** which vary slightly in form, such as *berry* and *berries*, or *take*, *took*, and *taken*. Are they different words, or simply alternative forms of the same word? Grammarians and linguists see them as inflected forms belonging to the same **lemma** or **lexeme**, which bypasses the difficulty of referring to them as alternative forms of the same word (see further under **inflection** and **lexeme**). In computer programs they are treated as independent word forms.

4 Homonymic pairs and sets of words

Questions of identity are also posed by **words** which are identical in form but independent in meaning (and origin), such as *light* “source of illumination” and *light* “not heavy.” In cases of **homonyms** like those, linguists and dictionary-makers treat them as separate words because of their very distinct meanings and historical independence. English contains a surprising number of pairs of homonyms, as well homonymic sets of three or more words, e.g. *mean* (= adjective “stingy,” noun “average,” verb “intend to say”). See further under **homonym**.

5 Lexical and functional (“grammatical”) words

In the grammar of English, **words** fall into two broad types: lexical and functional. Broadly speaking **lexical words** are the nouns, adjectives, lexical verbs, and adverbs which supply the information content of sentences (which is why they are sometimes called **content words**). **Functional words** are the auxiliary verbs, pronouns, determiners, prepositions, and conjunctions which express the grammatical relationships between words, in keeping with their alternative name “grammatical words.” (See further under **word class**, section 3.) Lexical words usually consist of a minimum of three letters (*go*, *ox*, *ax* are the chief exceptions). Meanwhile functional words may consist of just two letters, e.g. prepositions such as *AT*, *BY*, *IN*, *ON*, *TO*; pronouns such as *HE*, *IT*, *ME*, *US*; and parts of auxiliary verbs such as *BE* and *DO*. The vertical pronoun *I* and the determiner/article *A* consist of one letter only.

6 Simple, complex, and compound words

Words differ in their internal structure, and can consist of one or more morphemes, and morphemes of different types (see further under **morpheme**).

- **Simple words** consist of one morpheme only, and are **monomorphemic**, e.g. *flat*, *house*, *residence*.
- **Complex words** consist of one free plus one bound morpheme (the latter being either an inflection or derivational affix), e.g. *flatter*, *housed*, *residency*. See further under **affixation**.
- **Compound words** consist of at least two free morphemes/bases, or two bound (neoclassical) bases, for example *blackboard*, *snowball*, *paleography*, *telemetry*. See further under **compound word** and **neoclassical compound**.

Note that some words are both compound and complex, as in *house-mates*, *snowballed*, where the compound base takes the inflections of the word class it belongs to.

word class

- 1 traditional word classes
 - 2 word classes in modern English grammars
 - 3 open and closed word classes
 - 4 movements between individual word classes
-

1 Traditional word classes

The traditional classification of English words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. can be traced back to classical times when they were used in describing the lexicon of Greek and Latin. The original **word classes** or *parts of speech*, as they were called, were eight in number:

<i>noun</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>adverb</i>
<i>pronoun</i>	<i>preposition</i>	<i>conjunction</i>	<i>interjection</i>

These word classes were taken over by English grammarians from the C17 on, with one addition – that of **article**, consisting of the *definite* and *indefinite* subtypes (*THE* and *A/AN*). These nine word classes have also been perpetuated until recently through English dictionaries.

2 Word classes in modern English grammars

C20 grammarians progressively reanalyzed the appropriateness of the traditional **word classes** for the English language. Several kinds of update can be found in Quirk et al. (1985), involving both additional word classes, and mergers between them. Thus three major types of verb are distinguished, according to their roles within the verb phrase:

- **auxiliary verb** (*BE, HAVE, DO*), also called **primary** verbs
- **modal verb** (*CAN, MAY, MIGHT*, etc.)
- **full verb** (*see, walk, depart, conceive*, etc.), also called **main** verbs

Other minor types are the **copular verb** (*seem, look*, etc.) and the **catenative** (*begin to, fail to*, etc.): see further under **verb**, sections 8 and 9.

Meanwhile the minor traditional class of **articles** is subsumed into the larger class of **determiner**, where they are grouped with the numerous other words which can also be used to introduce a noun phrase, such as *EVERY, MANY, NO* (see further under **determiner**, section 1). All up, the set of word classes in the *Comprehensive Grammar* (Quirk et al. 1985) includes:

<i>noun</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>adverb</i>	<i>full verb</i>	<i>modal verb</i>
<i>primary verb</i>	<i>determiner</i>	<i>preposition</i>	<i>pronoun</i>	<i>conjunction</i>

There are also two minor classes: **numerals**, **interjections**, and the term **particle** is used to refer to words belonging to both adverb and preposition classes, which are a key element of **phrasal** and **prepositional verbs** (see further under **phrasal verb and prepositional verb**, section 1).

Later grammars such as Biber et al. (1999) take on all those additional **word classes**, and add others. Its authors reanalyze the conjunction word class beyond the traditional breakdown into **coordinating** and **subordinating conjunctions**, so that the latter are differentiated into **subordinators**, **complementizers**, and **relativizers** (*wh-words*), according to the types of clause they introduce (see **complementizer**, **relativizer**, **subordinator**). The interjection word class is rechristened **inserts** and substantially expanded beyond emotive noises such as “Ouch,” “Heavens,” to include reaction signals such as “yes,” “uhhuh,” “well,” and formulaic discourse units such as “Good

morning,” “Of course” (see further under **interjection**). Biber et al. (1999), like Quirk et al., make use of the term *particle*, and they identify some additional one-off word classes: the negator *NO*, existential *THERE*, and the infinitive marker *TO*. All have very specialized syntactic roles which make them difficult to classify. By the same token, making them the sole member of a word class is also less than ideal.

Other adjustments to the traditional **word class** inventory are proposed in the Huddleston and Pullum (2002). One is that there is no separate class for pronouns. Instead they are included within the word class of nouns, on the grounds that they function as the head of a noun phrase. The *Cambridge Grammar's* set of word classes includes:

<i>noun</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>adverb</i>	<i>preposition</i>
<i>determinative</i>	<i>subordinator</i>	<i>coordinator</i>	<i>interjection</i>	

As the list shows, the traditional conjunction class is subdivided into coordinators and subordinators, but the latter class has far fewer members than in earlier grammars. This is because all those subordinators which also serve as prepositions (e.g. *SINCE* as in *since you were last here* and *since last time*) are treated simply as prepositions. See further under **subordinator**, section 1.

Word classes in Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) are conceived as outshoots of three underlying functions of words (nominal, verbal, adverbial), which are expressed in English grammar as eight different classes:

nominal:	<i>noun (includes pronoun)</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>numeral</i>	<i>determiner</i>
verbal:	<i>verb</i>	<i>preposition</i>		
adverbial:	<i>adverb</i>	<i>conjunction</i>		

In the Hallidayan view, prepositions may be grouped with verbs on the grounds that they represent a kind of verbal process and a “minor predicator.” Conjunctions are grouped with adverbs by virtue of the overlapping semantic and logical relations they express. See further under **conjunct**; and **adverb**, section 3.

All this updating of the inventory of English word classes reflects the greater use of syntax in determining their scope and membership, their larger semantic functions, and also the now greater interest in the grammar of discourse.

3 **Open and closed word classes**

The English **word classes** can be broadly grouped into open and closed classes, according to whether their members form more or less restricted sets. The closed classes with very restricted memberships are pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, numerals – words with inherent grammatical roles in relation to the syntax of the phrase, clause, and sentence. This is why they are sometimes called the *grammatical* or *functional* word classes. The open or *lexical* word classes include nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs (excluding the auxiliary or modal verbs). These classes are continually expanding with new coinings, in response to linguistic and cultural need. The class of interjections

was formerly regarded as closed, but its enlargement under the heading of *inserts* to include a variety of *discourse markers* makes it increasingly open-ended (see above, section 2).

Other closed word classes accept new members through the *grammaticalization* of open class words into new syntactic roles. This is most evident in the various kinds of adverbial which have taken on additional roles as subordinating conjunctions, including *however, once, directly, immediately* (see further under **subordinator**, section 3). The grammaticalization of complex prepositions, such as *in terms of*, and of complex subordinators such as *in case* are further examples. See further under **grammaticalization**.

4 Movements between individual word classes

Classifying words into **word classes** might seem to suggest that they are permanently attached to a particular class with fixed grammatical functions. In fact many English words operate as members of more than one class, as dictionaries make very clear. The word *like* can be used as a verb, noun, adjective, preposition, subordinating conjunction, as well as a mobile discourse marker (see further under **LIKE**). Many English words have expanded their grammatical roles over the course of time, and continue to do so. It is therefore more apt to think of word class membership as indicating the grammatical functions which a word may perform, rather than a set of pigeonholes to which they belong as individuals. Many English nouns can be used as verbs, and vice versa. The adaptability of English words from one grammatical function to another has been a feature of the language since Shakespearean times. See further under **conversion**, section 3.

word formation

- 1 derivational processes
 - 2 loanwords from languages other than English
 - 3 applications of proper nouns
 - 4 strategic or spontaneous creations
-

1 Derivational processes

The term **word formation** refers to the various ways in which new words are added to the English language. It includes the various derivational processes by which new words are formed, e.g. *affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, semantic extension, conversion*. In all of these cases, new words are created out of one or more existing words in the common language. See further under **derivation**, section 3.

2 Loanwords from languages other than English

Relatively small numbers of new words come from sources other than internal derivation. Some are loanwords from languages other than English, for example those associated with the colonial era and the expansion of English-speaking settlements in the Americas (*barbecue*), Africa (*impala*), India (*suttee*), Australia

(*boomerang*), and New Zealand (*haka*). Other borrowings simply reflect contacts with foreign cultures, e.g. Italian architecture (*loggia*, *patio*), French cuisine (*jus*, *quiche*), Japanese entertainments (*karaoke*, *ninja*). Such words are often different in their sound and form from any English word, and they undergo assimilation to the norms of English over the course of time. See **assimilation of loanwords**.

3 **Applications of proper nouns**

A small number of new English words are general uses of proper nouns, and therefore not strictly derived from the common language. Placenames can become the common name for particular objects, e.g. *cheddar* for a hard variety of cheese (from the name of a town in the south west of England), and *burgundy* for a red wine produced in the Burgundy region in southeastern France. Not to mention *currants*, originally “(raisins de) Corinth” (a town in Greece), and *denim* for the cloth exported from *Nîmes*, a town in the south of France. The surnames of inventors often become the byword for the object or system they create, e.g. *boycott*, *braille*, *diesel*, *leotard*, *sandwich*. See further under **eponym**.

4 **Strategic or spontaneous creations**

These are the least common source of new words. Very rarely does an original coining, such as a brandname or trademark, develop by widespread usage into a household word. Most examples owe something to other words of the English language, and do indeed need to if they are to carry marketable connotations. Even the much-cited example of *nylon* seems to owe its second syllable to an existing word for another artificial fibre: *rayon*. The most clearly “manufactured” words are to be found in slang, e.g. *scag* for “heroin” – items which seem to be forged by the speech community out of nowhere. Other seemingly spontaneous words are imitative ones with quite long histories in the English-speaking community, such as *plop*, *squish*, *woof*. They have no etymological precursors in English, but their phonological sequences construct syllables which seem to reflect the natural sound they refer to (see further under **phonestheme**). Other spontaneous creations which seem to be phonologically motivated are those types of reduplicatives made up of pairs of “nonsense” words, e.g. *fuddy-duddy*, *helter-skelter*, *shilly-shally*. They presumably owe their currency to the appeal of their rhyming effects: see further under **reduplicative**.

word order

See under **clausal order**.

word space

In the setting of words, word space has always been a punctuator in marking word boundaries in a line of writing, and showing their status as lexical units. But in compound words and phrases, word space can also be used internally as an alternative to the hyphen or no space at all, depending on whether the boundary between the component morphemes needs to be marked. This may be important to prevent misreading, as in the case of *under age*. On the other

hand, the interconnection between the two elements of the compound may rely on their semantic unity and continual juxtaposition in an NP, as with *first person narrative*. Such compounds do not normally need to be linked by means of a hyphen or solid setting (see further under **compound word**, section 1). Yet if any compound is susceptible to misreading in a given syntactic context, it may be useful to add a hyphen. Compare:

In the author's first person narrative voice, she ...

In the author's first-person narrative voice, she ...

As the example shows, the choice between using word space and hyphen is crucial within the adjectival phrase when there are multiple premodifiers of the noun. This is why adjectival compounds consisting of an uninflected adverb are normally hyphenated, as in *a well-known author, a less-studied text*, though they need no hyphen when used as predicative complements:

The author is well known. This text is less studied.

In those sentences, “well known” and “less studied” display their ordinary syntactic roles as the adverb and past participle of the verb, and there is none of the ambiguity that can occur when they are rank-shifted into adjectival phrases in attributive position (i.e. premodifying the noun head). See further under **adjective**, section 5.

WOULD and SHOULD

- 1 use of **WOULD** and **SHOULD** in expressing past tense
- 2 modal meanings for **WOULD** and **SHOULD**
- 3 expressing politeness

1 Use of **WOULD** and **SHOULD** in expressing past tense

These two were originally the past forms of *WILL* and *SHALL* respectively, used to express futurity from a past perspective. They are still used that way in complex sentences where the verb tenses are matched according to the principles of reported speech and the so-called *sequence of tenses* (see further under **sequence of tenses**). Compare the use of *WILL* and *WOULD* in:

They are going by bus if I will do the same.

They said they were going by bus if I would do the same.

And *SHALL* and *SHOULD* in:

It doesn't matter if we shall never go that way again.

I said it didn't matter if we should never go that way again.

The use of “said” in the second sentence in each pair prompts the backshifting of verbs in both subordinate clauses into the past tense, and so *WOULD* rather than *WILL*, and *SHOULD* rather than *SHALL* appear in the open condition. This use of *WOULD* and *SHOULD* to express past tense is preserved in rather formal styles of writing. But in everyday discourse, *WOULD* and *SHOULD* have acquired independent meanings expressing different types of modality.

2 Modal meanings for **WOULD** and **SHOULD**

In present-day English, there are substantial differences between *WOULD* and *SHOULD*, which are most obvious when we compare them with *WILL* and *SHALL*. When used in a main clause, there's a modal overlay of meaning for *WOULD*, adding complexity to the sense of futurity. Compare:

You will go to the ball tonight.

with

You would go to the ball.

Where *WILL* remains a simple statement about what's on the agenda, *WOULD* no longer serves to state or predict the future, but takes on other shades of meaning. With an *IF*-clause following, it becomes more tentative and conditional. When the subject is first person, it typically expresses a weaker volitional meaning or inclination. Note also that *WOULD* could express a habitual meaning in such a clause, especially when a temporal context is specified or implied:

You would go to the ball when you were in your teens.

The meaning of *WOULD* is thus very susceptible to the linguistic context (see further under **modality and modal verb**, section 3).

The divergence in modal meaning between *WOULD* and *SHOULD* shows up even more strongly when we compare *SHOULD* and *SHALL*:

You shall go to the ball, Cinderella. (affirmation)

You should go to the ball, Cinderella. (advice/urging)

While the first sentence is mostly predictive, the use of *SHOULD* in the second puts some pressure on the addressee to make it happen. It adds in the modal sense of obligation or necessity, weaker or stronger, depending again on the context. This is now the most common use of *SHOULD*, as an exponent of deontic modality, a role not shared by *WOULD* at all (see **modality and modal verb**, section 1). The use of *SHOULD* in mandative constructions is a syntactic analogue of this deontic meaning (see further under **mandative subjunctive**).

3 Expressing politeness

In just one context, *WOULD* and *SHOULD* still seem to be interchangeable:

I should like to have been at the wedding.

I would like to have been at the wedding.

Both are polite formulations of the past-in-present, though the first is the marked option, mostly confined to British English. Corpus-based research shows that the use of *SHOULD* in such contexts is seven times more frequent in British than American English (Peters 2004), and available for only a few verbs of thinking and feeling such as *hope*, *like*, *think*.

- For the sentence-initial uses of *WOULD* and *SHOULD*, see under **optative** and **hypothetical** respectively.
- For the usage of ***WILL and SHALL***, see further under that heading.

X

X-bar

This is the structural concept and mechanism for formalizing the fact that syntactic categories are projected from the lexical items that head them. X-bar theory provides a system for relating the noun systematically to the NP it heads, and for annotating the relationship between them. For example the first noun in *The cow jumped over the moon* would be annotated in X-bar notation as [NOUN] [BAR 0], while the NP is [NOUN][BAR 2]. The latter is variously annotated as N^2 , N' , or as \bar{N} . The system requires each category to have a head, which is intended to limit the number of phrase structure rules needed. X-bar theory was first suggested by Zellig Harris (1951), but has since been developed especially by Ray Jackendoff (1977), and incorporated into other grammars including GPSG. See further under **generalized phrase structure grammar**.

Y

YE

This was once the nominative form of the second person plural pronoun, contrasting with *YOU*, the accusative form (see further under **personal pronoun**, section 4). The contrast is shown in the following, from the 1611 (Authorized) translation of the English Bible:

Ye have not chosen me: I have chosen you. (John 15:16)

The quotation, addressed to the disciples of Jesus, is clearly plural and makes distinct use of the subject and object forms (nominative/accusative). However the grammatical distinction between them was falling into abeyance by the end of the C16, so that the Bible's maintenance of it would have sounded quite formal. Shakespearean drama at the turn of the century uses *YE* and *YOU* rather interchangeably for subject and object. This breakdown of the case distinction between *YE* and *YOU* in late C16 English, coupled with the loss of the plural/singular distinction between *YE/YOU* and *THOU/THEE*, set the scene for *YOU* to become the all-purpose second person pronoun (see further under **THOU and THEE**).

YE survived only in poetic rhetoric, for example, Burns's C18 lyric:

Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doone ...

and in the work of other romantic poets, such as Shelley:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! (*Ozymandias* (1817))

The archaic *YE* in *Ye Olde Tea Shoppe* and other quasi-historical business names is not a survival of the second person plural pronoun. Instead it represents the word *THE*, where the first two letters replace the Old English letter þ "thorn," borrowed from the runic alphabet. Thorn was still used in Tudor handwriting and printing, rendered like a "y," and used to compact the "th" of various common words (*the, this, that, they*) into a single character to save space. The practice was obsolete by C18, but its ghost lives on in the *YE* of British pub and shop signs, wherever the whiff of antiquity is a commercial asset.

YET

-
- 1 *YET* as an adverb
 - 2 the collocation *YET TO*
 - 3 *YET* as a conjunction
-

1 **YET as an adverb**

YET is essentially a time adverb or adjunct, relating past time up to the present time of the utterance:

The answer has not yet come.

When coupled with a negator, as in that example, *YET* is **nonassertive** (see further under **nonassertive**). But *YET* can also be used assertively, as in:

We will convince him yet.

Used thus in association with a predictive modal verb, the time frame indicated by *YET* stretches from the present on into the future.

YET also functions as a subjunct without time reference when coupled with a comparative adjective or adverb, as in *go yet further, a yet more beautiful scene*. In contexts like these it works as a kind of **booster** to extend the scope of the adverb or adjective. See further under **intensifier and downtoner**; and **adverb**, section 3.

2 **The collocation YET TO**

A curious idiomatic feature of *YET* is the way it combines with the quasi-modal *BE TO* in expressing a future likelihood or necessity:

The best is yet to be.

It is also found with more extended complementation, with both *BE TO* and *HAVE TO*:

This film is yet to be classified by the Film Censorship Board.

The cinema management has yet to announce the date of the preview.

Nevertheless the construction of *YET* with *HAVE TO* is far commoner than with *BE TO*, in data from the British National Corpus (Peters 2004). For the use of *BE TO* and *HAVE TO* as quasi-modals, see **BE**; and **HAVE**, section 3.

3 **YET as a conjunction**

Modern grammarians allow that *YET* is also a marginal conjunction, i.e. coordinator (Quirk et al. 1985). See for example:

The sky was thick with smoke, yet the sun pierced through as a weird orange ball.

In that sentence, *YET* is a synonym for *BUT*, and like *BUT*, it can occur at the start of the clause without any preceding conjunction:

The fire raged to the west. Yet there was still an escape route to the south.

YET cannot however link a sequence of subordinate clauses, nor sequences of more than two main clauses, which keeps it on the fringe of the coordinator group for the moment. See under **coordinator**.

YOU

- 1 **YOU** the invariant pronoun
- 2 generic or indefinite *YOU*
- 3 regional variants of *YOU*

1 **YOU the invariant pronoun**

In standard modern English *YOU* is the second person pronoun, used to refer to the person(s) addressed (see further under **personal pronoun**, sections 1 and 2). Unlike other personal pronouns, it does not have different forms for nominative and accusative case, but the same for both:

Can you show me the way to go home? (nominative)

I'll show you on the map. (accusative)

Likewise there is no special form for either singular or plural: it can refer to a singular or plural addressee:

You look good with that hair cut. (singular)

You won't all fit into the lift. (plural)

The lack of singular/plural distinction in *YOU* sometimes makes for ambiguity, especially when talking over the phone. Is the invitation "We'd like you to come for lunch" intended specifically for the person sharing the conversation, or for the whole family? Many varieties of English make use of colloquial forms of *YOU* which are specifically plural (see below section 3).

Note that *YOUR*, the genitive/possessive form, is treated as a determiner in modern English grammars. See further under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3. The independent possessive form *YOURS* is discussed under **possessive pronoun**.

2 **Generic or indefinite YOU**

Although *YOU* typically refers to the person or persons addressed (i.e. second person), it can also be used to refer to people in general, as in:

You'd want to be sure of the facts.

You could say that.

The use of *YOU* in those examples deflects attention from the actual addressee of the utterance, and makes the reference nonspecific and open-ended. Like the generic pronoun *ONE*, it projects a third person referent (see further under **ONE**). English grammarians who acknowledge this use of *YOU* call it by various names. For Quirk et al. (1985) it's **generic YOU**; Wales (1996) adds **indefinite YOU** and **impersonal YOU**; while Huddleston and Pullum (2002) use **nonreferential YOU**.

Generic *YOU* is surprisingly frequent in spoken discourse. Berry (2009) found it in about 1 in 3 instances of *YOU* in a random sample of 100 concordance lines from the Collins COBUILD Wordbanks. Yet in analyzing its occurrence, he and others draw attention to the fact that some examples are indeterminate, and could be read either as generic use or as the canonical second person pronoun – which may be part of the rhetorical strategy.

3 **Regional variants of YOU**

In colloquial and nonstandard speech, most varieties of English make use of an additional second person pronoun which is marked in some way for plurality. The most widely used are:

- **youse** or **yous**: the form *yous* is more common in the UK, and *youse* in North America and Australia (Peters 2004)

- *you-all*, *y'all*, or *ya'll* – used in the southern and southwestern parts of the US (Garner 1998)
- *you guys* – a less colloquial alternative to *youse* in Australia, the UK, and the US generally (used of both sexes)

Curiously, the plural marking is not always salient for the users of these pronouns. Both *youse* and *you-all* are sometimes used in addressing a singular individual.

YOUR and YOU'RE

YOUR is the second person possessive pronoun, as in

Your birthday is tomorrow.

See further under **determiner**, sections 1 and 3 for its grammar; and **YOU** for its contextual meanings.

YOU'RE is a contraction of *you are*, as in:

You're welcome.

See further under **contraction (1)**.

Z

zero

Used as a modifier, **zero** refers to the absence of the usual grammatical morpheme or marker from a subset of a given word class or construction, as indicated by the noun it premodifies. In linguistics it is symbolized by \emptyset or \emptyset .

See further under **zero adverb**, **zero article**, **zero complementizer**, **zero conjunction**, **zero derivation**, **zero past tense**, **zero plural**, **zero relativizer**, **zero valency**.

zero adverb

This term is used to refer to unsuffixed forms of adverbs, which are derived by conversion from the adjective and do not carry the regular adverbial suffix *-ly*. Some adjectives have both regular and zero forms for their adverb. Compare the two adverbial forms in:

Tie it tight. *Tie it tightly.*
If I have it right ... *If I have it rightly ...*

Other adverbs which appear in both zero and *-ly* forms are:

<i>bad</i>	<i>cheap</i>	<i>clean</i>	<i>clear</i>	<i>close</i>	<i>deep</i>	<i>direct</i>
<i>easy</i>	<i>fair</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>loud</i>	<i>quick</i>	<i>right</i>
<i>sharp</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>slow</i>	<i>tight</i>	<i>wide</i>	<i>wrong</i>	

In some cases the two forms express rather different meanings, and only the **zero adverb** is idiomatic for the one intended, as in:

The ball flew low over the net.

Lowly does not express the same physical meaning, but (as an adverb) is more or less confined to meaning “held in low esteem”:

They thought lowly of him after that.

For others listed above, the choice of alternatives hardly affects the meaning. They may however carry different stylistic connotations, so that the zero adverb is the more colloquial choice. Corpus-based research shows that the zero adverbs predominate in spoken discourse, as the *-ly* forms do in writing (Biber et al. 1999).

- For the use of *-ly* as an adjectival ending, see further under ***-ly***, section 2.

zero article

This term is used to refer to the absence of the indefinite article *A/AN* before noncount nouns. It is one of the grammatical differences between countable and noncountable uses of the same noun. Compare:

A lamb had just been born.

There's lamb on the menu.

And also

We saw a turkey escaping through the hedge.

Turkey goes with cranberry sauce.

The noncountable use does not allow the indefinite article to precede it. See further under **count noun, mass noun, and countability**.

Note also the occasional use of **zero article** in predicative complements where a definite article might be expected:

He's president of the university.

They made him president of the university.

This is particularly common in the second type of clause with SVOC construction. See further under **clause**, section 1.

zero complementizer

See under **complementizer**.

zero conjunction

See **conjunction**, section 3.

zero derivation

This is an alternative name for the process by which English words extend their scope by taking on additional grammatical roles without the addition of *derivational* affixes. Thus the noun *face* can also be used as the verb *face* with exactly the same *stem*. Compare its use in *a strong face* with *The houses face east*. See further under **conversion**, sections 1 and 2.

zero-headed

See under **absolute**, section 1 (final note).

zero past tense

Verbs like *cut*, *hit*, *put* whose past tense forms are identical with the base form used for the present are said to have a **zero past tense**. See **irregular verb**, section 2.

zero plural

Nouns like *chassis*, *deer*, *series*, *sheep* which have no distinct plural form are called **zero plurals**. See further under **plural**, section 2.

zero relativizer

See under **relativizer**.

zero valency, zero valence

These are synonyms for *avalency*. See under **valency**, section 3.

REFERENCES

- Aarts, Bas. 1997. *English syntax and argumentation*. London: Macmillan.
2010. *Oxford modern English grammar*. Oxford: University Press.
- Aarts, Bas and Haegeman, Liliane. 2006. English word classes and phrases. In Aarts and McMahon (eds.), pp. 117–45.
- Aarts, Bas and McMahon, April (eds.). 2006. *The handbook of English Linguistics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Aitchison, Jean. 2003. *Words in the mind: An introduction to the mental lexicon*, 3rd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Algeo, John. 1995. Having a look at the expanded predicate. In Bas Aarts and C. Meyer (eds.), *The verb in contemporary English: Theory and description*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 203–17.
- Allan, Keith and Burridge, Kate. 1991. *Euphemism and dysphemism: Language used as shield and weapon*. Oxford University Press.
2006. *Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Allerton, David J. 1982. *Valency and the English verb*. London: Academic Press.
- Austin, John L. [1955] 1975. *How to do things with words*, 2nd edn. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ayto, John. 1996. Lexical life expectancy. In Jan Svartvik (ed.), *Words: Proceedings of an International Symposium, Lund 25–26 August 1995*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikviteits Akademien, pp. 181–8.
- Baron, Dennis. 1986. *Grammar and gender*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Bauer, Laurie. 2001. *Morphological productivity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berry, Roger. 2009. You could say that: The generic second-person pronoun in English. *English Today* 25(3): 29–34.
- Biber, Douglas. 1988. *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, Douglas, Johansson, Stig, Leech, Geoffrey, Conrad, Susan, and Finegan, Edward. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Bloomfield, Leonard. 1933. *Language*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Bolinger, Dwight L. 1946. Visual morphemes. *Language* 22: 4.
- Börjars, Kersti and Burridge, Kate. 2010. *Introducing English grammar*, 2nd edn. London: Hodder Education.
- Brown, Gillian and Yule, George. 1983. *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Roger and Gilman, Albert. 1960. The pronouns of power and solidarity. In T. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 253–76.
- Burridge, Kate and Kortmann, Bernd (eds.). 2008. *Varieties of English*, vol. III: *The Pacific and Australasia*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bybee, Joan and Hopper, Paul (eds.). 2001. *Frequency and the emergence of linguistic structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cambridge grammar of the English language*. See Huddleston and Pullum 2002.
- Chafe, Wallace. 1987. *Punctuation and the prosody of written language*. Center for the Study of Writing, University of California.
- Chicago manual of style*, 16th edn. 2010. University of Chicago Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1957. *Syntactic structures*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Collins, Peter. 1982. *Cleft and pseudocleft constructions in English*. London: Routledge.
1996. Get-passives in English. *World Englishes* 15: 1.
- 2009a. The progressive. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 115–24.
- 2009b. *Modals and quasi-modals in English*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Collins, Peter and Peters, Pam. 2008. Australian English morphosyntax. In Burridge and Kortmann (eds.), pp. 593–610.
- Comprehensive grammar of the English language*. See Quirk et al. 1985.

- Crystal, David. 2003. *Encyclopedia of the English language*, 2nd edn. Cambridge University Press.
- de Beuzeville, Louise and Peters, Pam (eds.). 2010. *From the Southern hemisphere: E-proceedings of the 2008 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. E-Scholarship Repository, University of Sydney, online at: <http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/6860>.
- Dixon, Robert M. W. and Aikhenvald, Alexandra. 2002. *Word: A crosslinguistic typology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Elsnon, Johan. 2009. The perfect and the preterite in Australian and New Zealand English. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 89–114.
- Engel, Dulcie and Ritz, Marie-Eve. 2000. The use of the present perfect in Australian English. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 20: 119–40.
- Esser, Jürgen. 1999. Collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody. In W. Falkner and H.-J. Schmid (eds.), *Words, lexemes, concepts – Approaches to the lexicon: Studies in honour of Leonhard Lipka*. Tübingen: Narr, pp. 155–66.
- Fernando, Chitra. 1996. *Idioms and idiomaticity*. Oxford University Press.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 1968. The case for case. In E. Bach and R. T. Harms (eds.), *Universals in linguistic theory*. New York: North Holland, pp. 1–88.
1976. Frame semantics and the nature of language. In *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences: Conference on the origin and development of language and speech*, vol. 280: 20–32.
- Firth, John R. 1957. Modes of meaning. In *Papers in linguistics 1934–1951*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 190–215.
- Flesch, Rudolf. 1955. *Why Johnny can't read*. New York: Harper.
- Fowler, Henry W. 1926. *A dictionary of modern English usage*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Francis, Nelson and Kucera, Henry. 1982. *Frequency analysis of English: Usage and lexicon*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Fries, Charles. 1925. *The periphrastic future with Shall and Will in modern English*. *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 40: 963–1024.
1940. *American English grammar*. London: Appleton-Century Crofts.
- Garner, Bryan. 1998. *A dictionary of modern American usage*. Oxford University Press.
- Gazdar, Gerald, Klein, Ewan, Sag Ivan, and Pullum, Geoffrey. 1985. *Generalized phrase structure grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gowers, Ernest. 1948. *Plain words*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Halliday, Michael. 1985. *Introduction to functional grammar*, 1st edn. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, Michael and Hasan, Ruqaiya. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, Michael and Matthiessen, Christian. 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar*, 3rd edn. London: Hodder Education.
- Harris, G. 1752. *Observations upon the English language*. London: Edward Withers.
- Hasselgard, Hilde. 2010. *Adverbial adjuncts in English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Haussamen, Brock. 1994. The future of the English sentence. *Visible Language* 28: 6–25.
- Hockett, Charles. 1961. Grammar for the hearer. In R. Jakobson (ed.), *Proceedings of symposia in applied mathematics*, vol. XII: *Structure of language and its mathematical aspects*. Providence, RI: American Mathematical Society, pp. 220–36.
- Hoey, Michael. 1997. From concordance to text structure: New uses for computer corpora. In B. Leandowska-Tomaszczyk and P. L. Melia (eds.), *PALC '97: Proceedings of practical applications of linguistic corpora conference*. Lodz University Press, pp. 2–23.
2005. *Lexical priming: A new theory of words and language*. London: Routledge.
- Hofland, Knut and Johansson, Stig. 1982. *Word frequencies in British and American English*. Bergen: Norwegian Computing Centre for the Humanities.
- Hopper, Paul. 1988. Emergent grammar and the a priori postulate. In D. Tannen (ed.), *Linguistics in context*. New York: Ablex, pp. 117–34.
- Huddleston, Rodney. 1984. *Introduction to the grammar of English*. Cambridge University Press.
1988. *English grammar: An outline*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huddleston, Rodney and Pullum, Geoffrey K., et al. 2002. *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hundt, Marianne. 1998. *New Zealand English grammar: Fact or fiction?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
2007. *English medio-passive constructions: A cognitive, corpus-based study of their origin, spread, and current status*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Hunston, Susan. 2001. Colligation, lexis, pattern, and text. In M. Scott and

- G. Thompson (eds.), *Patterns of text: In honour of Michael Hoey*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 13–34.
- Jackendoff, Ray. 1977. *X syntax: A study of phrase structure*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Jespersen, Otto. 1917, repr. 1962. Negation in English and other languages, in *Selected writings of Otto Jespersen*. London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 3–151.
- 1927, repr. 1954. *A modern English grammar on historical principles, Part III: Syntax*, vol. 2. London and Copenhagen: Allen & Unwin and Ejnar Munksgaard.
1937. *Analytic syntax*. Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard.
- 1942, repr. 1954. *A modern English grammar on historical principles, Part VI: Morphology*. London and Copenhagen: Allen & Unwin and Ejnar Munksgaard.
- Johnson, Samuel. 1755. *A dictionary of the English language*. London: Printed by W. Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and L. Hawes; A. Millar; and R. and J. Dodsley.
- Kaplan, Ronald and Bresnan, Joan. 1982. Lexical-functional grammar: A formal system for grammatical representation. In J. Bresnan (ed.), *The mental representation of grammatical relations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. i–lii.
- Kearns, Kate. 2009. Zero complementizer, syntactic context and regional variety. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 243–62.
- Kortmann, Bernd and Szmrecsanyi, B. 2004. Global synopsis: Morphological and syntactic variation in English. In B. Kortmann and E. Schneider (eds.), *Handbook of varieties of English*, vol. II. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 1141–1202.
- Krug, Manfred. 2000. *Emerging English modals: A corpus-based study of grammaticalization*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and woman's place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of cognitive grammar*, vol. I: *Theoretical prerequisites*. Stanford University Press.
- Leech, Geoffrey and Short, Michael. 1981. *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose*. London: Longman.
- Levin, Beth. 1993. *English verb classes and alternations: A preliminary investigation*. Chicago University Press.
- Levin, Magnus. 1998. On concord with collective nouns in British and American English. In H. Lindquist, S. Klintborg, M. Levin, and M. Estling (eds.), *The major varieties of English: Papers from MAVEN '97*. Växjö University Press, pp. 193–204.
- Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. See Biber et al. 1985.
- Lowth, Robert. 1762. *A short introduction to English grammar*. London: Printed by J. Hughs for A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley.
- Mair, Christian and Leech, Geoffrey. 2006. Current changes in English syntax. In Aarts and McMahon (eds.), pp. 318–42.
- Marchand, Hans. [1960]. 1969. *The categories and types of present-day English word-formation*, 2nd edn. München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
- Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. 2000. 10th edn. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Meyer, Charles F. 1987. *A linguistic study of American punctuation*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Miller, Jim. 2009. Like and other discourse markers. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 317–38.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter. 1983. Stinkiepoohs, cuddlepies and related matters. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 3: 1, 75–91.
- Nesfield, J. C. 1900–61. *Outline of English grammar*. London: Macmillan.
- New Hart's rules*. 2005. Oxford University Press.
- New Oxford Dictionary of English*. 2005. Oxford University Press.
- Nunberg, Geoffrey. 1990. *The linguistics of punctuation*. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Övergaard, Gerd. 1995. *The mandative subjunctive in American and British English in the 20th century* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 94). Uppsala University.
- Oxford English dictionary*. 1989. 2nd edn. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Palmer, Frank. 1987. *The English Verb*, 2nd edn. London: Longman.
- Pawley, Andrew. 2008. Australian vernacular English: Some grammatical characteristics. In Kate Burridge, and Bernd Kortmann (eds.), *Varieties of English*, vol. III: *The Pacific and Australasia*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, pp. 362–97.
- Peters, Pam. 1996. Comparative insights into comparison. *World Englishes* 15: 1.
2004. *The Cambridge guide to English usage*. Cambridge University Press.
2006. English usage: Prescription and description. In Aarts and McMahon (eds.), pp. 759–80.
2008. Patterns of negation. In Terttu Nevalainen, Irma Taavitsainen, Paivi Pahta,

- and Minna Korhonen (eds.), *The dynamics of linguistic variation: Corpus evidence on English past and present*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 147–62.
- 2009a. Personal pronouns in spoken English grammar. In Rhonwen Bowen, Mats Möbärg, and Sölve Ohlander (eds.), *Corpora and discourse – and stuff: Papers in honour of Karin Aijmer*. University of Gothenburg, pp. 253–67.
- 2009b. Irregular verbs: Regularization and ongoing variability. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 13–30.
- 2009c. The mandative subjunctive in spoken English. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 125–38.
2012. Emergent conjunctions. In Sarah Chevalier and Thomas Honegger (eds.), *Words, words, words: Philology and beyond*. Tübingen: Francke, pp. 127–44.
- Peters, Pam, Collins, Peter, and Smith, Adam (eds.). 2009. *Comparative studies in Australian and New Zealand English: Grammar and beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Peterson, Peter. 2009. Commas and connective adverbs. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 277–92.
- Pollard, Carl and Sag, Ivan. 1987. *Information-based syntax and semantics*, vol. I: *Fundamentals*. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Prince, Ellen. 1992. The ZPG letter: Subjects, definites and information status. In William C. Mann and Sandra A. Thompson (eds.), *Discourse description: Diverse analyses of a fundraising text*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 295–325.
- Quinn, Heidi. 2009. Pronoun forms. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 31–48.
- Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, Sidney, Leech, Geoffrey, and Svartvik, Jan. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
- Reid, Wallis. 1991. *Verb and noun number agreement: A functional explanation*. London: Longman.
- Ritz, Marieve. 2010. The perfect crime? Illicit uses of the present perfect in Australian police media releases. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 12, 3400–17.
- Romaine, Suzanne and Lange, Deborah. 1991. The use of *like* as a marker of speech and thought: A case of grammaticalization in progress. *American Speech* 66: 3, 227–79.
- Sinclair, John. 1987. *Looking up*. London: Collins COBUILD.
- Skandera, Paul. 2007. *Phraseology and culture in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Smith, Adam. 2009a. Light verbs in Australian, New Zealand and British English. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 139–55.
- 2009b. Non-numerical quantifiers. In Peters et al. (eds.), pp. 159–81.
- Stirling, Leslie. 2010. The treatment of reported speech. In de Beuzeville and Peters (eds.).
- Taglicht, Joseph. 1984. *Message and emphasis: On focus and scope in English*. London: Longman.
- Terraschke, Agnes. 2010. And I was like “ah yeah, what are they talking about?”: The use of quotatives in New Zealand English. In de Beuzeville and Peters (eds.).
- Tesnière, Lucien. 1959. *Éléments de syntaxe structurale*. Paris: C. Klincksieck.
- Thorne, Barrie and Henley, Nancy. 1975. *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Todd, Loretto. 1995. *The Cassell guide to punctuation*. London: Cassell.
- Treble, Henry A. and Vallins, George H. 1936. *An ABC of English usage*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Trubetzkoy, Nikolai. 1969. *Principles of phonology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Trudgill, Peter and Chambers, Jack. 1991. *Dialects of English: Studies in grammatical variation*. London: Longman.
- Wales, Katie. 1996. *Personal pronouns in present-day English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Webster's dictionary of English usage*. 1989. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Wickens, Mark. 1992. *Grammatical number in English nouns* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 76). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zwicky, Arnold. 1987. Constructions in monostratal syntax. *CLS* 23: 389–401.

