Parts of Speech – basic rules/tips

**NOUNS**

* **Nouns name persons, places, things, or ideas**
* **Concrete nouns**

Words that can be touched. Abstract nouns (like love, bitterness, happiness, or joking) cannot be touched but are, nonetheless, still nouns because they name entities.

* **Nouns can be proper or common.**

Nouns that begin with a capital letter are proper nouns (Germany, Alice). They have a specific name or title and refer to a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns do not begin with capital letters because they are less specific (teacher, sister).

* **Nouns of address**

This is a noun used to call upon a person for his or her attention. It can be the person's name (i.e. Paul) or the name by which he or she is known (i.e. Dad, Judge). Here are some examples:

Nouns of direct address are "set off" by commas.

**ADJECTIVES**

* **Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns.**

Possessive pronouns can be used as adjectives. Example: That is his book.

Adjectives answer these questions about the noun:

              WHAT KIND of noun is it?

              WHICH noun is it?

              HOW MANY of that noun are there?

The, a, and an are called articles. Articles are always adjectives. They modify nouns and pronouns.

**VERBS**

* **A verb is a word that expresses action, makes a statement, or links relationships.**
  + **Action** verbs do just that. They demonstrate action.  (i.e. Joey hit the ball)
* **Linking** verbs make statements OR they express links and relationships. (i.e. He is a football player.)
  + Linking verbs are on a special list. Here is that list:

Am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, has been, have been, had been, will be, shall be, may be, would have been, should have been, can be, should be, would be (any combination that ENDS with be or been.) seem, become, taste, feel, smell, sound, look, appear, grow, remain, stay

**HINT**: In a verb phrase, it is the word that ENDS the phrase that determines usage. For example, in the phrase, "is cooking," even though "is" would be classified as a linking verb used by itself, the last word in the phrase is "cooking." Therefore, the verb phrase is action and "is" was used simply as a helping verb - **NOT** a linking verb.

**HINT**: Linking verbs can be in any tense and can have endings such as "ing" or "ed" and they are STILL linking

verbs.

**HINT**: Some of the verbs on the linking verb list can be used as action verbs OR linking verbs. Be sure to reason out their usage.

**ADVERBS**

* **Adverbs modify verbs. An adverb can also modify adjectives and other adverbs.**   
  Adverbs answer these questions:

**WHERE?** **WHEN?** **HOW?** **HOW OFTEN?** **TO WHAT EXTENT?**

**PRONOUNS**

* **Pronouns take the place of nouns to name persons, places, things, or ideas.** 
  + **PERSONAL PRONOUNS:** I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they, them
  + **POSSESSIVE PERSONAL PRONOUNS:** my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs
  + **INDEFINITE PRONOUNS**: Anybody, anyone, each, either, none, someone, somebody, both, everyone, no one, neither, many, few, several, one.
  + **INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS:** who, whom, what, which, whose
  + **DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS:** this, that, these, those

**PREPOSITIONS**

* **Prepositions show relationships between nouns or pronouns and other words in a sentence.**
  + **Commonly used prepositions**: Aboard, about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, off, on, over, past, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, without
  + Prepositional phrases generally contain the preposition and an object of the preposition. Objects of the preposition MUST be nouns.

RULE

Subjects and verbs can NEVER be found in prepositional phrases. It is a good habit to learn to spot prepositional phases. Use parentheses to mark them; then, when you are looking for the subject and verb of the sentence, it will narrow down the search. Here is an example:

The boy by the window on the other side of the room was looking over his shoulder at the pretty girl in the hall.

The boy (by the window)(on the other side)(of the room) was looking (over his shoulder)(at the pretty girl)(in the hall.)

A WORD ABOUT “TO” When "to" is used with a noun, it is a preposition; but when it is used with a verb, it is an infinitive. Be careful to recognize the difference. Examples: To bed to plus noun = preposition vs. To sleep to plus verb = infinitive

**CONJUNCTIONS:**

* **Conjunctions are words that join words or groups of words.**
  + **Coordinating** conjunctions include: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet (FANBOY)**

These conjunctions connect words, phrases, and clauses of equal value. Clauses of equal value are called independent clauses and can stand on their own as separate sentences. Example: John is running in this race, and I am carrying his water bottle. (Each clause can stand alone: John is running in this race. I am carrying his water bottle.)

* **Subordinating** conjunctions include: **although, because, as, while, until, whether, since, after, so that, when, before, if**

These conjunctions introduce dependent clauses. Dependent clauses cannot stand alone as a single sentence. In fact, the clause is dependent on the rest of the sentence for its meaning. Example: Since I will not be home, Tina will answer the phone. ("Since I will not be home" doesn't make sense by itself. It is dependent on the rest of the sentence for its meaning.)

**INTERJECTIONS:**

* **Interjections are words added to a** [**sentence**](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/subjpred.html#sentence) **to convey emotion.**
  + It is not grammatically related to any other part of the sentence.
  + You usually follow an interjection with an [exclamation mark](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/endpunct.html#exclamation%20mark). Interjections are uncommon in formal academic prose, except in direct quotations. (i.e. “Hey!” “Ouch!”)