

ACADEMIC GRAMMAR Workshop

Dear Student,

This workshop is designed for students who feel that their English needs a brush up. It starts with the parts of speech because we can't talk about grammar if we don't know what a **noun** is, for example. At the end of each explanatory section, there are exercises which are intended to test your understanding. The answers to the exercises can be found at the end of the document – I suggest that you resist the temptation to look up answers until you have really tried to do the exercises. If you do not understand the explanations or why a particular answer has been given, come and see me in A Block, Rm A 014 on Wednesdays to Fridays! Or you may email me on m.clugston@fhs.usyd.edu.au

Good luck!
Marie

Section 1 Parts of Speech.

1.1 Verbs

This is the most important word in a sentence. Actually, a sentence isn't a sentence without one. There are several types of verbs.

- verbs of doing: Dogs *are barking*.)
 I *live* in the city.) indicates an **action**
 The car *crashed*.)

- verbs of being She *seems* nice)
 The book *is* not on the shelf) indicates a **state**
 He *became* Prime Minister)

Note the difference between the verb in these two sentences:

- The boys *make* a go-cart every summer - **action**
- Two and three *make* five **state**

1.2 Nouns

Noun means name and refers to a thing or person. It's easy to tell nouns because you can (usually) put 'the' or 'a/an' in front of them or they start with a capital letter.

Children go to school on Monday
Canberra is the capital of Australia
Tom stole a pig

Closely related to nouns are **pronouns**, which can take the place of nouns. For example, in relation to the last sentence above, we could say:

What did Tom steal? *He stole a pig.*

Who stole the pig? *Tom stole it*

What did Tom do to the pig? *He stole it*

Exercise 1

Here is a passage written by a student who doesn't know how to use pronouns. Help her (joining sentences if necessary).

Yang et al carried out a study on a 74-year old man. The man suffered a severe reaction to a cholesterol-lowering drug. The man recovered fully and quickly once the man stopped taking the drug. The drug caused muscle weakness as a side-effect but the drug is one of the most commonly prescribed drugs. The researchers do not understand why the drug affected the patient but the researchers are investigating.

1.3 Adjectives

Adjectives are words which relate to a noun and add to or change (modify) its meaning. (Perhaps they should be called ad-nouns!)

An *anxious* patient is waiting in the *next* room
The *elderly* patient is *anxious*

1.4 Adverbs

Adverbs generally modify verbs but they can also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

Exercise 2a

In the following sentences, what word/s is/are modified by the adverbs in italics?

1. He arrived *late*
2. *Obviously* we need to leave *soon*
3. They were *therefore* forced to resign
4. The bus was *quite* late
5. She is *very* beautiful but *rather* poor
6. An *extremely* anxious patient is waiting in the *stiflingly* hot room
7. You are driving *too* fast
8. She did *remarkably* well
9. *Quite* obviously we will be late

Exercise 2b

Identify the adverbs and say what they are doing

1. The Germans assimilated well and worked hard
2. His research will very soon be published
3. Both parties seem to be cynically exploitative

1.5 Prepositions

Prepositions are words which show relationships between a verb and a noun or between a noun and another noun. The whole prepositional phrase (prep + noun) may denote time, place, manner or instrumentality. Prepositions always come before a noun or pronoun.

Exercise 3

*Find the proposition *sin* these sentences and say what type they are [The first one is done for you.]*

1. We danced [*until* dawn] - time
2. Put the book on the table and the box under it.
3. He walks with a limp.
4. He was killed by a bus in the street at night

1.6 Conjunctions

There are two types of conjunction: coordinating and subordinating.

1.6.1 Coordinating

These join together items that are of equal value.

You can have fish *and* chips *or* stew *but* not soup (all the items are nouns)
She had red hair *and* a fair complexion
Put down your pens *and* stop writing!

1.6.2 Subordinating

These join together items which are not of equal value.

Her mother died *when* Jane was six
The girl went to hospital *because* she had appendicitis
The man *who* is reading the paper is my uncle
He said *that* he would forgive me.

[There will be more about conjunctions in Section 2]

Exercise 4

Identify the conjunctions in the following sentences and state whether they are co-ordinating or subordinating

1. He plays squash and rugby
2. This is the picture which I brought from Russia
3. She doesn't smoke or drink
4. He gave it to me because he trusted me
5. We knew that the bridge was unsafe
6. We came first but didn't get the prize

[Progress] Exercise

You can't tell what part of speech a word is without seeing its function in a sentence. For example, the word 'round' can be used in five different ways, as adjective, adverb, noun, verb and preposition. *Which is which?*

1. She'll soon come round
2. Let's round it up to \$100
3. They cut a round hole in it
4. She disappeared round the corner
5. She bought a round of drinks

Section 2 Sentences, Subjects and Clauses

2.1 Sentences

2.1.1 A sentence makes sense by itself [the word ‘sentence’ comes from a Latin word meaning ‘opinion’]. It always contains a verb. In fact it may consist only of a verb as in the sentence: *Stop!*

2.1.2 But a subject of the verb (i.e. the person or thing doing the action or experiencing the state involved) is always to be understood. For example, we understand the subject of the sentence above to be the person(s) addressed. So we could rewrite the sentence as: *[You] stop!*

Exercise 5

What is/are the subject(s) of the following sentences?

1. A thick layer of snow covered the four men.
2. He shot the man who was behind the counter
3. We were tired and we stayed in bed
4. Hand in your assignments on Friday
5. She asked where he had gone

2.1.3. A sentence may have more than one verb. We call each group of words which contains a verb a **clause**. A sentence may have one clause or it may have two, three or four. Three of the sentences above have more than one verb and hence more than one clause. **Which are they?** A sentence with five or more clauses is likely to be difficult to understand.

2.1.4 The sentence usually has a clause that makes sense by itself and contains the basic meaning. We call it the **main (principal)** clause. If a sentence has only one verb we call it a **simple sentence**. Two main clauses may be joined by together by a coordinating conjunction to form a **compound sentence**. A main clause [or more than one] which is joined to others with subordinating conjunction is called a **complex sentence**. **Note how a simple sentence can be built up in the following examples:**

- He shot his father (simple)
- He shot his father but he escaped (compound)
- He shot his father because he wanted money (complex)

2.2 Clauses

There are 3 types of subordinate clauses: adjectival, adverbial and noun clauses.

2.2.1 Adjectival Clauses

These add meaning to a noun or pronoun just as an adjective does. They begin with a subordinator such as: *who whom whose which that*

Note: A sentence should never begin with an adjectival subordinator unless you are asking a question:

- Who are you?
- Whose child is she?
- Which book do you want?

Exercise 6

In the sentences below find the adjectival clause and identify the noun or pronoun to which it adds meaning.

1. He who hesitates is lost
2. The cat ate the mouse that lived in the house
3. The student whose assignment was lost has been given a conceded pass
4. The one whom you seek is not here
5. She had little in common with her brothers whose recreation was entirely physical

2.2.2 Adverbial Clauses

These are more complex than adjectival. As the name indicates, they add meaning to verbs and answer the questions: time (when ?), place(when?), reason (why?), manner (how?), purpose (with what purpose?), result (with what result?), concession (in spite of what? beginning with *though*), condition (under what condition? beginning with *if*), comparison (compared to what?)

Exercise 7

Here are examples of each type, in the order given above. Circle the subordinator

1. The plane crashed after the bomb exploded
2. We stopped where we could find shade
3. He left work because he hated his job
4. She speaks Arabic as only a native can
5. We were tired so we went home early
6. She worked so hard that she almost died
7. Although she is small she is very strong
8. You will fail if you don't hand in your essay on time
9. She is as intelligent as her father [is]; she is more intelligent than her mother [is].

An adverbial clause can be separated from the verb to which it adds meaning but an adjectival clause must be next to the noun it describes. Otherwise it can be misleading or ridiculous. For example:

Adjectival clause:

- The girl who had an infected toe went to hospital BUT NOT
- The girl went to hospital who had an infected toe

Adverbial clause:

- The girl went to hospital because who had an infected toe AND ALSO
- Because she had an infected toe, the girl went to hospital

2.2.3 Noun clauses

These are quite tricky. They are clauses which take the place of nouns. They begin with words like: *that whether if when where what how why*

2.2.3.1 Noun clauses usually come after reporting/communicating verbs and so are the **object** of the verb.

- He said that the cheque was in the mail [This is an indirect statement. Another way would be : He said ‘The cheque is in the mail’]
- She asked whether the bus had gone [This is an indirect question. To make it a direct question: She asked, ‘Has the bus gone?’]

Exercise 8

Turn these sentences into direct questions. Note the change of tense

1. We wonder if it is true
2. She asked when the train was due
3. They asked where the toilets were
4. The police wanted to know what he was going on

2.2.3.2

In all of the above sentences, the noun clauses underlined are the object of the verb in the main clause. He said – what?

They can also be, less frequently, subjects of the verb

- What she saw made her afraid
- How it happened is yet to be determined
- Why she married him I will never know

Exercise 9

Find the noun clauses in the following sentences and say whether they are subject or object of the verb in the main clause.

1. They’ll believe whatever you tell them
2. I forget who told me
3. Tom said that there would be a strike
4. That he left his wife is incredible
5. I wonder when he’ll pay me back

2.2.3.4 A further complication (sorry!). Instead of sentence no 4 we could introduce a dummy 'it' and say : *It is incredible that he left his wife*

Other examples:

- It's great that you've passed your exam
- It is well known that cigarettes cause cancer
- It is untrue that AIDS is caused by UFOs

2.2.3.5

A noun clause can also be **in apposition**. Apposition means 'lying alongside'. In the sentence

Adam, the first man, ate an apple

'Adam' and 'the first man' are both the subject of the verb 'ate'. They are just simple nouns but we can use a noun clause in the same way:

The suggestion that we go out to lunch was accepted by all

The noun clause 'that we go out to lunch' has the same function in the sentence as 'the suggestion'.

Some more examples:

- *The announcement that a new airport would be built at Badgery's Creek has been delayed*
- *A report that brisk walking is beneficial has been published*
- *She agreed with my opinion that the book was nonsense*
- *What do you think of the rumour that the boss has AIDS?*

Exercise 10.

Here is an extract from a literature review. Find the noun clauses and say what their function is (what they are doing) in the sentence – subject, object, with dummy 'it' or in apposition.

A study of 124 sedentary adults has found that those assigned to aerobic exercise improved their thinking ability on a variety of objective measures. Results suggest that the cognitive benefits only needed a relatively small improvement in fitness levels. It is difficult to explain. The researchers, however, believe that not all parts of the brain age uniformly. It appears that aerobic exercise makes metabolic exercise in the brain more efficient and that the frontal lobes may gain most from it.

[Progress] Exercises

A. Find the main clause in the following complex sentences and then the subordinate clauses. What type are they and what is their function in the sentence (if they are adjectival, what non/pronoun are they qualifying; if adverbial, what verb; if noun, are they subject or object and of what verb?)

1. Keep on using the drugs which are prescribed
2. When the sun rose, the people who slept in the tent got up early so that they could do their exercises
3. If the villagers were hungry we shared with them the little rice that we had left
4. Although most people believe differently, a recent study which was conducted in Australia has shown that elderly people can succeed at university
5. He says that he asked whether it was free. [Hint: This is a noun clause within a noun clause; turn them into direct questions first]

B. *Here are some incomplete sentences. Complete them using your own words – sometimes you will have to guess what the student meant.*

1. Self-determination which gives opportunity to indigenous people to find solutions
2. When a person is unhealthy and not managing well
3. Infant difficulties which are associated with physiological processes
4. Because there are patients with special communication difficulties
5. If the needs of elderly clients are to be met and the results noted

Section 3 More about Verbs

3.1 Tenses

Students often have problems with tenses when they write reports. We use **present** tense for routine actions and **past** when we report on what has happened.

Exercise 11

Here is a list of instructions. Turn them into a report of what you observed on your clinical placement.

explain procedure to patient -> The procedure was explained to the patient.
 position patient
 calculate dosage
 cover with shield
 position machine
 switch it on

Another occasion when tense is a problem is when writing up a research report. A simple rule is: Use past tense for what was done in the study (is it happening now?) and present tense for generalisations (is it still true?)

Exercise 12

In the following passage, write the correct form of the verb in the brackets.

A total of 90 students (return) the questionnaires. 41 students (be) male and 45 (indicate) that they (be) female while 4 (fail) to specify their gender.

It (appear) that communication problems (be) not the sole prerogative of non-native speakers. Four respondents (have) trouble understanding elderly patients and one student (blame) his problem on his shy personality. One (complain) of a member of staff who (make) him feel uncomfortable and another (say) that the supervisor's

instruction (be) too vague.. The respondents (feel) unable to cope with elderly patients, those who (be) sick or in pain and those who (suffer) from dementia. Lack of friendliness on the part of hospital staff and ignorance of protocol on the part of students (lead) to a very strained atmosphere.

Before the next clinical placements, it (be) recommended that senior students (address) the first years about their experience of clinicals and the novices (can have) the opportunity to (ask) them questions that they could not ask anyone else.

Exercise 13

Find the incorrect sentences and correct them.

1. The article reports on an experiment which researchers conducted last year.
2. I arrive in Australia two years ago.
3. I have been in Australia since two years.
4. I stayed in Australia since 1994.
5. I study at the University of Sydney.

3.2 Active and Passive Verbs

An active verb is one in which the subject of the verb is also the doer of the action, e.g. The cook poisoned the woman.

A passive verb is one where the subject of the verb is not the doer of the action but the victim, sufferer, patient, (hence the word passive) e.g. The woman was poisoned by the cook

The subject of the active verb (the cook) becomes the agent of the passive verb and is usually preceded by the preposition 'by'. Often, however, it is not mentioned when the agent is not known or is not considered important or is understood.

e.g

- My house was burgled while I was out
- The tree was planted in 1800
- The patient should be monitored every 2 hours

The passive of an active verb is formed by putting the verb 'to be' into the same tense as the active verb (in the examples the past tense) and adding the past participle of the active verb

Poisoned → was poisoned

Keep → is kept

Will make → will be made

Has seen → has been seen

Is flooding → is being flooded

In English, we tend to put in the subject position in the sentence whatever we wish to emphasise. We use the active verb when we wish to make the doer of the action prominent; we use passive when the action is more important.

What is the difference between these two sentences?

All the data was lost when the computer operator failed to save it.
The computer operator lost all the data when he failed to save it

Exercise 14

Identify whether the verbs in these sentences are active or passive. If they are passive, turn them into actives and if they are active, turn them into passives.

1. Potatoes contain a substance which reduces appetite
2. Several drug companies have tried to replicate this chemical unsuccessfully
3. Researchers in New York have produced a potato-based drink
4. No placebo-controlled trials have yet been conducted
5. Obese people however have been given hope

Students sometimes use passive when an active verb is needed.

Exercise 15

In the following sentences, find the verb and subject of the verb and decide whether the subject is the doer or recipient of the action. Correct them if necessary.

1. He was used his calculator to work out the cost
2. Fifty new workers have been hired at the factory
3. Nursing care has been made progress in the last decade
4. Assertion skills must be applied in practice
5. The ointment should be applied thinly to the wound.

ANSWERS

Ex 1.

Yang et al carried out a study on a 74-year old man **who** suffered a severe reaction to a cholesterol-lowering drug. The man recovered fully and quickly once **he** stopped taking **it**. The drug caused muscle weakness as a side-effect although **it** is one of the most commonly prescribed **ones**. The researchers do not understand why the drug affected the patient but **they** are investigating

Ex 2a

1. verb 'arrived'
2. verb 'need'
3. verb 'forced'
4. adj 'late'
5. adj 'beautiful' / adj 'poor'
6. adj 'anxious' / adj 'hot'
7. adv 'fast'
8. adv 'well'
9. adv 'obviously'

Ex 2b

1. 'well' modifying verb 'assimilated' / 'hard' modifying 'worked'
2. 'very' modifying another adverb 'soon' / 'soon' modifying verb 'will be published' [Note: the adverbs break the verb up].
3. 'cynically' modifying adjective 'exploitative'

Ex 3

2. on, under - place
3. with - manner
4. by - instrumentality, in - place, at - time

Ex 4

1. and - coordinating
2. which - subordinating
3. or - coordinating
4. because - sub
5. that - sub
6. but - coord

Progress

1. adverb (short for 'around')
2. verb

3. adjective
4. preposition
5. noun

Ex 5

1. A thick layer of snow
2. He
3. We
4. [You]
5. She

Ex 6

1. who hesitates – he
2. that lived in the house – mouse
3. whose assignment was lost – student
4. whom you seek – the one
5. whose recreation was entirely physical – her brothers

Ex 7

After –time

Where - place

Because – reason

As – manner

So ... that – result

Although – concession

If - condition

As/than – comparison

Ex 8

1. Is it true?
2. When is the train due?
3. Where are the toilets?
4. Where are you going?

Ex 9

1. whatever you tell them – Object
2. who told me – O
3. that there would be a strike – O
4. that he left his wife – S
5. when he'll pay me back – O

Ex 10

1. that those assigned to aerobic exercise improved their thinking ability on a variety of objective measures. *Object of verb 'has found'*
2. that the cognitive benefits only needed a relatively small improvement in fitness levels. *Object of verb 'suggest'*
3. that not all parts of the brain age uniformly. *Object of verb 'believe'*

4. that aerobic exercise makes metabolic exercise in the brain more efficient . *Object* that aerobic exercise makes metabolic exercise in the brain more efficient and that the frontal lobes may gain most from it. *Object of verb 'appears'*
5. and that the frontal lobes may gain most from it. *Also object of verb 'appears'*

Progress

A.

1.

Keep on using the drugs - principal
which are prescribed adjectival, modifying 'drugs'

2.

When the sun rose – adverbial of time modifying 'got up'
the people.... got up early - principal
who slept in the tent – adjectival mod 'people'
so that they could do their exercises – adverbial of purpose modifying 'got up'

3.

If the villagers were hungry – adverbial of condition mod 'shared'
we shared with them the little rice - principal
that we had left – adjectival mod 'rice'

4.

Although most people believe differently – adv of concession mod 'has shown'
a recent study has shown - principal
which was conducted in Australia - adjectival mod 'study'
that elderly people can succeed at university – noun clause, object of 'has shown'

5.

He says - principal
that he asked – noun clause object of 'says'
whether it was free – noun clause obj of 'asked'.

B. [I give a suggestion for each of these – many possibilities!]

1. . Self-determination which gives opportunity to indigenous people to find solutions
must be pursued by the government

2. When a person is unhealthy and not managing well **there is no need for interventions**

3. Infant difficulties which are associated with physiological processes **are often not noticed until quite late**

4. Because there are patients with special communication difficulties, **interpreters may be needed.**

5. If the needs of elderly clients are to be met and the results noted , **time an money will have to made available to the health care team**

Ex 12

A total of 90 students **returned** the questionnaires. 41 students **were** male and 45 **indicated** that they **were** female while 4 **failed** to specify their gender.

It **appears** that communication problems **are** not the sole prerogative of non-native speakers. Four respondents **had** trouble understanding elderly patients and one student **blamed** his problem on his shy personality. One **complained** of a member of staff who **made** him feel uncomfortable and another **said** that the supervisor's instruction **was** too vague. The respondents **felt** unable to cope with elderly patients, those who **were** sick or in pain and those who **suffered** from dementia. Lack of friendliness on the part of hospital staff and ignorance of protocol on the part of students **led** to a very strained atmosphere.

Before the next clinical placements, it **is** recommended that senior students **address** the first years about their experience of clinicals and the novices **can have** the opportunity to **ask** them questions that they could not ask anyone else.

Ex 13

1. Correct
2. I **arrived** in Australia two years ago.
3. I have been in Australia **since 2001** OR **for two years**.
4. I **have** stayed in Australia since 1994.
5. Correct

Ex 14

1. active
2. active
3. Active...
4. Passive
5. Passive

Ex 15

1. He **used** his calculator to work out the cost: Subject is doer – so should be active
2. Correct Subject is Recipient so passive is right
3. Nursing care **has made** progress in the last decade: Subject is doer → active
4. Correct! Subject is recipient → passive
5. Correct! Subject is recipient → passive