**Nouns**

A noun is a word that represents a person, place, or thing. In a sentence, nouns answer the questions who and what.

Example: The *dog* ran after the *ball*.

In the sentence above, there are two nouns, *dog* and *ball*. A noun may be concrete (something you can touch, see, etc.), like the nouns in the example above, or a noun may be abstract, as in the sentences below.

Example 1: She has *integrity*.

Example 2: He was searching for *love*.

The abstract concepts of *integrity* and *love* in the sentences above are both nouns. Nouns may also be proper.

Example 1: She visited *Chicago* every year.

Example 2: *Thanksgiving* is in *November*.

*Chicago*, *Thanksgiving*, and *November* are all proper nouns, and they should be capitalized.

**Articles**

Articles include *a*, *an*, and *the*. They precede a noun or a noun phrase in a sentence.

Example 1: They wanted *a* house with *a* big porch.

Example 2: He bought *the* blue sweater on sale.

In example 1, the article *a* precedes the noun *house*, and *a* also precedes the noun phrase*big porch*, which consists of an adjective (big) and the noun it describes (porch). In example 2, the article *the* precedes the noun phrase *blue sweater*, in which *sweater* is the noun and*blue* the adjective.

**Pronouns**

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun in a sentence.

Example: *She* decided to go to a movie.

In the sentence above, *she* is the pronoun. Like nouns, pronouns may be used either as subjects or as objects in a sentence.

Example: *She* planned to ask *him* for an interview.

In the example above, both *she* and *him* are pronouns; *she* is the subject of the sentence while *him* is the object. Every subject pronoun has a corresponding object form, as shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subject and Object Pronouns** | |
| *Subject Pronouns* | *Object Pronouns* |
| I | Me |
| We | Us |
| You | You |
| She | Her |
| He | Him |
| It | It |
| They | Them |

**Adjectives**

An adjective is a word that modifies, or describes, a noun or pronoun. Adjectives may precede nouns, or they may appear after a form of the reflexive verb to be (am, are, is, was, etc.).

Example 1: We live in the *red brick* house.

Example 2: She is *tall* for her age.

In example 1, two consecutive adjectives, *red* and *brick*, both describe the noun house. In example 2, the adjective *tall* appears after the reflexive verb *is* and describes the subject, *she*.

**Verbs**

A verb is a word that represents an action, or a state of being, in a sentence.

Example 1: Beth *rides* the bus every day.

Example 2: Paul *was* an avid reader.

In example 1, *rides* is the verb; it describes what the subject, Beth, does. In example 2,*was* describes Paul’s state of being and is therefore the verb.

There may be multiple verbs in a sentence, or there may be a verb phrase consisting of a verb plus a helping verb.

Example 1: She *turned* the key and *opened* the door.

Example 2: Jackson *was studying* when I saw him last.

In example 1, the subject *she* performs two actions in the sentence, *turned* and *opened*. In example 2, the verb phrase is *was studying*.

**Adverbs**

Just as adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify, or further describe, verbs. Adverbs may also modify adjectives. (Many, though not all, adverbs end in -*ly*.)

Example 1: He waved *wildly* to get her attention.

Example 2: The shirt he wore to the party was *extremely* bright.

In the first example, the adverb *wildly* modifies the verb *waved*. In the second example, the adverb *extremely* modifies the adjective *bright*, which describes the noun *shirt*. While nouns answer the questions *who* and *what*, adverbs answer the questions *how*, *when*, *why*, and *where*.

**Conjunctions**

A conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses, or sentences, together.

Example 1: Ellen wanted to take a drive into the city, *but* the cost of gasoline was too high.

Example 2: Richard planned to study abroad in Japan, *so* he decided to learn the language.

In the examples above, both *but* and *so* are conjunctions. They join two complete sentences with the help of a comma. *And, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet* can all act as conjunctions.

**Prepositions**

Prepositions work in combination with a noun or pronoun to create phrases that modify verbs, nouns/pronouns, or adjectives. Prepositional phrases give readers a sense of space, time, or direction.

Example 1: Ivy climbed *up* the brick wall *of* the house.

There are two prepositional phrases in the example above: *up the brick wall* and *of the house*. The first prepositional phrase is an adverbial phrase, since it modifies the verb by describing where the ivy climbed. The second phrase further modifies the noun *wall* (the object of the first prepositional phrase) and describes which wall the ivy climbs.