

Glossary of Grammatical Terms

UWF Writing Lab

ABSOLUTE PHRASE - A phrase that, instead of modifying a particular word, acts like an adverb to the rest of the sentence in which it appears:

All struggle over, the troops lay down their arms.
Time out having been called, four commercials were shown.

ADJECTIVE - A word that modifies a noun, specifying such things as how many, what kind, and which one.

For a *small* crime, he was made to spend *seven* years in a *tiny* cell of the *old* prison.

ADJECTIVE PHRASE - A phrase that modifies a noun.

On the table was a bouquet *of red roses*.
The man *in the center of the picture* has never been identified.

ADJECTIVE (Relative) CLAUSE - A subordinate clause that is used as an adjective within a sentence. It normally begins with a relative pronoun, a word that relates the clause to a preceding word or phrase and thus makes the clause modify that word or phrase.

Pablo Picasso, *who learned to paint by the age of twelve*, worked at his art for nearly eighty years.

ADVERB - A word that modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a clause. It tells such things as how, when, where, why, and for what purpose. It often ends in *-ly*.

The cyclist breathed *heavily*.
She spoke *forcefully*.
Trains are *frequently* late.

ADVERB CLAUSE - A subordinate clause that is used as an adverb within a sentence. It commonly modifies another entire clause, but can also modify a word or phrase. It begins with a subordinator, a term like *before*, *because*, *when*, *since* or *although*.

Because he faltered in the seventh inning, the pitcher was taken off the mound.

Smiling *when the guests arrived*, she was miserable *by the time they left*.

To cut all the grass *before the rains came*, I had to work fast.

ADVERB PHRASE - A phrase that modifies a verb, another adverb, or a clause.

The fox jumped *over the hedge*.
Wary *at first*, he soon threw caution *to the winds*.

The Amazon runs *through some of the most densely vegetated land in the world*.

On the eve of the battle, the valley seemed peaceful.

AGREEMENT OF PRONOUN AND ANTECEDENT - Correspondence in gender and number between a pronoun and its antecedent.

Nellie Bly, the American journalist, was noted for *her* daring.
[*Her* is feminine and singular.]

Ms. Stearns handed Mr. Nichols *his* briefcase.
[*His* is masculine and singular.]

You can't tell a book by *its* cover.
[*Its* is neuter and singular.]

The Andrews Sisters sang some of *their* best-known songs during World War II.
[*Their* is plural and used for all genders.]

AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB - Correspondence in number between the form of a verb and its subject. In most cases, the subject affects the form of the verb only in the present tense; when the subject is a singular noun or a third-person singular pronoun, the present tense is made by the addition of *-s* or *-es* to the bare form.

Naomi *paints* houses.
He *fishes* every summer.

When the subject is not a singular noun or a third-person singular pronoun, the present tense is normally the same as the bare form.

I *paint* houses.
The men *fish* every summer.

ANTECEDENT - The word or word group that a pronoun refers to.

Oliver said that he could eat a whole pizza.
[*Oliver* is the antecedent of *he*.]

The police, who have surrounded the building, expect to free the hostages tonight.
[*The police* is the antecedent of *who*.]

A *snake* sheds its skin several times a year.
[A *snake* is the antecedent of *its*.]

APPOSITIVE - A noun or noun phrase that is used to identify another noun or noun phrase, or a pronoun.

The blackjack player, *an expert at counting cards in play*, was barred from the casino.

He was denied his favorite foods--*ice cream, pizza, and peanut butter*.

He and she--*brother and sister*--decided to run away from home together.

ARTICLE - A short word commonly used before a noun or noun equivalent. The articles are *a*, *an*, and *the*.

The bombing of *the* village provoked *a* storm of protest.

AUXILIARY (Helping Verb) - A verb used with a base verb to make a verb phrase.

I *have* seen the Kennedy Library

It *was* designed by I.M. Pei.

ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN - A noun serving as an adjective:

The *Massachusetts* way of doing things

or

A *gun* lover

CASE - The form that a noun or pronoun takes as determined by its role in a sentence. The subject case is used for a pronoun that is the subject of a verb.

The dog was far from home, but *he* still wore a leather collar.

The object case is used for a pronoun that is the object of a verb or preposition, or that immediately precedes an infinitive.

I found *him* trailing a broken leash behind *him*.

I wanted *him* to come with *me*.

The possessive case of a noun or pronoun is used to indicate ownership of something or close connection with it. The possessive case is the only one for which the noun has a special form.

The *dog's* hind feet were bleeding, and *his* coat was muddy.

The reflexive/emphatic case of a pronoun is used to indicate a reflexive action--an action affecting the one who performs it. This case is also used for emphasis.

The dog had injured *himself*; I *myself* had seen him do so.

CLAUSE - A cluster of words containing a subject and a predicate. All clauses are either independent or subordinate (dependent). An *independent* clause makes a complete statement and

thus can stand alone: *Biff held the cologne in front of the camera*. A subordinate clause, which doesn't make a complete statement, can't stand alone: *before I go out on the field*. In *I splash myself with his he-man preparation before I go out on the field*, the subordinate clause modifies the main verb *splash*.

Among subordinate clauses, an *adjectival* clause serves the function of an adjective:

ADJ CLAUSE

The model, *who was gorgeous*, pretended to faint in ecstasy.

The adjectival clause modifies a noun *model*, as in *the gorgeous model*.

An *adverbial* clause serves the function of an adverb:

ADV CLAUSE

She swore at Biff *when he tried to help her up*.

The adverbial clause modifies the verb *swore*, as in *she swore then*.

And a *noun* clause serves the function of a noun:

NOUN CLAUSE

That a little cologne could cause such extreme reactions surprised him.

The noun clause serves as the subject of the verb *surprised*, as in *reactions surprised him*.

A word group consisting of a subject and a predicate.

S P
We / bought an old house. [one clause]

S P S P
After we / bought the house, we / found a crack in the foundation.

S P S P S P
Furthermore, the roof / leaked, the floors / sagged, and the furnace / was out of order.
(three clauses)

COMMA SPLICE (comma fault) - The error of joining two independent clauses with nothing but a comma.

*Sir Richard Burton failed to trace the source of the Nile, John Hanning Speke discovered it in 1862.

REVISED: Sir Richard Burton failed to trace the source of the Nile; John Hanning Speke discovered it in 1862.

COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE - Forms of the adjective and adverb. The comparative is used to compare one person, thing, or group with another person, thing, or group.

Los Angeles is bigger than Sacramento.
Cal was more ambitious than his classmates.
Sheila argued more persuasively than Tim did.
In general, women live longer than men.

The superlative is used to compare one person, thing, or group with all others in its class.

Joan's quilt was the most colorful thing on display.
Whales are the largest of all mammals.
George was the most eagerly awaited bachelor at the party.

COMPARISON - A noting of the similarities and differences--or just the similarities--between two or more things of the same class.

Like a tramp, a hobo is a homeless vagrant with little or no money; but unlike a tramp, a hobo will sometimes do odd jobs.

COMPLEMENT - Usually, an element in the predicate that identifies or describes the subject. A single-word complement is either a predicate noun or a predicate adjective.

PRED N
He is a fool.

PRED ADJ
He is foolish.

In addition, a direct object can have a complement, known as an objective complement:

D OBJ OBJ COMPL
They consider him unteachable.

Infinitives, too, can have complements:

INF COMPL INF
They beg him to be serious.

COMPOUND (adj.) - Consisting of more than one word, as in a compound noun (ice cream), a compound preposition (in spite of), or a compound subject (He and she were there). A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses separated by a coordinating conjunction. A comma precedes the conjunction.

COMPLEX SENTENCE - A sentence consisting of one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause. The independent clause in a complex sentence is usually called the main clause.

Although Frank was pleased with Ida (subordinate clause), she would not give him the money (main clause).

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE - A sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.

When I moved to Chicago (subordinate clause), I first applied for a job (main clause), and then I looked for an apartment (main clause).

COMPOUND PHRASE - Words or phrases joined by a conjunction, a comma, or both.

The plan was simple but shrewdly conceived.

We saw an old, rough-skinned, enormous elephant.

The kitten was lively, friendly, and curious.

You must either pay your dues on time or turn in your membership card.

COMPOUND SENTENCE - A sentence normally consisting of an if clause, which states a condition, and a result clause, which states the result of that condition.

If it rains on the Fourth of July, the fireworks will be canceled.

If Social Security were abolished, millions of retirees would be destitute.

CONJUNCTION (coordinating conjunction) - A word used to show a relation between words, phrases, or clauses. The conjunctions are and, |yet, |or, |but, |nor, and--joining clauses only--for and so.

The tablecloth was red, white, and blue.

Small but sturdy, the cabin had withstood many winters.

Al and Joan walked to the meeting, for they liked exercise.

An uninflected word that connects other words, phrases, or clauses: and, although, etc.

A coordinating conjunction joins grammatically similar elements, without turning one into a modifier of the other: and, |but, |for, |nor, |or, |so, |yet.

A subordinating conjunction joins grammatically dissimilar elements, turning one of them into a modifier and specifying its logical relation to the other--e.g., Although in Although you are sad, I am cheerful.

Correlative conjunctions are matched pairs with a coordinating function: either/or, neither/nor, etc.

CONCISENESS - Economy of expression. Not to be confused with simplicity; conciseness enables a maximum of meaning to be communicated in a minimum of words.

CORRELATIVES - Words or phrases used in pairs to join words, phrases, or clauses. Correlatives include both. . .and, | not only. . .but also, | either. . .or, | neither. . .nor, | and whether. . . or.

He was both rich and handsome.

She not only got the part but also played it brilliantly.

Either they would visit us, or we would visit them.

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB (sentence adverb) - An adverb that also serves to indicate a logical connection between the modified clause or whole sentence and a previous statement--e.g., therefore in He took the job; therefore, he had to resign his fellowship.

CONTRACTION - The condensing of two words into one, with an apostrophe added to replace the omitted letter or letters: isn't, don't, etc.

DANGLING MODIFIER - A modifier without a headword--a word or phrase that it can modify.

*Running angrily out the back way, a couple of milk bottles were overturned.

REVISED: Running angrily out the back way, he overturned a couple of milk bottles.

DEGREE - The form of an adjective or adverb showing its quality, quantity, or intensity. The ordinary, uncomparative form of an adjective or adverb is its positive degree: Quick, Quickly. The comparative degree is intermediate, indicating that the modified term surpasses at least one other member of its group: quicker, more quickly. And an adjective or adverb in the superlative degree indicates that the modified term surpasses all other members of its group: quickest, most quickly.

Note that the three degrees show increasing extremeness or coverage, but not necessarily increasing size or value: little, | less, | least; | bad, | worse, | worst, etc.

DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE - A demonstrative pronoun form serving as modifier--e.g., those in those laws.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN - A pronoun that singles out what it refers to: this, | that, | these, or those, when not used as a modifier. Those is a demonstrative pronoun in Those are the laws. Cf. demonstrative adjective.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE (subordinate clause) - A clause that normally begins with a subordinator, a relative pronoun, or some other subordinating word, such as whoever or whatever. Such a clause cannot stand alone as a sentence. It must be connected to or included in a main clause.

Because Mrs. Braithwaite was writing her memoirs, she reviewed all her old diaries and correspondence. The essay that won the prize was written by a freshman. I didn't know where she left the key.

DICTION - The choice of words, especially insofar as they contribute to different tones or occupy different levels:

FORMAL

impecunious
appellation
deranged
livelihood

MIDDLE

bankrupt
name
crazy
job

INFORMAL

broke
handle
nuts
racket

Extremely informal diction of a faddish character is called slang: together dude, Your threads gross me out, etc.

DIRECT OBJECT (object) - A word or word group naming a person or thing affected by the action that a verb, an infinitive, or a participle specifies.

I hit the ball.

Sighting the bear he started to aim his rifle.

Splitting wood is hard work.

A direct object names the person or thing directly affected by the action specified.

The accountant prepared my tax return.

An indirect object names the person or thing indirectly affected by the action specified.

I gave Joe a bit of advice.

She bought her father a shirt.

Objects also include any word or word group that immediately follows a preposition.

For her, the meeting was crucial.

I found the sponge under the kitchen sink.

DOUBLE POSSESSIVE - A possessive form (see case) using both of and 's: an idea of Linda's.

FAULTY PARALLELISM - An error in which two or more parts of a sentence are parallel in meaning but not parallel in form.

*I want to learn how to write with simplicity, clarity, and logically.

REVISED: I want to learn how to write with simplicity, clarity, and logic.

FAULTY PREDICATION - the use of a linking verb between two expressions that are not equivalent.

*What surprised me was when she canceled the party.

REVISED: What surprised me was her cancellation of the party.

FAULTY TENSE SHIFT - An unjustified shift from one tense to another, or an inconsistency between the tense of a subordinate verb and the tense of the main verb.

*I lit a candle, but the darkness is so thick I saw nothing.

REVISED: I lit a candle, but the darkness was so thick I saw nothing.

*Though he blows as hard as he could, the drummer drowned him out.

REVISED: Though he blew as hard as he could, the drummer drowned him out.

FRAGMENT (sentence fragment) - A part of a sentence punctuated as if it were a whole one.

The plant drooped. And died. I could not get into the house. Because I had forgotten my key.

REVISED: The plant drooped and died. I could not get into the house because I had forgotten my key.

FUSED SENTENCE - Two or more independent clauses run together with no punctuation or conjunction between them.

*Mosquitos arrived at dusk they whined about our ears as we huddled in our sleeping bags.

REVISED: Mosquitos arrived at dusk, and they whined about our ears as we huddled in our sleeping bags.

GENDER - The form of a pronoun as determined by the sex of its antecedent, which may be masculine, feminine, or neuter.

Bill (antecedent) brought his fishing rod, and Sally (antecedent) brought her paints.

The sun (antecedent) shed its rays over the lake.

GERUND (verbal noun) - A word or phrase formed from a verb and used as a noun.

Hunting was once the sport of kings.

I like traveling.

Fixing bicycles keeps me busy.

Sacrificing his rook would have been Gilman's best move.

A verbal noun made with a present participle--such as hunting or fixing--is sometimes called a gerund.

HELPING VERB (auxiliary) - A verb used with a base verb to make a verb phrase.

I have seen the Kennedy Library.
It was designed by I.M. Pei.

IMPERATIVE MOOD (mood) - The form of a verb that indicates the writer's attitude toward a particular statement as it is made. The indicative is the mood used in statements of actuality or strong probability.

He lingered over his second cup of coffee.
We will sleep well tonight.

The imperative is the mood of commands and requests made directly.

Be quiet!
Please go away.
Let us pray.
Down, Fido!

The subjunctive is the mood used in statements of hypothetical conditions or of wishes, recommendations, requirements, or suggestions. Normally the subjunctive requires either a modal auxiliary or a subjunctive verb form.

I wish I could say yes, but I'm busy on Saturday night. (wish)
I wish I were a rock star. (wish)
Each member must pay her dues by December 1. (requirement)
The rules require that each member pay her dues by Dec. 1. (requirement)

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE - A clause that begins without a subordinator, a relative pronoun, or any other subordinating word, such as whatever or whoever. Such a clause can stand by itself as a simple sentence.

The roof leaks.

It can be combined with one or more other independent clauses in a compound sentence.

The roof leaks, and the floor sags.

And it can serve as the main clause in a complex sentence.

Whenever it rains, the roof leaks.

INDICATIVE MOOD - See imperative mood.

INDIRECT OBJECT - See direct object.

INDUCTIVE ARGUMENT - A type of argument in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of examples.

INFINITIVE - A form usually made by the placing of to before the bare form of a verb.

Some say that politicians are born to run.
The prisoners of war refused to continue their forced march.

After some verbs, the to in the infinitive is omitted. Compare:

Jack wanted the little boy to feed the ducks.
Jack watched the little boy feed the ducks.

INFINITIVE PHRASE - A phrase formed by an infinitive and its object, its modifiers, or both.

She hates to see horror movies.
It was beginning to rain furiously.
I hope to find a job soon.

INTRANSITIVE VERB - A verb followed by a word or word group that identifies or describes the subject.

This machine is a drill press.
I feel good today.
That perfume smells sweet.

MAIN CLAUSE - The independent clause in a complex sentence.

Since there was no food in the house, we went to a restaurant.

MAIN VERB - The verb of the independent clause in a complex sentence.

I cut the grass before the storm came.
Since the store was closed, we drove away.

MISPLACED MODIFIER - A modifier that does not clearly point to its headword--the word or phrase it modifies.

*Crawling slowly up the tree, the elderly Mrs. Cartwright spotted a bright green worm.
REVISED: The elderly Mrs. Cartwright spotted a bright green worm crawling slowly up the tree.

MODAL AUXILIARY - A helping verb that indicates the subjunctive mood.

The children should be here on Father's Day this year.
I'm not so sure that the average citizen can fight City Hall.

Besides should and can, the modal auxiliaries include would, could, may, might, must, and ought.

MODIFIER - A word or phrase that describes, limits, or qualifies another word or phrase in a sentence.

Pat smiled winningly.
I rarely travel anymore.
The big gray cat seized the little muse.
Polished to a high gloss, the mahogany table immediately drew our attention.

MOOD - See imperative mood.

NONRESTRICTIVE MODIFIER - See restrictive and nonrestrictive modifiers.

NOUN - A word that names a person, creature, place, thing, activity, condition, or idea.

NOUN CLAUSE - A subordinate clause that is used as a noun within a sentence. It serves as a subject, object, predicate noun, or object of a preposition.

Whoever contributed to the office party deserves many thanks.
I said that I was hungry.
You are what you eat.
She was amazed by what I said.

NOUN EQUIVALENT - A verbal noun or a noun clause.

NOUN PHRASE - A phrase formed by a noun and its modifiers.

She floated happily on a big, fat, black inner tube.
The eighteenth-century building was declared a landmark last week.

NUMBER - The form of a word as determined by the number of persons or things it refers to. Most nouns and many pronouns may be singular or plural.

A carpenter (singular) works hard.
Carpenters (plural) work hard.
Jeff said that he (singular) would give the party.
All his (singular) friends said that they (plural) would come.

OBJECT - See direct object.

OBJECT CASE - See case.

OBJECT COMPLEMENT - A word or word group that immediately follows a direct object and identifies or describes it.

I find card games boring.

They named their son Franklin.

The president appointed Smathers ambassador to India.

PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION - The arrangement of two or more elements of a sentence in grammatically equivalent patterns: Noun lined up with noun, verb with verb, phrase with phrase, and clause with clause.

Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote.

--Daniel Webster

We must take the risk or lose our chance.

PARTICIPLE - A term usually made by the addition of -ing, -d, or -ed to the bare form of a verb.

Present Participle: calling living burning lifting

Past Participle: called lived burned lifted

A perfect participle is made by the combination of having or having been with the past participle.

having called

having been lifted

PARTICIPLE PHRASE - A phrase formed by a participle and its object, its modifiers, or both.

Screaming the lyrics of its hit song, the rock group could hardly be heard above the cheers of the crowd.

Wearied after their long climb, the hikers were glad to stop and make camp.

Harriet picked at the knot, loosening it gradually.

PASSIVE VOICE - See voice.

PAST PARTICIPLE - See participle.

PAST PERFECT TENSE - See tense.

PAST TENSE - See tense.

PERFECT PARTICIPLES - See participle.

PERSONAL PRONOUN - The pronouns traditionally used in the conjugation (tense formation) of verbs--I, you, he, she, it, we, and they--plus the objective and possessive forms of these pronouns: me, my, mine, your, yours, etc.

PREDICATE - A word or word group that tells what the subject of a sentence does, has, or is, or what is done to it.

The strong man can lift 450 pounds.

The pastry chef makes doughnuts, napoleons, and eclairs.

Venice is a golden city interlaced with canals.

A base predicate is a predicate without its modifiers.

Simon and Garfunkel sang for a crowd of almost half a million.

The little boys threw snowballs at all of the passing cars.

They were therefore punished.

PREDICATE ADJECTIVE - A word that follows a linking verb and describes the subject.

Henry seems upset.
Velvet feels soft.

PREDICATE NOUN - A word that follows a linking verb and identifies the subject.

Bill Gorham is treasurer.
“Ma Bell” is a nickname.
Time was our only enemy.
Children eventually become adults.

PREPOSITION - A word used to show the relationship of a noun, pronoun, or noun equivalent to another word or word group in a sentence.

The table was set under a tree.
Hounded by his creditors, he finally declared himself bankrupt.

Besides under and by, prepositions include with, at, of, in, and on.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE - A phrase that starts with a preposition. Phrases of this type are regularly used as adjectives or adverbs.

Helen is the woman with the quizzical expression on her face.
Have you ridden on the Ferris wheel?

PRESENT PARTICIPLE - See participle.

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE - See tense.

PRESENT TENSE - See tense.

PRINCIPAL PARTS - The present, present participle, past, and past participle of a verb.

PRESENT (BARE FORM)	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
see work	seeing working	saw worked	seen worked

PROGRESSIVE FORM - (common and progressive forms) - Tense forms of the verb. The common form indicates a momentary, habitual, or completed action.

She cooks on weekends.
He cooked dinner last night.

I will cook next month.

The progressive form indicates a continuing action.

Divers are searching for the sunken ship.

Was I doing it right?

We will be seeing you.

The progressive consists of some form of the auxiliary be followed by a present participle--a verb with -ing on the end.

PRONOUN - A word that commonly takes the place of a noun or noun phrase. Pronouns may be definite or indefinite. A definite pronoun refers to an antecedent, a noun or noun phrase appearing before or shortly after the pronoun.

As soon as Grant (antecedent) saw the enemy, he ordered the men to fire.

Janis Joplin (antecedent) was only twenty-seven when she died.

Though he won the battle, Nelson (antecedent) did not live to savor the victory.

An indefinite pronoun refers to unspecified persons or things. It has no antecedent.

Everyone likes Marvin.

Anything you can do, I can do better.

Nobody around here ever tells me anything.

PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT - See agreement of pronoun and antecedent.

REFLEXIVE/EMPHATIC CASE - See Case.

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS - A regular verb is one for which the past and past participle are formed by the addition of -d or -ed to the present.

PRESENT (BARE FORM)	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
work	worked	worked
tickle	tickled	tickled
walk	walked	walked

An irregular verb is one for which the past, the past participle, or both are formed in other ways.

sew

sewed

sewn

have

had

had

eat

ate

eaten

RELATIVE CLAUSE - See adjective clause.

RELATIVE PRONOUN - A pronoun that introduces an adjective clause.

Women who like engineering are hard to find.

Some companies now make furnaces that burn wood as well as oil.

The relative pronouns are which, that, who, whom, and whose.

RESTRICTIVE AND NONRESTRICTIVE MODIFIERS - A restrictive modifier identifies or restricts the meaning of its headword.

All taxpayers who fail to file their returns by April 15 will be fined.

A restrictive modifier is essential to the meaning of a sentence; without the modifier, the meaning of the preceding sentence would be fundamentally different.

All taxpayers will be fined.

A nonrestrictive modifier does not identify or restrict the meaning of its headword.

Daphne, who loves football, cheered louder than anyone else.

A nonrestrictive modifier is not essential to the meaning of a sentence; without the modifier, the meaning of the preceding sentence remains basically the same.

Daphne cheered louder than anyone else.

RUN-ON SENTENCE - A fused sentence.

SANDWICHED MODIFIER - A modifier standing between two parts of a modified term:

His first, hastily assembled, draft of the paper was a mess.

The comma after assembled indicates that hastily assembled modifies first draft, not just draft.

Cf. squinting modifier.

SENTENCE - A word group containing at least one independent clause.

The telephone was ringing.

By the time I got out of the shower, the caller had hung up.

SENTENCE FRAGMENT - A part of a sentence punctuated as if it were a whole one.

The plant drooped. And died.
I could not get into the house. Because I had forgotten my key.

SEQUENCE OF TENSES - The relation between the tenses of the verbs in a sentence that contains more than one verb, or in a passage of several sentences.

By the time I arrived, everyone else had left.
When the parade goes through town, all the townspeople come to see it.

SIMPLE SENTENCE - A sentence consisting of one independent clause.

The rat ate the cheese.
Her desk was piled high with papers.

SIMPLE SUBJECT - See subject.

SPLIT INFINITIVE - An infinitive in which one or more adverbs are wedged between to and the verb.

The purchasing department is going to carefully check each new order.
BETTER: The purchasing department is going to check each new order carefully.

SQUINTING MODIFIER - A variety of misrelated modifiers trapped between sentence elements, either of which might be regarded as the modified term:

Why he collapsed altogether puzzles me.

Cf. sandwiched modifier.

SUBJECT - A word or word group that tells who or what performs or undergoes the action named by a verb, or experiences the condition named by the verb.

Gossip amuses me.
Morgan hit one of Johnson's best pitches.
Piccadilly Circus is the Times Square of London.
Does your allergy cause a rash?
Jan and I were pelted by the rain.

A simple subject is a subject without its modifiers.

The old dusty volumes fell to the floor.

A complete subject is a subject with its modifiers.

The old dusty volumes fell to the floor.

SUBJECT CASE - See case.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT - See agreement of subject and verb.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD - See mood.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE - See dependent clause.

SUBORDINATE VERB - The verb of a subordinate clause in a complex sentence.

I cut the grass before the storm came.
Since the door was open, I walked in.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION - See subordinator.

SUBORDINATION - An arrangement that makes one or more parts of a sentence grammatically subordinate to another part.

WITHOUT SUBORDINATION: The dog ate his dinner, and then he took a nap.
WITH SUBORDINATION: After the dog ate his dinner, he took a nap.

SUBORDINATOR (SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION) - A word or phrase used to introduce an adverb clause.

Before we left, I locked all the doors.

Besides before, subordinators include because, after, since, while, and even though.

SUPERLATIVE - See comparative and superlative.

TENSE - The form of a verb that helps to indicate the time of an action or condition.

Present: I jump.
Past: I jumped.
Future: I will jump.

Present Perfect: I have jumped.
Past Perfect: I had jumped.
Future Perfect: I will have jumped.

TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS - A transitive verb names an action that directly affects a person or thing specified in the predicate.

He struck the gong.
Water erodes even granite.

Did you mail the letters?
We elected Sloan.

An intransitive verb names an action that has no direct impact on anyone or anything specified in the predicate.

Wilson smiled at the comedian's best efforts, but he did not laugh.

VERB - A word or phrase naming an action done by or to a subject, or a condition experienced by a subject.

Cavanaugh runs every day.
Salmon swim upstream each year.
My aunt has lived in Chicago.
Reagan was elected by a landslide.

VERBAL NOUN - A word or phrase formed from a verb and used as a noun.

Hunting was once the sport of kings.
I want to travel.
Fixing bicycles keeps me busy.
To sacrifice his rook would have been Gilman's best move.

A verbal noun made with a present participle--such as hunting or fixing--is sometimes called a gerund. (See gerund)

VERB PHRASE - A phrase formed by two or more verbs--a base verb and at least one auxiliary

Richard may complete his experiment by July.
Alison would have come earlier if you had called her.

VOICE - The aspect of a verb that indicates whether the subject acts or is acted upon. A verb is in the active voice when the subject performs the action named by the verb.

She raised her hand. He ainted the ceiling. They built a house.

A verb is in the passive voice when the subject undergoes the action named by the verb.

I was told to do it that way. The operation was performed by a famous surgeon.
Is this form preferred?