



APSU Writing Center

Parts of Speech

Basic Parts of Speech

Resource: *LB Brief* handbook, 5th edition, which begins on page 190.

The basic parts of speech are **nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.**

Nouns

- Nouns are words that are used to name an animal, person, idea, place, or thing. Nouns usually act as the **subject** or **object** of a sentence.
 - **Example:** The **bird** ate the **seed**. The noun *bird* is the subject; the noun *seed* is the object.

Pronouns

- Pronouns are words that substitute for nouns.
 - **Example:** The **bird** ate all of **its** food. (*It* is a substitute for the noun *bird*.)

Verbs

- Verbs show action or state of being.
 - **Example:** The bird **flew** away. The verb *flew* shows action since it tells what the bird did.
 - **Example:** The students **are** tired. The verb *are* shows the state of being of the students.

Adjectives

- Adjectives modify (describe) nouns or pronouns. An adjective can describe size, color, number, kind, which, quality, etc., of the noun(s).
 - **Example:** The **red** bird ate the seed. *Red* describes the color of the noun *bird*.

Adverbs

- Adverbs generally modify (describe) verbs, but they can also modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They describe how, when, where, and to what extent. Adverbs can easily be recognized because many of them are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, though that is not always the case.
 - **Example:** The red bird **rapidly** ate the seed. *Rapidly* modifies the verb *ate* and describes *how* it ate the seed

Prepositions

- Prepositions combine with nouns and usually form phrases, called prepositional phrases. This combination shows location, time, or movement.
 - **Example:** The red bird rapidly ate the seed **near** the cats. The preposition *near* shows location of where the bird ate. *Near the cats* therefore forms a prepositional phrase.



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Conjunctions

- **Conjunctions** connect parts of speech, such as two or more nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, clauses, and phrases. The basic conjunctions are the coordinating conjunctions. An easy way to remember them is with the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, not, but, or, yet, so.
 - **Example:** The red **and** blue birds rapidly ate the seed near the cats. The conjunction *and* is connecting two adjectives *red* and *blue*.
 - **Example:** The red **and** blue birds rapidly ate the seed near the cats, **but** the cats were sleeping and did not see them. The conjunction *but* connects two complete clauses.

Articles

- **Articles** are special types of adjectives that precede singular or plural nouns or other parts of speech. The articles are *the*, *a*, and *an*. *A* usually precedes a noun that begins with a consonant, while *an* precedes a noun that begins with a vowel or a word pronounced with a vowel sound.
 - **Example:** **The** red and blue birds rapidly ate **the** seed near **a** cat, but **the** cat was sleeping and did not see them.
 - **Example:** **The** red and blue birds rapidly ate **the** seed near **an** orange cat, but the cat was sleeping for an hour and did not see them.
- Although the word *hour* begins with a consonant, *an* is used before it because the *h* is silent and the word begins with a vowel sound.
- Charlie wears **a** uniform at **the** school he attends.
- Although the word *uniform* begins with a vowel, *a* is used before it because the *u* in the word begins with the *y* consonant sound like the word *yellow*.