

Glossary of grammar terms

ABSTRACT NOUN a word used to refer to a quality, idea, feeling or experience, rather than a physical object. (e.g. *size, reason, happiness*)

ADJECTIVE a 'describing' word that tells you more about a person or thing, such as their appearance, colour, size or other qualities. (e.g. *pretty, blue, big*)

ADVERB a word usually used with verbs, adjectives or other adverbs that gives more information about when, where, how or in what circumstances something happens. (e.g. *quickly, happily, now*)

AGREEMENT changing word endings according to whether you are referring to masculine, feminine, singular or plural people or things.

APOSTROPHE a punctuation mark to indicate possession and to show where letters have been omitted in a contraction.

ARTICLE a word like *the, a* and *an*, which is used in front of a noun.

AUXILIARY VERBS a verb such as *be* or *have* when it is used with a main verb to form tenses.

BASE FORM the form of the verb without any endings added to it. (e.g. *walk, have, be*)

CARDINAL NUMBER a number used in counting. (e.g. *one, five, nine*)

CLAUSE a group of words containing a verb.

COMPARATIVE an adjective or adverb with *-er* on the end of it or *more* or *less* in front of it that is used to compare people, things or actions. (e.g. *slower, less important, more carefully*)

COMPOUND NOUN a word for a living being, thing or idea, which is composed of two or more words. (e.g. *tin-opener, railway station*)

CONCRETE NOUN a word that refers to an object that you can touch with your hand, rather than to a quality or idea. (e.g. *table, pear, ball*)

CONDITIONAL a verb form used to talk about things that would happen or would be true under certain conditions. (e.g. *I would help if I had the time*)

CONJUGATE (to) to give a verb different endings according to whether you are referring to *I, she, they* and so on, and according to whether you are referring to the past, present or future. (e.g. *she has, she had, she will have*)

CONJUGATION the change that takes place in a verb to express tense, mood or person.

CONJUNCTION a word that links two words or phrases of a similar type or two parts of a sentence. (e.g. *and, because, but*)

CONSONANT a letter of the alphabet which is not a **vowel**. (e.g. *b, d, s, t*)

CONSTRUCTION an arrangement of words together in a phrase or sentence.

DEFINITE ARTICLE the word *the*.

DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE one of the words *this, that, these* and *those* used with a noun to point out a particular person or thing. (e.g. *this woman, that chair*)

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN one of the words *this, that, these* and *those* used instead of a noun to point out people or things. (e.g. *that was fun.*)

DIRECT OBJECT a noun referring to the person or thing affected by the action described by a verb. (e.g. *She bought a car*)

DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN a word such as *me, him, us, them* which is used instead of a noun to stand in for the person or thing most directly affected by the action described by the verb.

DIRECT SPEECH a sentence where the exact words that are spoken are written in speech marks. (e.g. *He said "I hate it!"*)

EMPHATIC PRONOUN a word used instead of a noun when you want to emphasize something. (e.g. *Is this for me?*) Also called **stressed pronoun**.

ENDING a form added to a verb and to adjectives and nouns depending on whether they refer to masculine, feminine, singular or plural things. (e.g. *go* → *goes*)

FEMININE a form or noun, pronoun or adjective that is used to refer to a living being, thing or idea that is not classed as masculine.

FUTURE a verb tense used to talk about something that will happen or will be true.

GENDER whether a noun, pronoun or adjective is masculine or feminine.

IMPERATIVE the form of a verb used when giving orders and instructions. (e.g. *Sit down!*)

IMPERFECT one of the verb tenses used to talk about the past, especially in descriptions, and to say what was happening or used to happen. (e.g. *I used to walk to school.*)

IMPERSONAL VERB one which does not refer to a real person or thing and where the subject is represented by *it*. (e.g. *It is sunny*)

INDEFINITE ADJECTIVE one of a small group of adjectives used to talk about people or things in a general way, without saying who or what they are. (e.g. *several, every*)

INDEFINITE ARTICLE the word *a* and *an*.

INDIRECT OBJECT a noun used with verbs that take two objects. The indirect object is the person or the thing the action is intended to benefit or harm. (e.g. *I gave flowers to my mother.*)

INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN when a verb has two objects (a direct and an indirect one), the indirect object pronoun is used instead of a noun to show the person or the thing the action is intended to benefit or harm. (e.g. *Can you get her a towel?*)

INDIRECT SPEECH a sentence in which the content of another utterance is reported without directly quoting it. (e.g. *He said that he hated it.*)

INDIRECT QUESTION used to tell someone else about a question and introduced by a verb such as *ask, wonder* or *tell*. (e.g. *I wonder who she is.*)

INFINITIVE the form of the verb with *to* in front of it and without any endings added. (e.g. *to have, to go*)

INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVE a question word used with a noun to ask *who? what? Or which?* (e.g. *what instrument do you play?*)

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN one of the words *who, whose, whom, what* and *which* when they are used instead of a noun to ask questions. (e.g. *who is coming?*)

INVARIABLE used to describe a form which does not change.

IRREGULAR VERB a verb whose forms do not follow a general pattern or the normal rules.

MASCULINE a form of noun, pronoun or adjective that is used to refer to a living being, thing or idea that is not classed as feminine.

NEGATIVE a question or a statement which contains a word such as *not, never* or *nothing*, and is used to say that something is not happening, is not true or is absent. (e.g. *I never eat apples*)

NOUN a 'naming' word for a living being, thing or idea. (e.g. *chair, man, joy*)

NUMBER used to say how many things you are referring to or where something comes in a sequence. There are **cardinal** and **ordinal** numbers.

OBJECT a noun or pronoun which refers to a person or thing that is affected by the action described by the verb.

ORDINAL NUMBER a number used to indicate where something comes in an order or sequence. (e.g. *second, fourth*)

PARTITIVE ARTICLE the words *some* or *any*, used to refer to part of a thing but not all of it. (e.g. *I want some bread*)

PASSIVE a form of the verb that is used when the subject of the verb is the person or thing that is affected by the action. (e.g. *they were sold.*)

PAST PARTICIPLE a verb form which is used to form perfect and pluperfect tenses and passives. (e.g. *watched, done*). Some past participles are used as adjectives. (e.g. *a broken window*).

PERFECT one of the verb tenses used to talk about the past, especially about actions that took place and were completed in the past.

PERSON one of the three classes: first person (*I, we*), second person (*you* singular and plural) and the third person (*he, she, it* and *they*).

PLUPERFECT one of the verb tenses used to describe something that had happened or had been true at a point in the past. (e.g. *I had already eaten.*)

PLURAL the form of a word which is used to refer to more than one person or thing.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE one of the words *me, your, his, her, its, our* or *their*, used with a noun to show that one person or thing belongs to another. (e.g. *my mother*)

POSSESSIVE PRONOUN one of the words *mine, yours, hers, his, ours* or *theirs*, used instead of a noun to show that one person or thing belongs to another. (e.g. *This is mine*)

PREPOSITION is a word such as *at, for, with* or *in*, which is usually followed by a noun, pronoun, or, in English, a word ending in *-ing*. Preposition show how people and things relate to the rest of the sentence. (e.g. *I am at home.*)

PRESENT a verb form used to talk about what is true at the moment, what happens regularly, and what is happening now. (e.g. *I am a teacher; I am teaching.*)

PRESENT PARTICIPLE a verb form ending in *-ing* which is used in English to form verb tenses, and which may be used as an adjective or a noun. (e.g. *what is he doing?; Skiing is difficult.*)

PRONOUN a word which you use instead of a noun, when you do not need or want to name someone or something directly. (e.g. *it, you, none*)

PROPER NOUN the name of a person, place, organisation or thing. Proper nouns are always written with a capital letter. (e.g. *Sophie, London*)

QUESTION WORD a word such as *why, where, who* or *how* which is used to ask a question.

REFLEXIVE PRONOUN a word ending in *-self* or *-selves* such as *myself*, which refers back to the subject. (e.g. *He hurt himself.*)

REFLEXIVE VERB a verb where the subject and the object are the same, and where the action 'reflects back' on the subject. A reflexive verb is used with a **reflexive pronoun**. (e.g. *I washed myself*)

REGULAR VERBS a verb whose forms follow a general pattern or the normal rules.

RELATIVE PRONOUN a word such as *that, who* or *which*, when it is used to link two parts of a sentence together.

SENTENCE a group of words which usually has a verb and a subject. In writing, a sentence has a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark at the end.

SINGULAR the form of the word which is used to refer to one person or thing.

STEM the main part of the verb to which endings are added.

STRESSED PRONOUNS used instead of a noun when you want to emphasize something. Also called **emphatic pronoun**.

SUBJECT the noun in a sentence or phrase that refers to the person or thing that does the action described by the verb or is in the state described by the verb. (e.g. *My dog loves bones.*)

SUBJECT PRONOUN a word such as *I, you, he, they* which carries out the action described by the verb. The pronouns stand in for nouns when it is clear who is being talked about. (e.g. *My brother is not here at the moment, but he will be back soon.*)

SUBJUNCTIVE a verb form used in certain circumstances to express some sort of feeling, or to show doubt about whether something will happen or whether something is true. Unlike French, it is only used occasionally in English. (e.g. *If I were you, I would do it.*)

SUPERLATIVE an adjective or adverb with *-est* on the end of it or *most* or *least* in front of it that is used to compare people, things or actions. (e.g. *The funniest*)

SYLLABLE consonant + vowel units that make up the sounds of a word. (e.g. *im-po-ssi-ble: 4 syllables*)

TENSE the form of a verb which shows whether you are referring to the past, present or future.

VERB a 'doing' word which describes what someone or something does, what someone or something is, or what happens to them.

VOWEL one of the letters *a, e, i, o, u*.