

## PARTS OF SPEECH

(Compiler: Margaret Dickerson)

***PARTS OF SPEECH*** are the eight classes into which words are grouped according to [their] function, place, meaning and use in a sentence.

Words traditionally grouped into eight “classes” or “parts of speech” include:

nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns,  
prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

**Nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs** (called vocabulary or lexical words) . . . “make up more than 99 percent of all words listed in the dictionary” (Hodges, et.al. 12).  
“Dictionaries contain more **nouns** than any other kind of word; they are the most frequent element in English expression” (Morsberger 40).

However, **pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions** - although small in number - are also important because these words are used over and over in our writing and speaking. **Prepositions and conjunctions** (called function or structure words) connect and relate to other parts of speech. Of the eight word classes, only three -- **prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections** -- *do not* change their form.

### FORM CHANGE

“Form change” or **inflection** is a change in the form of a vocabulary or *lexical* (of or pertaining to the words or vocabulary of a specific language) word to show a specific meaning or grammatical relationship to another word *or* group of words.

**Examples:**

<u>verb</u>	-	<i>grasp, grasps, grasped</i>
<u>noun</u>	-	<i>cat, cats, cat's cats'</i>
<u>pronoun</u>	-	<i>I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours</i>
<u>adjective</u>	-	<i>light, lighter, lightest</i>
<u>adverb</u>	-	<i>carefully, more carefully, most carefully</i>

### FORM VERSUS FUNCTION

Many words cannot be confined to one part of speech, but function in several capacities. For instance, **dog** though conventionally labeled a **noun**, can be used as an **adjective** (“dog biscuit”), and **adverbial prefix** (“dog-tired”), a **transitive verb** (“dog his footsteps”), or an **interjection** (“hot dog!”).

Another example:

<i>water</i>	= noun
<i>water the grass</i>	= transitive verb
<i>his mouth watered</i>	= intransitive verb
<i>water buffalo</i>	= adjective
<i>watertight</i>	= adverbial prefix



## Collective Nouns

A **collective noun** stands for a group - usually of people, sometimes of animals - but it is not a true plural. **Collectives** can work with either singular or plural verbs, or pronouns, without changing their form.

If a collective works as a single unit, it takes a singular verb or singular pronoun to refer to it. If the individuals are working separately, the noun takes plural verbs or pronouns.

**Examples:** The jury was agreed on its verdict.  
(**jury** acting altogether;  
singular verb and possessive pronoun)

The jury were arguing about their views.  
(**individuals** on **jury** saying different things;  
treated as plural)

### Common Collective Nouns

<b>audience</b>	<b>class</b>	<b>crew</b>	<b>faculty</b>	<b>family</b>
<b>flock</b>	<b>group</b>	<b>herd</b>	<b>jury</b>	<b>mob</b>
<b>Congress</b>	<b>U.S. Senate</b>	<b>team</b>	<b>troop</b>	<b>committee</b>

**Exercise:** Label *col* above each collective noun. Keep in mind that capitalized nouns can be considered one proper noun and that a group of people may have a capitalized title.

1. This company has decided to encourage car pooling.
2. Each family must work out a schedule for using the family car.
3. Southern College will graduate 200 students in January.
4. Each class decorates a room of the college for the holidays.
5. The State may vote to charge for parking at their workplace.

## Possessive Nouns:

**Possessive nouns** are “*noun forms*” that show ownership, possession, and similar relationships.

Basic rule: **Watch for two nouns in a row, with an “s” on the first one.**

If a noun follows another noun or noun phrase in a sentence, the first noun is usually a *possessive* and needs an apostrophe before or after the **s**.

**Examples:**    Incorrect:    The boys foot was hurt.  
                         Correct:        The boy's foot was hurt.

Basic rule: To change singular nouns into plurals, and make them possessive: Put the apostrophe on the last noun, move the other noun to follow it, and remove *of*. Add *s* if you need the sound.

**Examples:**

<b>singular</b>	the ear of the donkey	the donkey's ear
<b>plural</b>	the ears of the donkeys	the donkeys' ears
<b>singular</b>	the eye of the man	the man's eye
<b>plural</b>	the eyes of the men	the men's eyes

**Exercise:**    Place apostrophes where needed in the sentences.

1. The students minds are not fully on their work this week.
2. Sallys eyes have a dreamy look.
3. Toms hands are idly sketching reindeer.
4. The teachers desk is covered with decorations.
5. Some people believe that students test scores have fallen in years.
6. A trip to the country wouldnt be complete without a stop at Joans Café and Deli.
7. The views from the mountains 1300 foot summit cant be surpassed; youll see a wilderness stretching out before your eyes in every direction.

## PRONOUNS

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun. Usually the pronoun substitutes for a specific noun, known as its *antecedent*, which means “the words before.”

Pronouns must agree in number (she or they), in person, (I, you, him), and in gender (he, she, it) with their antecedents.

Here are some common personal pronouns:

<b>Subject (Nominative)</b> Subject or equal to subject with being verb.	<b>Object (Objective)</b> Object of action verb or preposition.	<b>Possessive</b> Ownership of noun or pronoun.
<b>I</b>	<b>me</b>	<b>my, mine</b>
<b>you</b>	<b>you</b>	<b>your, yours</b>
<b>he</b>	<b>him</b>	<b>his</b>
<b>she</b>	<b>her</b>	<b>her, hers</b>
<b>it</b>	<b>it</b>	<b>its</b>
<b>we</b>	<b>us</b>	<b>our, ours</b>
<b>they</b>	<b>them</b>	<b>their, theirs</b>

The **subject pronouns** (except *it*) end in long vowels, making them easy to pronounce with verbs. Most of the pronouns with *m* in them are object pronouns, which are used at the ends of phrases, where the *m* is easy to pronounce.

### Types of Pronouns:

**Demonstrative:** Refer to things (**this, that, these, those**)

**Intensive:** End in self, selves (**myself, itself, herself, himself, yourself**)

**Indefinite:** Indefinite reference to nouns (**each, one, all, anybody, some, everyone**)

**Interrogative:** Used in questions (**who, which, what, whose, whom**)

**Personal:** Refer to people or things (**I, you, he, she, it, we, they**)

**Possessive:** Does not take an apostrophe (**its, her, theirs**)

**Reciprocal:** Refer back to individual parts of plural terms  
(**each other, one another**)

**Reflexive:** Intensify nouns they refer back to (**yourselves, themselves**)

**Relative:** Related dependent clause to a noun  
(**who, which, that, what, whom**)

**Exercise:** Circle the correct pronouns in the parentheses.

1. When Richard and (**I/me**) went to apply for jobs, we looked for (**them/they**) in the newspaper advertisements.
2. Cecilia said that she wanted to be a word processor, but (**I/me**) was more interested in jobs that might take (**I/me**) overseas.
3. (**She/Her**) applied for a computer job when (**I/me**) found (**it/them**) in an advertisement.
4. Everyone who applied except (**she/her**) didn't know WordPerfect.
5. The interviewers said (**they/them**) wanted an experienced worker for the job, but (**he/they**) couldn't find anyone.
6. Both Cecilia and (**I/me**) had excellent training in our business classes.
7. There was great competition between Jonathan and (**I/me**).
8. All of (**us/we**) had good references.
9. Now it's time for (**us/we**) to celebrate.
10. (**She and I**) (**Her and me**) have both been selected for new jobs.

## ADJECTIVES

A modifier that describes nouns and pronouns. An adjective usually answers one of these questions: Which one? What kind of? How many?

**Examples:** the **tame** elephant (which elephant?)  
**rare valuable old** (what kind of stamps?)  
**sixteen** candles (how many candles?)

### Kinds of Adjectives:

There are three kinds of adjectives: **descriptive** (gray sky, beautiful garden), **proper** (Buddhist, Italian) and **limiting** or **possessive**: these adjectives do not describe qualities, but instead identify or specify the words they modify:

(**this** sky, **my** garden, **its** name)

Adjectives can also be defined according to their **form** and their typical **position** in a sentence:

the kind of word that usually comes before a noun in a noun phrase (a *frisky* puppy, an *amiable young* man);

the kind of word that can follow a linking verb and describe the subject (the ship was *unsinkable*; talk is *cheap*);

the kind of word that when derived from another part of speech typically takes one of these endings: *wonderful*, *courteous*, *lucky*, *foolish*, *pleasurable*, *colonial*, *helpless*, *defensible*, *urgent*, *disgusting*, *friendly*, *spectacular*, *secretive*.

### Adjectives as Complements:

**Subject complements:** When an adjective functions as a subject complement, it describes the subject: Example: Justice is *blind*.

**Object complements:** When an adjective functions as an object complement, it describes the direct object.

*good*

Example: Laura looked well in her new raincoat.

**Note:** Do not repeat an object or adverb in an adjective clause.

**Why?** When a relative pronoun functions as the object of a verb or the object of a preposition, do not add another word with the **same** function later in the clause.

**Example:** The puppy ran after the car that we were riding in it.

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**Exercise:**

Underline the **adjectives** in the following sentences.

**Example:** John has a terrible temper.

1. Vandals covered the new car with black paint.
2. Scientists are constantly looking for new methods of space travel.
3. The broken wristwatch needs a new winding stem.
4. Proficient secretaries are invaluable employees.
5. Community colleges provide accessible and economical education.
6. Three men were washing the old truck.
7. State colleges and universities are the backbone of higher education.
8. Ralph Kincaid is an outstanding student but poor athlete.
9. Would you rather have a crystal microphone or a dynamic microphone?
10. Duke University is a fine example of the private colleges in this country.

## VERBS

A **verb** is a word that indicates action or existence, expressing what a subject does or is.

### Forms of a Verb:

#### Verb Characteristics

<b>Person</b>	Indicates who or what experiences or performs the action - the person speaking, the person spoken to, or the person or thing spoken about.	<i>first person:</i> I <b>walk</b> . <i>second person:</i> You <b>walk</b> . <i>third person:</i> He/She/It <b>walks</b> .
<b>Number</b>	Specifies how many subjects experience or perform the action.	<i>singular:</i> It <b>walks</b> . <i>plural:</i> They <b>walk</b> .
<b>Tense</b>	Signals the time of the action.	<i>past:</i> I <b>looked</b> outside. <i>present:</i> I <b>look</b> outside. <i>future:</i> I <b>will look</b> outside.
<b>Voice</b>	Indicates whether the subject performs or receives the verb's action.	<i>active voice:</i> The fans <b>watched</b> the game. <i>passive voice:</i> The game <b>was watched</b> by the fans.
<b>Mood</b>	Denotes the attitude expressed toward the verb.	<i>imperative:</i> <b>Listen</b> to me! <i>indicative:</i> You <b>are listening</b> to me. <i>subjunctive:</i> I wish you <b>would listen</b> to me.

### Primary Verb Forms:

All English verbs, with the exception of *be*, have five primary forms:

<b><u>Base Form</u></b>	<b><u>Present Tense</u></b>	<b><u>Present Participle</u></b>	<b><u>Past Tense</u></b>	<b><u>Past Participle</u></b>
look	looks	looking	looked	looked
walk	walks	walking	walked	walked
watch	watches	watching	watched	watched

The **base form** (simple form) is used for the present tense when the subject of the verb is: **I, you, we, they**, or a **plural noun**.

**Example:** I **talk** and you **listen**.

The **present tense** (or -s form) indicates action in the present when the subject is third-person singular (**he, she, it** or a **singular noun**).

**Example:** He **walks** while she **talks**.

The **present participle** indicates continuing action, creating by adding **ing** to the base form of the verb. In order to function as the main verb in a sentence, a participle must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be**.

**Example:** Mary **is looking** for a large apartment.

When a present participle functions as the grammatical subject or object in a sentence, it is a **gerund**.

**Example:** **Swimming** is good exercise. (*Swimming*=subject)  
Jonathan enjoyed **fishing**. (*fishing*=direct object of **enjoyed**)

A present participle can also function as an adjective in a sentence.

**Example:** The defense furnished **supporting** evidence.  
(*supporting* modifies **evidence**)

The **past tense** usually indicates action that occurred in the past. A verb's past tense can almost always be recognized by its **-d** or **-ed** ending. The past tense does not change form to indicate person or number.

**Example:** Richard **agreed** with her about the cost of the car.

Some irregular verbs form their past tense in other ways and are called **irregular verbs**.

**Example:** His parents **went** to Paris and **saw** the Eiffel Tower.

The **past participle** is identical to the past tense form of the verb, except in some irregular verbs. Like the present participle, the past participle must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be** to function as the main verb in the sentence, and does not change form to indicate person or number. The past participle is a part in the perfect verb tenses, and the passive voice verbs. It can also function as an adjective.

**Examples:** Each **had waited** for the other person.

(past perfect tense)

Nearly everyone **was helped** at the scene.

(passive voice verb)

Only occasionally will I eat an **overcooked** steak.

(adjective)

### Auxiliary Verb Forms:

Some verbs do not make sense as main verbs of a sentence without the aid of an **auxiliary verb** (or a **helping verb**). The most common auxiliary verbs are **be, have, do**. Forms of **be, have, do**:

<u>Base Form</u>	<u>Present Tense</u>	<u>Present Participle</u>	<u>Past Tense</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
<b>be</b>	I <b>am</b> he/she/it <b>is</b> we/you/they <b>are</b>	<b>being</b>	I/he/she/it <b>was</b> we/you/they <b>were</b>	<b>been</b>
<b>have</b>	I <b>have</b> he/she/it <b>has</b> we/you/they <b>have</b>	<b>having</b>	I <b>have</b> he/she/it <b>had</b> we/you/they <b>had</b>	<b>had</b>
<b>do</b>	I <b>do</b> he/she/it <b>does</b> we/you/they <b>do</b>	<b>doing</b>	<b>did</b>	<b>done</b>

### Linking Verbs:

A **linking verb** joins the subject of a sentence to a sentence complement, which describes or renames the subject. Linking verbs usually describe states of being, not actions.

**Examples:** Columbus **was** an explorer with a plan.  
King Ferdinand **remained** uncertain.  
Queen Isabella **felt** confident about Columbus's  
chances of success.

Common linking verbs include all forms of the verb **be**:  
**am, is, was, are, were, be, being, and been.**

### Transitive/intransitive Verbs:

A **transitive verb** transfers its action from a subject to a direct object.

**Example:** Angela **climbed the mountain.**

An **intransitive verb** does not take a direct object.

**Example:** Angela **climbed expertly.**

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## Verbals:

**Verbals** are verb forms that typically end in **-ing** or **ed**. Verbals can function as "nouns"

(**skiing** is fun) or as "modifiers" (the **stolen** goods) (the desire to **succeed**).

A **verbal** cannot stand alone as the main verb in a sentence.

(*the clown smiling*) (*the books read*) are not complete sentences but sentence fragments. A verbal must always be accompanied by an auxiliary verb when it serves as the predicate of a sentence.

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## EXERCISES USING VERBS

### **Practice Sentences:**

**In the following sentences, underline the correct principal part of the verb.**

**Example:** I (showed, shown) the photographs at the meeting.

1. The sun has not (rose, risen) yet this morning.
2. The child (threw, thrown) the ball well.
3. I have (chose, chosen) my life's partner.
4. Joe is (search, searching) diligently for a job.
5. The price of the stock has (fallen, falling).
6. My team (lead, led) in the tournament.
7. I am (return, returning) home soon.
8. Jim (eat, ate) quickly.
9. The neighbors have (brought, brung) me food.

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## PREPOSITIONS

A **preposition** is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in a sentence.

**Examples:** **in** the house, **to** the store, **over** the hill

**Example:** A journey **of a thousand miles** begins **with** a single step.

### Common Prepositions:

about	despite	opposite	under
above	down	out	underneath
after	during	outside	unlike
among	except	over	until
at	for	past	unto
before	from	plus	up
behind	in	regarding	upon
below	into	respecting	with
beside	inside	round	without
between	like	since	
beyond	near	than	
but	next	through	
by	off	throughout	
concerning	on	to	
considering	onto	toward	

### Multiple-word Prepositions:

according to	except for	in spite of
ahead of	in addition to	on top of
along with	in back of	other than
apart from	in case of	out of
away from	in front of	together with
because of	inside of	

**Note:** Prepositional phrases may contain two or more nouns or pronouns, **plus a conjunction such as “and.”**

**Exercise using prepositions and prepositional phrases:**

**Directions: Underline prepositions and place (parentheses) around prepositional phrases.**

1. In the winter, camping requires careful planning and extra gear.
2. You need special sleeping bags for below-zero temperatures.
3. Most people reserve tents with wooden floors for winter camping.
4. They greatly prefer campsites near hot showers and indoor plumbing.
5. On the breakfast table, the drinking water freezes.
6. Your milk and meat will be quite cold without an ice chest.
7. Cross-country skiing is now very popular in the mountains.
8. This sport will exercise every muscle in your body.
9. You ski down one small hill; then you struggle up the next hill.
10. After the skiing, you want a very warm fire and some hot cocoa.
11. Have you read any good books about wild animals lately?
12. Most counties are trying to save the natural environment and the animals living in it.
13. The grizzly bear is nearly extinct in North America, except in Alaska.
14. Many people like to go on trips to see animals in their natural habitats.
15. In fifty years, we may have no more wild animals like the zebra, giraffe, elephant, or rhinoceros.

## CONJUNCTIONS

A **conjunction** is any word that is powerful enough to connect sentences. To decide whether a word can function as a **conjunction**, try using it to join two short sentences:

**Examples:** She studies English constantly, **and** she knows it better every day.

I went to the store **because** I needed some supplies.

### Main Coordinating Conjunctions:

For	But	So
And	Or	
Nor	Yet	

These main coordinating conjunctions join independent clauses (possible sentences) to create a compound sentence.

A second type of conjunction is the **subordinating conjunction**, which joins a subject-verb combination to another subject-verb combination, but makes one part **subordinate** to or **dependent** upon the other. These conjunctions take possible sentences and turn them into “sub” sentences, something less than sentences, called **subordinate** or **dependent clauses**.

### Main Subordinating Conjunctions:

after	before	provided that	when
although	even if	since	whenever
as	for	so that	where
as if	how	than	wherever
as soon as	if	that	whether
as though	in case that	unless	while
because	in order that	until	why

**Note:** Some of these words also function as prepositions; however, when they are NOT joining sentences, they function as prepositions.

### Correlative Conjunctions:

**Correlative** (from co-related) **conjunctions**, the third type of conjunctions, come in pairs. They are used to join equal words, phrases, or clauses (possible sentences) with one conjunction before one part and the other before the other part.

**Main Correlative Conjunctions:** not only/but also      both/and

either/or

neither/nor

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**Exercise: Using Connectors (Prepositions and Conjunctions):**

**Directions:** Put **prepositional phrases** in (parentheses), and underline conjunctions.

1. Are you a good swimmer?
2. Swimming is good exercise for the whole body.
3. Many people learn swimming when they are very young.
4. Their parents have swimming pools, or they are taken to public pools or the homes of friends.
5. Small babies automatically hold their breath under water for short periods of time.
6. Some adults are afraid of the water, because they had frightening experiences when they were young.
7. They can still learn swimming, if they go to classes at the Y.
8. Swimming not only is fun but also increases safety.
9. All non-swimmers should learn “drown-proofing” -- swimming and floating on the surface for fairly long periods of time.
10. With the proper equipment, most people can enjoy both the beautiful underwater scenery and the tropical fish in warm vacation waters.

## **INTERJECTIONS**

**Interjections** are words or small groups of words that are used before exclamation points to express strong feeling of any kind.

**Examples:** Wow! Hurrah! Way to go!

If an exclamatory group of words is too short to be called a sentence, call it an **interjection**, and write it separately from the main sentence.

**Examples:** Congratulations! You've just won the lottery!  
Oh, Sure! That comes in everyone's mail!  
Not mine! Do you really believe that?

**Note:** Use the exclamation point sparingly. Overuse diminishes its value. A comma is better after mild interjections.

A period is better after mildly exclamatory expressions.

**Example:** He refused it.

A period is better after mild imperatives [request or command]

**Example:** Refuse the offer.

**Exercise:** Add exclamation points (interjections), other ending punctuation, and capital letters where necessary in the sentences.

1. Wow what a time that was
2. Don't run in the street
3. Stop
4. Can't you stop that irritating noise
5. Far out you really did it that time
6. Of course not
7. I thought those grapes were ripe

## **ADVERBS**

An adverb is a word that describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Most adverbs will end in -ly.

Examples: The pastry chef **carefully** spread raspberry frosting over the cake.  
(The adverb **carefully** describes the verb spread.)

That lamp shines **very brightly**.  
(The adverb **very** describes the adverb **brightly**.)

Note: Be careful to use an **adverb**—**not an adjective**—after an action verb.  
Compare the following;

### **Incorrect**

The boss sneezed loud at his desk.  
(loud is an adjective)

Speak slow during your lecture.  
(slow is an adjective)

### **Correct**

The boss sneezed **loudly** at his desk.

Speak **slowly** during your lecture.

**Rule: Adverbs add to action verbs. Adverbs show how, when, where, or why actions are done.** Look at the sentence and decide: Is the verb doing something or being something? If it is doing, you need an adverb; it tells how, when, where, or how much is happening.

### **Placement of Adverbs:**

Adverbs modifying verbs appear in various positions at the beginning or end of the sentence, before or after the verb, or between a helping verb and its main verb.

Example:

**Slowly**, we drove along the rain-slick road.

Mary handled the china dish very **carefully**.

Martin **always** wins our tennis matches.

Chris is **rarely** late for our luncheon dates.

My daughter has **often** spoken of you.

**An adverb may be placed at the beginning or at the end of the sentence or before the verb.** It cannot appear after the verb because the verb is followed by the direct object the gift.

Correct: **Carefully**, Mother wrapped the gift.

Correct: Mother wrapped the gift **carefully**.

Correct: Mother **carefully** wrapped the gift.

**An adverb may not be placed between a verb and its direct object.**

Incorrect: Mother wrapped **carefully** the gift.

### **Words Introducing Adverb Clauses**

**Subordinating Conjunctions:** after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, in order that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, while.

### **Adverbial Prepositional Phrases**

**Adverbial prepositional phrases** that modify the verb can appear nearly anywhere in a sentence.

Do not judge a book **by its cover**.

Tyranny will **in time** lead to revolution.

**To the ant** a few drops of rain are a flood.

**Adverbial word groups** usually answer one of these questions: **When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?**

Do not judge a book **how?** By its cover.

Tyranny will lead to revolution **when?** In time.

A few drops of rain are a flood **under what conditions.** To an ant.

### **Using Irregular Comparative and Superlative Forms of Adverbs**

Some adverbs (and adjectives) change form to indicate their comparative and superlative degrees. Examples of irregular “modifiers” are listed below:

<b>Adverbs:</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
	<b>badly</b>	<b>worse</b>	<b>worst</b>
	<b>ill</b>	<b>worse</b>	<b>worst</b>
	<b>well</b>	<b>better</b>	<b>best</b>

### **Exercise:**

Underline the appropriate modifier (adverb) in each of the following sentences.

Example: Their actions courageous/courageously benefited many lives.

1. The snow began falling light/lightly and then steady/steadily intensified.
2. Remember to drive slow/slowly through Devil’s Pass.



3. They were charged with disorder/disorderly conduct.
4. Edith guessed correct/correctly that she had been given the job.
5. Our accountant made a costly/cost mistake on our tax return.
6. We were more than slight/slightly upset with him.
7. Whenever a bird screeched loudly/loud, he shivered violent/violently.
8. He acted heroic/heroically when called upon to aid the accident victims.
9. The blankets her grandmother wove so skillful/skillfully were beautiful.
10. They awaited the return of their ancestral artifacts eager/eagerly.

### **Adverb Clauses**

**Adverb clauses** usually modify verbs, in which case they may appear nearly anywhere in a sentence: at the beginning, at the end, or in the middle. Like other adverbial word groups, they tell **when, where, why under what conditions, or to what degree** an action or a situation existed.

Examples:

**When the well is dry**, we know the value of water.

Venice would be a fine city if the canals were only drained.

Unlike adjective clauses, adverb clauses are frequently “movable.” We can move the adverb clause without affecting the meaning of the sentence:

We know the value of water **when the well is dry**.

**If the canals were only drained**, Venice would be a fine city.

### **Using “good/well” and “bad/badly”**

Some writers confuse the adjective “good” with the adverb “well” and the adjective “bad” with the adverb “badly.” Rule: Use the adjectives “good” and “bad” to modify nouns or pronouns: “a good time” “a bad play.” Use the adverbs “well” and “badly” to modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs: she speaks well; he hears badly.

**Exercises:** In the following sentences, correct the misuse of good/well or bad/badly. Some sentences may be correct as written.

Example: She no longer skates good.

Corrected: She no longer skates well.

1. It was a good time; it was a bad time.
2. It did not go good; it did not go badly.
3. It could have gone better, but it was not badly.
4. They invested their money good, so good they doubled their investment.

### **Avoiding Double Negatives**

A **double negative** is a nonstandard form using two negatives where only one is necessary. Although few speakers of English would misunderstand “I **do not** have **no** money,” the statement is nonstandard because it contains two negatives and only one is necessary. The adverbs “barely,” “scarcely,” and “hardly” and the preposition “but” (meaning “except”) are negative and should not be used with other negatives.

Examples:   Faulty:       We couldn't **hardly** see the band. Their music didn't **never** reach the back rows of the stadium.  
                  Revised:      We could hardly see the band. Their music never reached the back rows of the stadium.  
                  Or:                Their songs would never have been heard in the back rows of the stadium.

Although double negatives were once acceptable in English (Shakespeare used them for emphasis), using them in your writing may lead your readers to believe you are careless. Therefore, **revise any double negatives used in your writing.**

## Selected Resources

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