

Glossary of Terms

adjective: A word used to modify a noun or pronoun. It tells which one, what kind or how many. *The white dog lost his collar.*

adverb: A word used to modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a whole clause, phrase or sentence. Adverbs tell how, when, where, or to what extent. *The child ran quickly to his mother.*

agreement: The correspondence in person, number, and gender between two words. A verb must agree with its subject in person and number. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender. *The boy and girl understood their homework assignment.*

antecedent: The word or group of words to which a pronoun refers. *The boy and girl understood their homework assignment.*

appositive: A noun or group of words used as a noun, placed next to a noun or pronoun to explain, describe, or identify it. Most appositives are set off with commas. *“The Catcher in the Rye,” a book by J.D. Salinger, was written in 1945.*

article: *The* is a definite article. *A* and *an* are indefinite articles. Articles are classified as adjectives. Use *an* before a word with an initial vowel sound. *A boy took an apple from the basket.*

clause: A group of words that has a subject and predicate. A **main (independent) clause** forms a grammatically complete sentence. Main clauses can be joined to other main clauses with coordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, or semicolons. *I ran 20 miles today, but the marathon is two weeks away. I ran 20 miles today; however, the marathon is two weeks away. I ran 20 miles today; the marathon is two weeks away.*

Dependent (subordinate) clauses are not sentences and must be joined to a main clause to form a grammatically complete sentence. Dependent clauses function as adjectives, adverbs, and nouns. *When I go for a morning run, I take the dog for his exercise as well.*

comma splice: An error occurring when main clauses are joined by a comma alone. *I ran 20 miles today, the marathon is two weeks away.* Correct: *I ran 20 miles today; the marathon is two weeks away.*

compound: Words or groups of words of two or more parts functioning as a unit.

Compound words: *mother-in-law, lifeguard.* **Compound constructions:** *Matt and Ben (compound subject) are running in the race. The cats hissed and spit (compound verb).*

conjunction: A word that connects and shows the relation between words, phrases, and clauses. **Coordinating conjunctions** (*and, but, or, nor, yet, for, and so*) connect items of

equal grammatical rank: *The cat jumped and the dog ran away.* **Correlative conjunctions** (*either...or, not only... but also, etc.*) are used in pairs: *He will not only dance, but also sing.* **Subordinating conjunctions** (*when, while, if, although, because, etc.*) introduce dependent clauses and connect them to main clauses. *When I have a day off, I will run errands and clean the house.*

conjunctive adverb: An adverb used to connect two main clauses: *I ran 20 miles today; however, the marathon is two weeks away.*

dangling modifier: A modifying phrase or clause that does not logically connect to any word in a sentence. *To be informed of local news, a local newspaper should be read.* To correct: *To be informed of local news, one should read a local newspaper.*

double negative: Two negative words used in the same construction. *I didn't have no reason to go to the party* should be *I didn't have any reason to go to the party.*

gender: The classification of nouns and pronouns as masculine (*man, he*), feminine (*woman, she*), or neuter (*house, it*).

gerund: A verbal ending in *-ing* that functions as a noun. Gerunds may have objects, complements, or modifiers. *Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.*

infinitive: The form of a verb listed in the dictionary, it usually appears in combination with *to* to form a verbal that functions as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Infinitives may have objects, complements, or modifiers. *I want to buy a new car.*

misplaced modifier: A modifier positioned incorrectly in a sentence. *Most of my accomplishments in a day result from the ability to, without losing focus, do several things at once.* To correct: *Most of my accomplishments in a day result from the ability to do several things at once without losing focus.*

modifier: An adjective, an adverb, or a word, phrase, or clause used as an adjective or adverb to limit or qualify another word or group of words. *To be informed of local news, one should read a local newspaper.*

mood: The form of a verb indicating a writer's intent in a sentence. The **indicative mood** is used for questions and statements of fact or opinion. *John is a talented artist.* The **imperative mood** indicates a command or direction: *Be a good student.* The **subjunctive mood** expresses doubt, a condition contrary to fact, or a wish: *I wish I were a good fisherman.*

noun: A word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. **Proper nouns** name particular people, places or things: *William Shakespeare, Georgia, Fenway Park.* **Common nouns** name general classes: *hotel, singer.* **Abstract nouns** name intangible qualities: *friendship, loyalty.* **Concrete nouns** name tangible nouns: *desk, rain.* **Collective nouns** name groups: *squad, team.*

number: The indication of singular or plural in the forms of nouns (*boy, boys*), pronouns (*he, they*), demonstrative adjectives (*this, these*) and verbs (*runs, run*).

object: A word, phrase, or clause that receives the action of or is affected by a transitional verb, a verbal, or a preposition. A **direct object** receives the action of a transitive verb or verbal and answers the question *What?* or *Whom?* *I ate a sandwich*. An **indirect object** indicates to whom or for whom an action is done. *I threw Tom the keys*. An **object of a preposition** is the noun that a preposition relates to the rest of the sentence. *A side effect of the medication is drowsiness*.

participle: A verbal that functions as an adjective, an adverb, or a part of a verb phrase. **Present participles** end in *-ing*. *The swimming dog was tiring quickly*. **Past participles** of regular verbs end in *-d* or *-ed*. *Defeated, the team went home*.

phrase: A group of words lacking a subject or a predicate or both and used as a single part of speech. A **verb phrase** consists of more than one verb: *had been sewing, was running*. A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers. It functions as an adjective, adverb, or noun. *A side effect of the medication is drowsiness*. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive, its object, and any modifiers. It functions as an adjective, adverb, or noun. *I want to buy you a new car*. A **participial phrase** consists of a participle, its object, and any modifiers. It functions as an adjective or adverb. *Defeated by its archrival, the team went home*. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund, its object, and any modifiers. Gerund phrases function as nouns. *Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health*.

predicate: The part of a sentence that tells what the subject did or how it was acted upon. *I ate a sandwich*.

preposition: A word that shows the relation of a noun or pronoun (the object of the preposition) to some other word in the sentence. *A side effect of the medication is drowsiness*.

pronoun: A word that takes the place of a noun. **Personal pronouns:** *I, you, he, she, it, we, they, my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs*. **Reflexive pronouns:** *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*, which are also sometimes used as **intensive pronouns**. **Relative pronouns:** *who, whom, that, which, whose*. **Interrogative pronouns:** *who, which, whom, whose, what*. **Demonstrative pronouns:** *this, that, these, those*. **Indefinite pronouns:** *all, both, few, several, nobody*.

regular verb: A verb that forms its past and past participle by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the infinitive form. *I want to buy you a new car*.

sentence fragment: A portion of a sentence punctuated as though it were a sentence. *When I go for a morning run*.

sentence: A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate and is not introduced by a subordinating conjunction. A **simple sentence** has one main clause. *I ate a sandwich.* A **compound sentence** has two or more main clauses. *I ate a sandwich and I washed the dishes.* A **complex sentence** has one main clause and at least one dependent clause. *After eating my sandwich, I washed the dishes.* A **compound-complex sentence** has two or more main clauses and at least one dependent clause. *After eating my sandwich, I washed the dishes and I fed the dog.* A **declarative sentence** makes a statement. *I ate a sandwich.* An **imperative statement** gives a command or makes a request. *Eat your sandwich.* An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. *Did you eat your sandwich?* An **exclamatory sentence** expresses strong feeling. *I love sandwiches!*

subject: The part of the sentence that acts, is acted upon, or is described. *The cats hissed and spit.*

tense: The form of a verb and its helping verbs that expresses the verb's relation to time. The simple tenses are **present tense** (*I walk*), **past** (*I walked*) and **future** (*I will walk*). The **perfect tenses** indicate completed action: **present perfect** (*I have walked*), **past perfect** (*I had walked*), and **future perfect** (*I will have walked*). The **progressive tense** indicates continuing action (*I am walking*).

verb: A word or group of words expressing action or a state of being, A **transitive verb** expresses action that has an object. *I threw the keys.* An **intransitive verb** expresses action that does not have an object. *The cat meowed.* A **linking verb** expresses a state of being or a condition. It links the subject of the sentence with a complement that identifies or describes the subject. *I am tired.*

verbal: A form of a verb used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. **Gerunds, infinitives** and **participles** are verbals. Verbals may take objects, complements, and modifiers.

voice: The form of a transitive verb that indicates whether the subject acts (**active voice**) or was acted upon (**passive voice**). Active: *I closed the door.* Passive: *The door was closed by me.*

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