

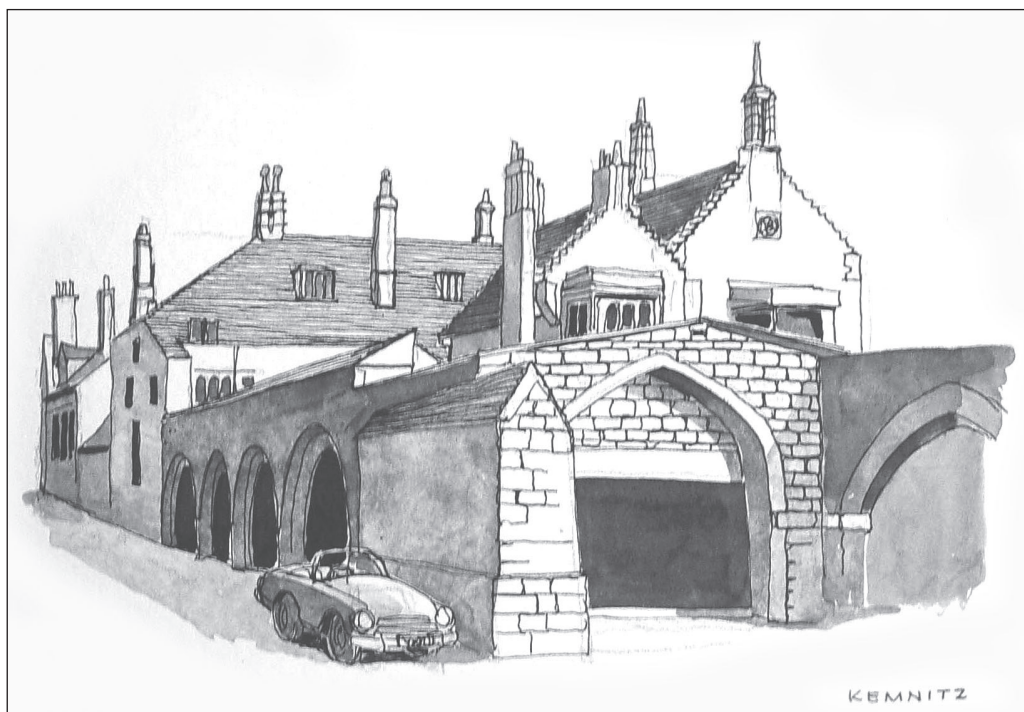
Royal Fireworks

Language Arts

by Michael Clay Thompson

Grammar Town

Second Edition



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Grammar Town

Once upon a time,
far away and yet
not so far,
there was a town
called Grammar Town,
with shady streets and good shops
and nice places to walk.
In Grammar Town
people talked, and lived,
and did their work.
With everyone they
knew, the people
of Grammar Town
communicated with words.
Let us go visit Grammar Town....

There are many words
in Grammar Town.

There are nouns for things,
such as *window*, and *roof*, and *bus*,
and there are verbs for actions,
like *walked*, or *read*, or *ate*.
There are all kinds of words,
and the words work together
to make language.

Language is what we call
all of the words that
we combine to express ideas.
Each idea is a sentence,
but we will talk about that later.

When we think
about language,
that is called
GRAMMAR.

We think about language
in FOUR ways.

These four ways
of thinking about language
are called:

1. parts of speech
2. parts of the sentence
3. phrases
4. clauses

We will learn more
about the four ways of thinking
about language later,
but here are the four levels:

1. **parts of speech:**
the eight kinds of words

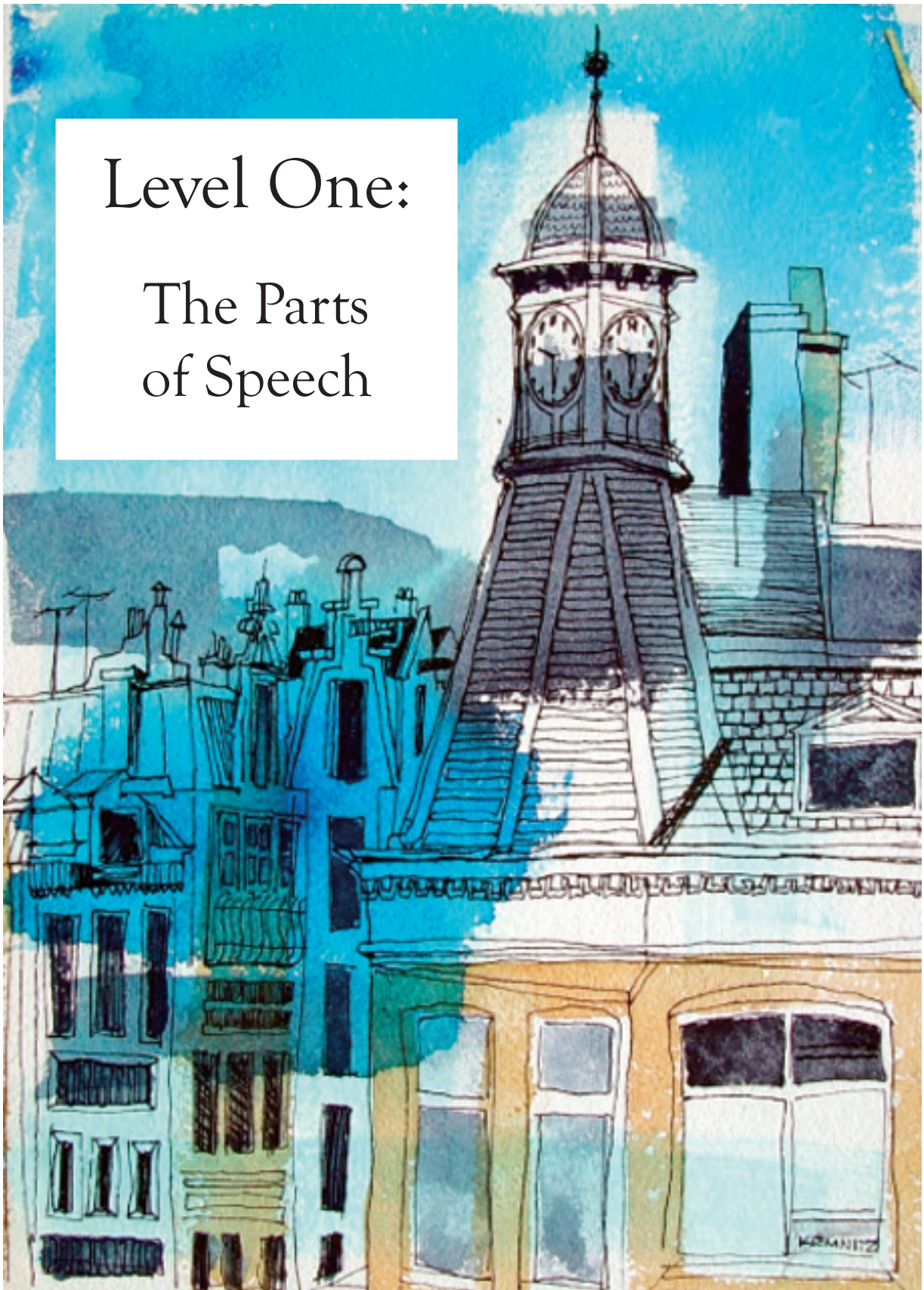
2. **parts of the sentence:**
how words make ideas

3. **phrases:**
little groups of words

4. **clauses:**
simple or complicated ideas

Level One:

The Parts
of Speech

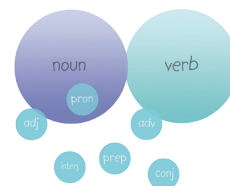




1. NOUNS

Nouns are words
that name things,
like *train*, *smoke*, *track*, and *land*.

Nouns can even be names
of people, like *Shorty Hawkins*.



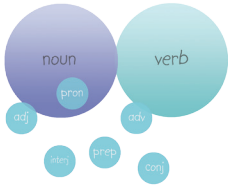
The word *noun*
comes from the Latin *nomen*,
meaning name.

Proper nouns, like *England*
and *Jane*,
are capitalized.

Common nouns, like
country, *person*, and *sandwich*,
are not capitalized.

A noun naming one thing,
like *tree*,
is **singular**.

A noun naming more,
like *trees*,
is **plural**.



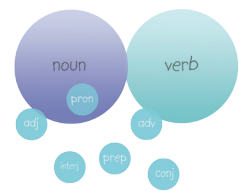
2. PRONOUNS

Pronouns are
quick words
we use when we do not
want to repeat a whole long noun.

Instead of saying
Samuel Langhorne Clemens
(Mark Twain),
we can just say
he.

Pronouns make language fast!

The word *pronoun*
means “for the noun.”
The pronoun is a quick
short-cut sound, like a beep.

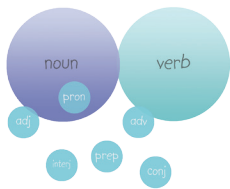


One important group
of pronouns
is the **SUBJECT** pronouns:

*I, you, he, she, it,
we, you, they*

Another important group
of pronouns
is the **OBJECT** pronouns:

*me, you, him, her, it,
us, you, them*



Subject and object pronouns
are used for different things.

Subject pronouns are for grammar subjects.

I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they

Object pronouns are for grammar objects.

me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them

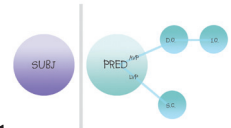
You must memorize
these two groups of pronouns.
Repeat them until
they will be in your mind forever.

We will discuss this later,
but notice the pronouns
in this sentence:

I saw him, and he saw me,
but she gave him and her the tomatoes.

Level Two: The Parts of the Sentence



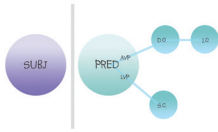


So, how do the eight kinds of words
work together?

Usually the noun, pronoun, and adjective
say what we are talking about,
and the verb, adverb, preposition,
conjunction, and interjection
say something about it.
This complete, two-part idea
is called a *SENTENCE*.

Every sentence has two parts:
what it is about, called the **SUBJECT**,
and what we say about the subject,
called the **PREDICATE**.

These two parts must make
a complete thought,
or else it is not a sentence
but only a sentence *fragment*.



Do you remember
that the noun and the verb
are the two main parts of speech?
Well, now we see these two in a new way.
In a sentence the noun or its pronoun
becomes the basis of the subject, and
the verb becomes the basis of the predicate.

SUBJECT

Carlos
Angelena
The old priory
The blue cab
The water supply
The canal
His countenance
The blue sky

PREDICATE

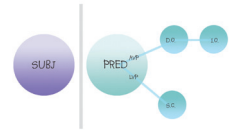
is the owner of the shop.
walked down Main Street.
is a huge building.
stopped at the corner
comes from the mountain.
was good for commerce.
seemed grim and tragic.
looked serene.

Notice that the verb is always in the predicate.

We call the verb the *simple predicate*.

The *complete predicate* is the verb and all
other words that talk about the subject.

When we say *predicate*, we usually will mean
simple predicate—the verb.



Now we can examine a sentence
in two different ways.

If we want to see what kinds of words
are in the sentence and what each
word is doing, we look at the parts
of speech, but if we want to understand
the whole idea in action,
what the idea is about, and what we are saying
about it, then we look at **Level Two,**
the parts of the sentence,
which are in two sides:
the subject side and the predicate side.

The	tall	boy		rode	his	bicycle	down	the	path.
adj.	adj.	n.		v.	adj.	n.	prep.	adj.	n.
subject				predicate					

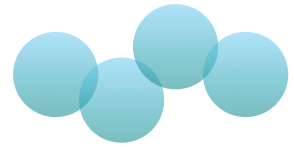
In this sentence the complete subject is *The tall boy*, and the complete predicate is *rode his bicycle down the path*. The simple subject is the noun *boy*, and the simple predicate is the verb *rode*. Remember that when we talk about the subject and the predicate, we usually will mean the simple subject and the simple predicate.

Level Three: Phrases



A phrase is a *group* of words,
but it acts like *one* word,
like a single part of speech.
It can act like an adjective,
or an adverb, or a noun.

Phrases do not contain
subjects and verbs,
though sometimes
an entire phrase can be a subject.



Three Kinds of Phrases

Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases always begin with prepositions, and they act like modifiers (like adjectives or adverbs).

Like an adjective: the bus **at the corner**

Like an adverb: they swam **after school**

Like an adjective: the letter **for him and her**

Appositive Phrases

Appositive phrases are interrupting definitions that are put (*pos*) beside (*apo*) what they define. They act like nouns or adjectives.

Robert, *the new student*, arrived late.

The viaduct, *an old Roman design*, was still in use.

Verbal Phrases

Verbals are verb words that are not used as verbs.

There are three kinds of verbals: gerunds, participles, and infinitives.

Gerunds: nouns made out of *-ing* verbs

Thinking is fun.

Participles: adjectives made out of verbs

Thinking quickly, the ice cream man filled the cone.

Completely *broken*, the gate swung freely.

Infinitives: nouns or modifiers made from the *to* form of the verb

To think is fun. (noun)

The man *to see* is Howard. (adjective)

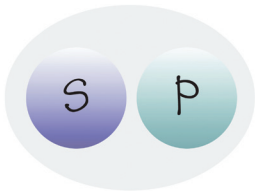
He lived *to read*. (adverb)

Note: We think of the infinitive as one word.

Example: *To think* is regarded as one word.

A watercolor illustration of a city scene. In the foreground, a small boat with a striped canopy is on a river. A bridge with a central tower and arches spans the river. In the background, there are several tall buildings, including a prominent skyscraper. The sky is a deep blue. The overall style is artistic and painterly.

Level Four: Clauses



Follow the trail....

First we learned that
the noun and the verb are
the two most important parts of speech.

Then we learned that
the noun and verb become
the subject and predicate,
the most important parts of the sentence.

Then we learned that
the subject/predicate
is exactly what is never in a phrase.

Now we see where it leads:
the noun and verb pair
is the nucleus that
is the heart of every clause.
It is as though the noun/verb pair
is always the key
in all four levels of grammar.